



# **Tanzanian ‘Freedom’ and Chinese ‘Friendship’ in 1965: laying the tracks for the TanZam rail link<sup>1</sup>**

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When the Chinese government first made a verbal promise to sponsor the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia (TanZam) rail link in February 1965, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere was apprehensive about accepting it. Consequently, the offer was shrouded in secrecy for some months. The political value of the rail link was in creating a new copper export route for Zambia via Tanzania rather than through its other hostile, settler-controlled neighbours. The rail link would strengthen Zambia's participation in the southern African liberation struggle, but the prospect of such a massive, politically sensitive project being undertaken by communist China triggered an international furore. The more established colonial powers in Africa, as well as the United States, had to go beyond superficial assessments of Beijing's technical capacity in order to re-evaluate Beijing's political intentions in Africa and its effect on their vested interests. The reactions of these different stakeholders should be viewed in the context of the intense East-West cold war tension and active Sino-Soviet rivalry on the African continent. From Nyerere's perspective, these challenges both offered access to alternative sources of development aid from the Eastern Bloc countries, while complicating his government's foreign policymaking.

This article examines the context in which the Chinese government's offer was made and how Nyerere managed its impact on Tanzania's foreign affairs until the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) by Southern Rhodesia in November 1965. Tanzanian political history has been dominated by a Party-centred narrative which presents the Tanzanian African National Union (TANU) party and the government as monolithic entities. This paper intends to go beyond this simplistic view by highlighting an important link between Nyerere's tenuous position at home and his foreign policy objectives. It will be argued that pressure from both the domestic and international politics had a large impact on the negotiations and bargaining that led to the rail link being built by the Chinese.

To arrive at this view, it is important to understand five distinct factors, into which the article is organised. First, Nyerere's priorities and how the TanZam rail link emerged at the forefront of the Tanzanian government's agenda as a key supporter of the southern African liberation struggle. Second, the significance of the high-level visits made by Tanzanian and Chinese representatives which marked the growing relationship

between the governments as well as the political importance of the relationship to their respective foreign policies. Third, how Nyerere's consolidation of power enabled him to manage the highly politicised aid milieu, domestically (within his government) and internationally, in order to secure a sponsor for the link. Fourth, the mixed domestic and foreign reactions to the Chinese offer which revealed both the contentiousness of Beijing's profile in Africa and concerns about Chinese capacity as a donor. Finally, the circumstances and pressures which bore down on Nyerere and his Zambian counterpart President Kenneth Kaunda, which were the triggers that eventually made the trilateral collaboration on the rail link to take root.

### Nyerere's concerns – the party, government and new nation

In the immediate aftermath of Tanzanian independence from Britain in 1961, President Julius Nyerere had two paramount concerns.<sup>2</sup> First and foremost was to support the liberation struggles of neighbouring countries, which would be tantamount to preserving Tanzania's own independence, as hostile neighbours would be a continued security threat. This point will be discussed in greater detail in a separate section. The second concern was for nation building. TANU had united many ethnic groups during the independence struggle and the challenge after independence was to keep the nation together.

With regard to the formation of the nation, its national security was one obviously essential component. After mainland Tanganyika became independent in December 1961, Nyerere wanted to increase foreign military assistance and strengthen national defence. However, the mutiny of the Tanganyika Rifles in January 1964, sparked by the soldiers' disgruntlement with the slow rate of Africanisation of the military, showed how tenuous governmental control of the army was.<sup>3</sup> Most worryingly for Nyerere, the outbreak came just days after the revolution in nearby Zanzibar, which was an independent country at that point.

In the field of international relations, Nyerere made overt moves to establish Tanganyika as an active member of the global community. The Tanganyikan government made small bilateral contributions towards disaster relief and in support of the United Nations

(UN). Modest donations also went to the Skopje (Yugoslavia) earthquake fund, Longarone (Italy) disaster fund and the hurricane-hit Caribbean countries.<sup>4</sup> The Tanganyikan government further authorised its UN Permanent Representative to purchase £1,000 worth of UN bonds, as a token of support which was also 'intended in the main as a stimulus to others who can afford to pay better than her, but do not do so.'<sup>5</sup> The ethos and 'principles' that the Tanganyikan government put into practice were an indication of the kind of relationships it expected to have with other governments.

However, living up to such high aspirations proved to be difficult. The reality of being heavily dependent on foreign aid was that, in spite of recognising the dangers of external political interference, there was the danger that aid would be withheld. Since Tanzanian needs were so great and it was politically desirable to accept aid from all quarters as an extension of the government's non-alignment policy, they felt bound to take whatever was offered.<sup>6</sup> The union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in April 1964 complicated things even more. The government of the Union Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar (later re-named Tanzania) inherited Zanzibar's close ties with the Eastern Bloc, which posed both political problems and development funding possibilities. West Germany enforced its Hallstein Doctrine and withdrew aid monies over the status of East German representation within the country. Tanzania's relations with the American government were at an all time low because of allegations of subversion by embassy staff against Nyerere's government, which led to a suspension of the Peace Corps programme. Britain was not in a position to provide more economic solace as it was weathering its own balance of payments crisis. The souring of relations with so many of its key donors had a grave impact on the Tanzanian government's already under-funded development plans.

The Zanzibar element emerged through the merger between Tanganyika and the Islands in April 1964 which, in Nyerere's words, was a 'straightforward' decision made between him and the leader of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council, Abeid Karume.<sup>7</sup> This union led to the more progressive, leftist members of the Zanzibari government being sent to take up cabinet positions in Dar es Salaam. These included the Afro-Shirazi 'intellectuals' from Zanzibar who had fallen out with Karume, including Abdallah Kassim Hanga (Minister of Industries), Othman Shariff (Ambassador to the USA) and

Hasnu Makame (Minister of Communications and Works), Salim Ahmed Salim (Ambassador to the United Arab Republic), Ali Mafoudh (Chief of Operations in the Tanganyika People's Defence Forces) and Abdulrahman Babu (Minister of Trade) were also sent to the mainland.<sup>8</sup> Nyerere had to manage these Zanzibari ministers carefully in order to maintain the delicate relations with Karume. Babu in particular had close relations with the Chinese leadership and, as Secretary of the Zanzibar Nationalist Party prior to the Union, was probably the first liberation fighter from East and Central Africa to visit China in 1959.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the British called him 'the best known Sinophile' in Tanzania.<sup>10</sup> His ideological affinity and work with the New China News Agency made him a good channel of communication with Beijing.<sup>11</sup>

TANU's commitment to the African liberation struggle was enshrined in its constitution even before independence. After independence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defence was set up in early 1963 to translate policy into action. Tanzania played an important role in the southern African liberation struggle, which placed its borders in the line of fire from the Portuguese colonies of Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa's *cordon sanitaire* (including Southern Rhodesia). When the Organisation for African Unity designated Dar es Salaam the host of the African Liberation Committee in 1963, the Tanganyikan government quickly contributed £30,000 to the Committee's special fund to supply the necessary practical and financial aid to the various African liberation groups.<sup>12</sup> The headquarters of the African Liberation Committee (ALC) had to be as close as possible to the colonial territories, with the stability of the host country and security of the freedom fighters being other important considerations.<sup>13</sup> Tanganyika was already independent in the region and close to Mozambique, which made her a good rear base and training location for the liberation armies. Additionally, the country already housed a number of refugees from Southern Africa. Oscar Kambona, Tanganyikan Foreign Minister, was named the Chairman of the Liberation Committee.<sup>14</sup> Many liberation movements were headquartered in Dar es Salaam, including the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO), South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and South Africa's African National Congress (ANC).

Zambia became independent in October 1964: with the newfound political independence was a larger stake riding on the politically tenuous situation in Southern

Rhodesia. The export of Zambian copper and other minerals was contingent on access to a secure transport route. This issue had already been identified as a priority for the United National Independence Party (UNIP) by Kaunda in the run-up to independence, because of its toll on the new government's financial position.<sup>15</sup> Lobito in Angola and Beira in Mozambique were not ideal ports for access to the international seas because both were under Portuguese jurisdiction. Furthermore, a viable alternative outlet for the copperbelt's lucrative exports under African control would allow Lusaka to throw itself more fully into supporting the liberation struggle. Taken in this light, the proposed rail link became a nationalist symbol that was spearheaded by the leaders of two independent black African countries, a potent symbol of liberation and nationalism.

With the increased pressure on Zambia because of the deteriorating political situation in Southern Rhodesia, the political urgency for the rail link was clear to Nyerere and Kaunda: the pressing issue was to find a committed donor to finance the expensive and ambitious project. Recognising the wherewithal required for such a large undertaking, the leaders first approached the more obvious donors. Nyerere spoke to British officials of promoting development and the positive gains that the rail link would bring to Tanzania's undeveloped southwest region. To cement his stance, Nyerere was adamant that the link would still be necessary for political and development reasons even if the Zambian copperbelt did not exist. Their appeals to a range of possible donors, including the World Bank, the Soviet Union, Britain, the United States and Japan, were unsuccessful.<sup>16</sup>

#### A glorious friendship, like Kilimanjaro and the Himalayas<sup>17</sup>

The Eastern bloc countries came forward to support the liberation groups with supplies, arms and expressions of solidarity when most Western powers had deserted or reneged on their assistance because of pressure from Portugal or South Africa. The Chinese embassy in Dar es Salaam was busy –the British believed it to be 'the centre of Chinese activity in East Africa since the arrival of New China News Agency representative Kao Liang in December 1961'– and had a large workforce of 50 staff and around 90 economic technicians.<sup>18</sup> The city was also the departure point for Africans from the region who were invited to China by various solidarity organisations.<sup>19</sup> Up to a certain

point the Chinese could, based on their own experience with colonialism, commiserate with Tanzania about the importance of national pride, mutual respect for sovereignty and indignation at the patronising attitudes of the Western powers. Military training and materiel support for liberation groups like FRELIMO were also coordinated by the Chinese embassy in Dar.

Tanzania itself had accepted Chinese military support following the Rifles mutiny and the pullout of West German instructors in 1964, a move which led to intense criticism from (mostly) Western governments.<sup>20</sup> Until the end of 1964 though, the Chinese government had only given modest amounts of aid.<sup>21</sup> Having enjoyed a somewhat limited but promising relationship with the Chinese government up till that point, Nyerere decided to visit China in February 1965. Tanzania's first Ambassador to China, Tewa Saidi Tewa, presented his credentials to Vice-Premier Chen Yi on 8 February and met Premier Zhou Enlai the next day.<sup>22</sup> In the run-up to Nyerere's arrival, the *People's Daily* ran an article which quoted selected Tanzanian officials on the significance of the event. National Assembly Speaker Adam Sapi Mkwawa was quoted, 'Nyerere's visit to China is an important matter to us. Tanzania and China are brothers. In the struggle against imperialism, we are in the same camp. China's experience will help to guard against new, old colonialism and imperialism, especially the American's united front.' He believed that Nyerere would be given the warmest welcome in China.<sup>23</sup> Another official was quoted as saying that Chinese economic aid to Tanzania and the recently signed trade agreement in Beijing were 'concrete examples of our friendship and cooperation.' Bibi Titi Mohammed, founding member of TANU and President of the Women's Union, assured that Nyerere would convey the Tanzanian people's warm regard for the Chinese on this visit.

According to Babu's memoirs, Nyerere wanted to build on Zanzibar's close ties and create benefits for the whole country.<sup>24</sup> Babu was named head of the trade delegation that would precede Nyerere's presidential delegation.<sup>25</sup> The outcome of his trip was a trade agreement (separate from the £11 million aid agreement) for £5 million a year for five years. Under this agreement the Tanzanians were to buy whatever they could afford from the Chinese but the Chinese were to buy £5 million worth a year from Tanzania. The Chinese would pay cash for the balance not taken up by purchases from



Tanzania.<sup>26</sup> Due to his personal experience with the Chinese and his ideological affinity for their progressive model of development, Babu seized the initiative and mentioned the difficulties his government faced in trying to secure financing for the rail link. The Chinese officials purportedly said that they would raise the matter to the Politburo for further discussion. According to the official diary of Zhou Enlai, the most significant issues discussed with the Tanzanians were the Chinese government's strive for real equality, fraternity and mutual respect in relations with Afro-Asian countries, as well as the principle that their trade should be founded on equality, mutually beneficial and helpful.<sup>27</sup>

In an interview many years later, Nyerere recalled that in his meeting with Chairman Mao Zedong, President Liu Shaoqi and Premier Zhou Enlai, Liu had inquired what Tanzania needed most at that time. Nyerere was reluctant to mention the rail link at first because he was aware of the extent of poverty in China. But he eventually did and Liu replied, 'If [the railway] is important to you and Zambia, we will build it for you.'<sup>28</sup> Mao replied that China, which had gained independence earlier, was 'duty-bound' to help those which are in the process of being emancipated, and that they would 'build the best railway for you'<sup>29</sup> That offer was made on 18 February for the entire rail route, including the Zambian section, and with it came the Chinese government's assurance that full ownership would be handed over to Tanzania and Zambia upon the project's completion, along with the relevant technology and equipment.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, according to the Communist Party of China (CPC) News, an additional consideration for Zhou was that having a Chinese offer on the table might increase the stakes and possibly spur another country or a consortium of countries to fund the rail link project. Even if China did not end up constructing the rail link, Nyerere and Kaunda would have a trump card in hand.<sup>31</sup> Nyerere's itinerary included visits to Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai and culminated in the signing of a ten year Sino-Tanzanian Treaty of Friendship on 20 February.<sup>32</sup> He was struck by the people's strong work ethic and diligence.<sup>33</sup> In his final speech of the visit, Nyerere emphasised the importance of non-alignment in Tanzanian foreign policy, but also expressed how impressed he was with the way the Chinese Government managed to 'keep the country together' with 'one ideology, one nation'. He also admired the frugality he had observed at all levels of society.<sup>34</sup>

Surprisingly for a project which would have garnered immense publicity and accolade for the Chinese government, no official statements made about the rail link offer following Nyerere's visit. The joint communiqué at the end of Nyerere's visit included some general comments on the advantageous international situation, continued struggle against imperialism, support for the Congolese people's just struggle and importance of the Afro-Asian conference.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, both sides agreed that trade and economic cooperation should conform to the principles of equality and mutual benefit, opposing the interference in internal affairs of other countries, committing to jointly consolidate and develop their friendship. No mention was made of the rail link. In the absence of further primary information on this lack of official announcements, it is likely that a number of conditions had to be met before both parties officially committed to the rail link project: first, the Chinese survey team had to complete their mission, and second, Kaunda had to agree to Chinese sponsorship of the Zambian section as well. After Nyerere's departure, the Chinese government proceeded to ratify a Friendship Treaty between the two countries which did not explicitly mention the railway project.<sup>36</sup>

Not surprisingly, rumours were spreading in diplomatic circles about what exactly had transpired during Nyerere's meetings. British officials observed that Babu, upon his return from China, appeared confident that the rail link would be built. He told a foreign journalist that money was no longer an obstacle and that the political value of the railway as a form of African unity had been emphasised to the sponsors. They had promised to support the project, though he could not reveal their identity.<sup>37</sup> In spite of their doubts about the low levels of Chinese technical capacity and commitment to take on such a project, British and American diplomats increased their warnings of Chinese neo-colonialism and political interference to the Tanzanian Government.

On the first anniversary of the Union Republic, on 26 April, Nyerere made a radio speech to the nation. Amongst other things he highlighted some 'very important lessons' that he had learnt during his state visit to China. In spite of its enormous population, the Chinese government was still able to provide funds and technical personnel to Tanzania to help the government carry out its national development

plan.<sup>38</sup> He attributed this to their frugality and urged Tanzanians to adopt a similar attitude because, 'borrowing money from other countries to carry out what can be done by ourselves is very foolish ... of this danger, we are already aware.'<sup>39</sup> Nyerere's trip left him with an indelible impression. According to Charles Sanga, his personal secretary and a former Ambassador to China, Nyerere believed that the Chinese leaders really wanted to make a change for the people, their country and the world. This change would not just benefit the Chinese, but all countries of the South. The family unit was still very strong and Chinese culture was not affected by their development. He apparently thought that the Chinese had already found their cause and owned it, which was apparently not the case in Russia, which he had also visited. Therefore he was very keen to talk to their leaders.<sup>40</sup> This deep impression was partly responsible for the subsequent boost in Sino-Tanzanian relations. In the months and years to follow, the Tanzanian government would send various ministers and delegations on study tours to China.

Back in 1965, however, the symbolism of Nyerere's trip was not lost on other African nationalists. Chinese and Tanzanian leaders provided moral and material support for the southern African liberation struggle. A statement from South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) President Sam Nujoma said that the warm welcome Nyerere received proved that China and all of Africa was determined in resisting American subversion.<sup>41</sup> The South African Pan-African Congress' (PAC) Central Committee Member Niaosi pointed out that the joint communiqué was a significant milestone and filled with revolutionary spirit. Additionally, the friendship treaty would not only promote the common anti-imperialist struggle of African and Asian people, but also be helpful to Asian, African and world peace.

Yet even though Nyerere had a firm offer from the Chinese government, he decided to keep his options open for other donors. He may have been influenced by Kaunda, who was still rigidly opposed to Chinese involvement in the project and British records mention his dismissal of the Chinese Embassy's overtures in his country.<sup>42</sup> Secondary accounts attribute Kaunda's aversion to tenuous Chinese interference in Zambian internal affairs, such as a trade union official receiving cash from a Chinese diplomat, which led to regulations on the size of all diplomatic missions in Lusaka.<sup>43</sup> Several

communist publications, including the *World Marxist Review* and those by the British communist party, were also banned.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the Zambian Government was more restricted in exploring alternatives because of its 1963 railway agreement with Rhodesia. Even if it disentangled itself from that legal obligation, there would probably be a loss of revenue because of its joint ownership of Rhodesia Railways.<sup>45</sup>

It is also possible that, aside from commiserating with China's economic situation, Nyerere believed that China's entry into East Africa on such a large scale might further entangle Tanzania's already complicated foreign relations situation, subjecting him to greater political pressure from the Western powers and from within his own government. It is possible that he believed a Western donor, with better access to resources and technology, would do a better job. There was no official confirmation of Nyerere's interest in taking the Chinese offer further. On the contrary, he continued discussions with the Zambians and attempted to secure other offers while keeping the Chinese one under wraps.

Nevertheless, at the same time, preparations were being made for Zhou's reciprocal visit to Tanzania. Nyerere met Ambassador He Ying at the Chinese Embassy in Dar es Salaam on 14 May.<sup>46</sup> A week later, another article in the *People's Daily* announced that Zhou would visit Tanzania in June, at Nyerere's invitation.<sup>47</sup> The Chinese Premier was respected as the diplomatic face of New China and a luminary in his own right by many in the developing world, therefore the event received a great deal of attention. Zhou was originally scheduled to visit in January 1964, as part of his great continental tour, but the trip was postponed because of the Zanzibar revolution and Rifles mutiny. This time, in June 1965, Zhou was en route to Algiers for the Afro-Asian Conference.<sup>48</sup> A major part of his agenda was to drum up support for the conference at the end of the month.<sup>49</sup> Zhou arrived in Dar es Salaam on 4 June and was met by the highest level government entourage, which included Nyerere, First Vice-President Abeid Karume and Second Vice-President Rashidi Kawawa. *People's Daily* accounts of Zhou's warm welcome in Tanzania reveal how much protocol was prized. NCNA journalist Gao Liang described how more than 100,000 people lined the streets from the airport to State House, a grand occasion which was truly unprecedented.<sup>50</sup> A memorable image which was also caught on film and televised on Tanzanian national television was of Zhou's

meeting with Nyerere's elderly mother at State House, a symbolic scene of respect which also made for effective propaganda. A similarly warm welcome greeted Zhou in Zanzibar.<sup>51</sup>

The issues that were discussed in the five meetings that Zhou and Nyerere had touched on the challenges facing developing countries, the establishment of the Sino-Tanzanian joint shipping company and the Afro-Asian conference. Zhou insisted that frugality was important and that developing countries should not compare their situation and standard of living with that of developed countries. Additionally, in terms of development planning, a country should not be too centralised and urban areas should be dispersed. Secondly, urban-rural disparity should be minimised by dispersing industries throughout the country. Zhou invited those Tanzanian ministers who had not yet been to China to visit, because 'seeing something once is better than hearing about it a hundred times.'<sup>52</sup> While in Dar es Salaam, the Premier addressed a mass rally in the national stadium and used the rhetoric of the Afro-Asian peoples' shared experience of several centuries of enslavement, oppression and colonisation and how they had 'stood up' and wanted to control their own destinies. He rallied that, 'Africa must belong to the Africans [...] Africa must become an independent, free Africa.'<sup>53</sup> Zhou also took the opportunity to meet with the Chinese personnel and experts working in Tanzania.<sup>54</sup> On 6 June, Zhou informed Nyerere that a comprehensive study group would be despatched in August or September to survey the main rail route. The team would also study other geological aspects along the route, including the coal mine, iron ore deposits, hydrology, etc.<sup>55</sup> However, it is unclear if the team intended to cover the Zambian section as well. At the state banquet in honour of Zhou's visit, Nyerere, perhaps pre-empting his anti-Chinese critics, announced that even though Tanzania's Long March was an economic one, 'Neither our principles, our country, nor our freedom to determine our own future, are for sale.'<sup>56</sup>

The Chinese press quoted an excerpt from *The Nationalist* (the TANU-sponsored daily) to illustrate how Zhou's visit had strengthened Sino-Tanzanian relationship: one based on equality, mutual respect and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as well as the Bandung Ten Principles.<sup>57</sup> The article highlighted Zhou's agenda as the promotion of friendly cooperative relationship between the countries, in order to strengthen Afro-

Asian unity and world peace. Alluding to the revolutionary, anti-imperialist spirit shared by their leaders, it stated that 'Tanzanian and Chinese people are new brothers and also old comrades'.<sup>58</sup> The joint communiqué issued after Zhou's visit emphasised the development of their friendly cooperative relationship in political, economic and cultural aspects since Nyerere's February visit.<sup>59</sup> Nothing was announced about the railway and the Chinese study team's impending visit. However, American intelligence understood that the rail link had been discussed and that Zhou had offered assistance in building 1,000 miles of it, partly with Chinese labour.<sup>60</sup>

### Nyerere's uncertain position

What has not been fully appreciated by scholars of Tanzanian history are Nyerere's insecurity and the role of President Kenneth Kaunda. He and Nyerere enjoyed what was, for the most part, a strong relationship which harked back to their days with the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) in the 1950s.<sup>61</sup> However, that rapport was put under intense strain on the matter of Chinese involvement in the rail link. When Nyerere was in Beijing in February 1965, Kaunda's representative called on Downing Street and claimed that Kaunda was very anxious about Nyerere's position. The Zambian leader wanted to convey his belief that a rescue operation by Britain was needed if Tanzania was not to be 'lost entirely to the Chinese.'<sup>62</sup> Kaunda believed that Nyerere would be very lucky to remain in control much longer, particularly as Babu - 'the ideas man' - was entirely pro-Chinese and was increasingly influencing Kambona, so much so that Nyerere had to 'go along with the hysteria if he was to stay in control.' Nyerere was portrayed as being in a dilemma of whom to receive aid from. He would be removed from office if he did not take a hard anti-American and anti-West German line. On the other hand, it is ironic that the harder he pursued that line, the less aid those countries gave and the more he would have to consider aid from China. Nyerere was not the only one who struggled with the consequences of Chinese support for the rail link. While Babu had facilitated an initial introduction between his government and the Chinese, he was unable to reconcile his brokering the rail link with an increase of his own profile within the Tanzanian government.<sup>63</sup> The radical Left wingers, nearly all Zanzibari, who were incorporated into Nyerere's government were eventually neutralised as a political force.

According to Kaunda's representative, Zambia was giving a certain amount of aid to Tanzania for the exploitation of their coal resources and Kaunda had tried to persuade major business interests to invest there. Nyerere had apparently told Kaunda that he would do his best to avoid committing himself irrevocably to China, though he was under strong pressure, especially in the absence of any alternative source of funding.<sup>64</sup> Kaunda hoped that there could be a private dialogue created between Nyerere and Whitehall, since Nyerere could not appeal for aid openly from Britain or Western governments due to Dar es Salaam's central role in the southern African liberation struggle. However the Commonwealth Relations Office believed that Kaunda's fear was not so much of Nyerere being ousted, but from something closer to home, his own sense of Zambia's isolation.<sup>65</sup> The real possibility of a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) in Rhodesia would render Zambia dependent on communications northwards, through Tanzania. On the other hand, what was perceived as Tanzania's leftward drift would make it increasingly difficult for Kaunda to maintain a moderate and relatively pro-Western government. Kaunda was therefore looking to the British government to launch a joint Tanzania-Zambia development project to create a zone of stability between the two countries. That would also have the additional benefit of allowing Kaunda the means to exert a more effective influence over Nyerere and divert emotional pressure in Tanzania from external political problems to domestic economic ones, where African nationalism would be less of a factor and there would be an atmosphere more conducive to friendly cooperation.

Priding himself in his close relations with the British Government, Kaunda wrote personally to Prime Minister Harold Wilson urging him to do everything possible to support Nyerere, including re-considering financial assistance for the rail link.<sup>66</sup> It was in response to this plea and the hope of improving bilateral relations that the Minister for Overseas Development, Barbara Castle, was dispatched to Tanzania in April. Castle was already personally acquainted with Nyerere and Kaunda through her earlier advocacy work with the Movement for Colonial Freedom. In her meeting with Nyerere, Castle reiterated that because of their own financial difficulties, the British government's offer of £10 million till 1970 was as much as the Treasury would allow. But there was the possibility of a £75,000 contribution towards a joint British-Canadian feasibility study

for the railway. Nyerere did not breathe a word about Zhou's offer during their discussions.<sup>67</sup>

Kaunda had been aware of the rail link discussions between Tanzania and China for a number of months, but only discovered that Nyerere had actually accepted the Chinese study mission while at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting in June. Not surprisingly, he was livid and strongly cautioned Nyerere against accepting the offer, suggesting that the Chinese be asked to build a dam or some other project which would minimise their access to such a dangerous source of influence. Nyerere reassured his critics that Beijing had committed itself to building the railway only if their survey indicated that it was feasible. After all, he would not accept aid which was obviously political and without reservations about feasibility.<sup>68</sup> This did not assuage Kaunda's concerns. Although the two African leaders had a good friendship, on this occasion Kaunda complained that Nyerere took 'too simple and moralistic a view of international relations and was not sufficiently concerned with the presentation of his government's policies.'<sup>69</sup>

Other observers also noted Nyerere's apparently strong pro-Chinese stand at the Commonwealth meeting. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson felt that some of the second and third men in the Tanzanian delegation were 'directly in the Chinese pay.'<sup>70</sup> He viewed Nyerere as being very weak and unable to stop his own delegates from saying 'odd things'. Nyerere initially had objections to Wilson's plan for a peace mission to Vietnam, but later requested to be a part of it, a move which Wilson did not appreciate.<sup>71</sup> Drawing from the events at the Conference, Wilson felt that Nyerere had 'sold himself out to the Chinese' and was also too weak to stand up to the Zanzibaris. He guessed that it would not be long before Nyerere was ousted by 'some less desirable person.'<sup>72</sup> Castle noted in her official diary that 'Julius was either afraid of his own extremists or was not being honest about his own ideologies.'<sup>73</sup>

The Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson asked Nyerere privately if it was a mistake to get so close to the Chinese, to which the latter responded with 'an incredible story' which, in spite of its seemingly tangential content at first glance, was an allusion to the circumstantial factors that made Tanzania appear more pro-Beijing.<sup>74</sup> Nyerere explained



that the Tanzanian Ambassador to the United States, Othman Shariff, was recalled from Washington D. C. in February after a diplomatic disagreement between their governments. In early June, Nyerere had wanted to smoothen relations and get closer to the Americans, so he issued a directive for Shariff to return to his post, but the diplomat could not be found.<sup>75</sup> It later surfaced that Shariff was imprisoned Zanzibar because he was of the wrong political persuasion. He had originally been sent to the United States after the Union in an attempt to keep him out of the way of domestic politics, and upon his return, was incarcerated by the Zanzibari authorities. Nyerere said that the Zanzibaris only agreed to his release after he negotiated with them 'for two days and two nights' and on condition that Shariff was not returned to Washington. Consequently, Nyerere would need some time to find another candidate to fill the post. Through telling this episode, Nyerere hoped to illustrate some of the challenges facing his government and that its foreign policy should not be analysed on a piecemeal basis, but rather on its overall intention and general direction. Nyerere felt that the 'process of gradualism' that he adopted in managing Zanzibar was taking effect, albeit slowly, though this episode reveals the rather higher level of autonomy that the Zanzibari authorities believed they had.<sup>76</sup>

In trying to explain his behaviour at the Commonwealth meeting, Nyerere admitted privately to the British that his reactions were based on his own understanding of what would be an acceptable approach to the Chinese. After all, the Tanzanian government enjoyed a good relationship with Beijing and there were reciprocal top-level visits in the first half of the year. Nyerere expressed some exasperation at his own naïve response to the situation, but ultimately he was not so much pro-Chinese as much as attempting to stick to what he saw as a principled position of non-alignment.<sup>77</sup> He was relatively even-handed in his criticisms of other aspects of Chinese foreign policy. Indeed, after Beijing's speedy recognition of the coup government that ousted Algerian President Ben Bella on 19 June, Nyerere responded to the Chinese government's endorsement of Boumedienne and their insistence for the second Afro-Asian conference in Algiers to proceed, that 'it was a betrayal, and disgusting [...] Ben Bella was my friend.'<sup>78</sup> At that point, Nyerere complained bitterly to Kaunda that the Chinese, 'like everyone else outside, did not understand Africa.'<sup>79</sup> Thereafter he strongly supported the Commonwealth Afro-Asian prime ministers' proposal to postpone the Afro-Asian

conference, a big setback and loss of face for the Chinese who had canvassed so hard for it.<sup>80</sup>

### Mixed reactions to the Chinese rail link offer

*The Guardian* newspaper reported on 1 July that the Chinese Government had made a firm offer of tied aid to the Governments of Tanzania and Zambia, worth £75 million and £150 million to enable them to build the railway line.<sup>81</sup> The article also stated that Beijing was increasing its pressure on Nyerere especially since Kaunda had spurned the direct offer from the Chinese Embassy in Lusaka. The very next day though, another paper reported that there was still no firm Chinese offer.<sup>82</sup> A telegram from the High Commission in Lusaka to the Commonwealth Relations Office on 3 July broke the news that the local press and radio carried reports of the Chinese government's offer of a free survey of the Tanzanian section of the rail link, and construction of that section on terms to be negotiated after the survey.<sup>83</sup> Press reports and interviews with Nyerere about the railway were confusing because he vacillated between confidence that it would be built and uncertainty about the Chinese offer. On the same day Nyerere was quoted as having said that the project would go ahead, 'whether his country got the money from East or West' he appeared to have a change of heart a week later, when he postponed his decision on the Chinese offer.<sup>84</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) speculated that the Tanzanian government's appeal might have been made as early as July 1964, during Second Vice-President Rashidi Kawawa's visit to Beijing.<sup>85</sup> Kaunda believed that it was Kambona, the Tanzanian Foreign Minister, who had put forward the request during Nyerere's February visit because Kambona was jockeying for power within TANU.<sup>86</sup> Makame, the Minister of Communications and Works, was also suspect. Although a lot of the speculation was off the mark, it reflected the rumbles of disunity within the Tanzanian government.

In fact, Kambona, formerly the TANU Secretary General, was touted by the British as Nyerere's possible rival from much earlier on.<sup>87</sup> British files describe him as an ambitious and dynamic nationalist who had close contact with Left wing organisations during his student days in the UK, as well as extensive contacts with the Eastern bloc, to where he had travelled as well.<sup>88</sup> After the Rifles mutiny, which the British felt Kambona had

something to do with (although they had no prove this claim), they estimated that it would just be a matter of time before he would attempt to seize power from more moderate elements in the government. In search of the truth about China and the rail link and whether Nyerere or Kambona was in charge, a British newsman visited Tanzania and conducted a series of interviews. His conclusion was that Nyerere was 'definitely in control' and that he, rather than Kambona, was 'by far the abler personality.'<sup>89</sup>

Key Tanzanian leaders were divided on the possible framework for collaboration vis a vis the rail link. First Vice-President Karume favoured a joint exercise with Zambia, with the Zambians footing a higher proportion of the cost. Kambona, as Foreign Minister, favoured each country building its half, with China constructing the Tanzanian half. However, Nyerere felt that neither option would be agreeable to Kaunda. Without further substantiation from Tanzanian primary sources, it can be inferred that these disagreements within the Tanzanian government drove Nyerere's hesitation in raising the Chinese offer to his Cabinet. In line with the British assessment, the outcome of the national elections in September could have been decisive to Nyerere's strategy.<sup>90</sup>

Nyerere wanted to keep his options open and, if at all possible, find a donor more to Kaunda's liking while using the Chinese offer as a bargaining chip. On his visit to London, he had managed to elicit an offer for a survey from Britain, through revealing his Chinese approach.<sup>91</sup> Cudlipp, who interviewed Nyerere, observed that the President felt he had successfully played off East against West and obtained an initial Western commitment. More interestingly, from what Nyerere had said, Cudlipp inferred that he would prefer to have the railway built by the West rather than the East because the former would do a better job. Nyerere approached the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam on 22 July, to have the British-Canadian offer for a feasibility study conducted as soon as possible.<sup>92</sup> Almost as soon as that request was made though, the press reported that preparations for that survey were halted until September at the earliest, a delay attributed to Chinese pressure on Tanzania.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, the Tanzanian government appeared to be stalling for time because it had not approved the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Ministerial Committee with Zambia that would be tasked to oversee the proposed project's terms of reference and financing.<sup>94</sup> Nyerere

was convincing: The British felt that he genuinely believed Tanzania's major problem to be economic and that the people wanted to see the interstate rail link in action, as the fulfilment of a promise of improvement made before independence.<sup>95</sup> Nyerere had concerns about Chinese sponsorship: in a private meeting with the British High Commissioner to Kenya, Malcolm MacDonald, he intimated that Zhou had gone much too far with his criticisms of America and the West in his speeches and had 'brought the cold war to Tanzania.'<sup>96</sup> Nyerere also shared specific worries about the influx of Chinese labour if Beijing were to undertake the project, citing the textile mill and state rice farm projects which were experiencing problems with Chinese labour.<sup>97</sup> Although Nyerere did not specify what the problems were in these cases, the prevailing notion was of the disproportionately high number of Chinese workers brought in and their difficulty in assimilating with local workers.

Prior to Chinese interest in the TanZam rail link, Washington saw East and Southern Africa as being primarily a British responsibility. The State Department's African Affairs Bureau faced an uphill battle in raising their portfolio's profile within the Oval Office. Their suggestions for the United States to remain engaged in the region were rejected, showing them their place -and Africa's secondary importance- in President Lyndon Johnson's priorities.<sup>98</sup> The American administration was more focused on developments in Vietnam than out-bidding the Chinese for an expensive African infrastructure project. A disgruntled Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Wayne Fredericks, was himself sceptical of the built-in bias both in the State Department and USAID against the railway in favour of a road improvement. As a former engineer himself, he doubted whether 'the figures were being cooked' so as to make the road much cheaper and the railway much more expensive. When Zhou's trip to Tanzania in June was imminent, and fears arose that he would make a formal offer, the Bureau finally obtained approval to propose a packaged road transport deal, complete with vehicles, to the Tanzanian and Zambian governments.<sup>99</sup> Fredericks offered Nyerere a road survey as supplement to the British and Chinese rail surveys. Nyerere seemed genuinely interested because of the road's short construction time. That was an essential consideration in the event of Rhodesian UDI and also for the potential of linking the railway by road with Mtwara, in southern Tanzania.<sup>100</sup> The American project later materialised in the early 1970s as the Tanzania-Zambia highway that replaced the perilous 'hell run.'<sup>101</sup>

The British Government would only offer a railway survey without any commitment to construct the rail link. The balance of payments crisis, aid debates in parliament and the situation in Southern Rhodesia absorbed Whitehall's attention. The strategy taken vis a vis the rail link was the management of the leaders' expectations. The British also referred to the use of delaying tactics in the hope that the demands would eventually run out of steam and help Kaunda hold the situation without implying any commitment. Their concern was to minimise political repercussions in the region which would further complicate Britain's interests there. The British feared that left-wing elements in Zambia might have grounds to exert pressure on Kaunda to demonstrate comparable support for Zambia from the West if Nyerere accepted the Chinese offer.<sup>102</sup> A spill-over of destabilising Chinese influences from Tanzania into Zambia would weaken Kaunda's ability to restrain foreign influences in the trade unions and endanger the substantial British investment in Zambian copper supplies.<sup>103</sup> Kaunda wrote another imploring letter to Wilson, stating their acceptance of the British-Canadian joint survey, on condition that it came with a survey grant for the entire route. He emphasised to Wilson that things had come very far in order for Nyerere to have accepted that survey.<sup>104</sup>

The negative reactions of many countries to Nyerere's independent policymaking annoyed him. He bristled that the drama over Tanzania's growing relations with China was 'sometimes funny, sometimes irritating, and always odd', emphasising that non-alignment was a central pillar of his Government's policy and that 'the West' should recognise the urgency of the African freedom struggle.<sup>105</sup> Instead, representatives of Western powers persisted in questioning him with the objective of showing their disapproval at the Chinese offer, whilst offering no alternative.<sup>106</sup> The implication was that Nyerere and Kaunda would be 'committing a crime' if they accepted money from the Communist world to build the link. Nyerere said that the Chinese and Russian Governments, on the contrary, did not tell him to reject Western funding because 'they would not dare say so.'<sup>107</sup> He continued,

*If I had Tanzanian money I would use that. Unfortunately money has taken up a position. There is Red money and there is Blue money – all the money in this*

*world is either Red or Blue. I do not have my own Green money, so where can I get some from? I am not taking a cold war position. All I want is money to build it. I do not want another survey without an implied commitment to build the railway.*<sup>108</sup>

### The window of opportunity narrows

In spite of the Chinese government having communicated its intention to send a study team during Zhou's June visit, the group's arrival in August kicked off what has been described as 'the preliminary acts in an unfolding drama.'<sup>109</sup> British records show that twelve Chinese railway experts arrived in Dar es Salaam on 20 August and a further five two days later.<sup>110</sup> The Minister of Finance, Paul Bomani, communicated to the High Commission that he and most of his colleagues at the Treasury had known absolutely nothing about the arrivals. In that account of events, Nyerere was apparently so livid that he refused the team's courtesy call and that urgent meetings had to be held by distressed ministers to decide on how this embarrassing matter should be handled.<sup>111</sup> The last minute arrangements for the team seemed to indicate that the Chinese had come without a specific invitation from the Tanzanian government. In one account from the District Traffic Superintendent (a British expatriate) to the High Commission, Minister Sheikh Makame had instructed his Principal Secretary to write to the Chinese to ask them to come. The Secretary refused because no government decision had been made at that point, though the British thought it likely that Makame might have gone ahead to contact the Chinese anyway.<sup>112</sup>

A British road engineer described the Chinese team as a fact gathering mission rather than an actual survey party because their plans appeared quite general and they had only three to four weeks of fieldwork to complete before departing in early November.<sup>113</sup> Going on the available information, this assessment is true. It was a comprehensive study group which would do a general overview of the project. The actual survey team, which carried out a detailed plotting of the route, only came in 1968.<sup>114</sup> This corroborates with the Tanzanian government's stand that the group was not preparing a survey report: rather, they had come to gather information for their own purposes in order to have a basis to evaluate the project should there be a request

at a later stage. Nyerere was fully aware of the visit, having referred to the Chinese team's impending trip to the British on a number of occasions.<sup>115</sup> So why was there so much confusion? Once again the primary sources fall short of providing a clear picture, but a plausible reason was the divisive effects of foreign aid: the lack of consensus within the Tanzanian government about the Chinese offer at the higher level led to poor coordination between ministries. It is possible that there was inadequate communication about the Chinese study team's objectives, which led to a 'general vagueness' about their activities.<sup>116</sup> The *People's Daily*, usually quick to report on Chinese projects overseas, did not mention anything about the team. At the same time (20-21 August), a Zambian government delegation was in Beijing for a high level visit though, from Zhou's official diary, there is no evidence to suggest that the rail link was brought up.<sup>117</sup>

By September, when there was still no counter-offer made by other governments which went beyond a feasibility study, Nyerere vented that 'there [was] more talk about the railway, more political hot air, more cold war rubbish than actual development'.<sup>118</sup> He finally confirmed on 22 September that China had offered to finance the Tanzanian section of the rail link.<sup>119</sup> Kaunda responded by playing down the Chinese offer: he thanked the British and Canadian governments for their offer to finance the preliminary survey and that he remained confident that all governments contacted by the Inter-Governmental Ministerial Committee would participate at some stage in building it.<sup>120</sup> He added that as China was one of the governments, their reply might have been the first to be received, which explained Nyerere's announcement. Fortunately for Nyerere, although his supporters and moderates were relatively under-represented in TANU's Central Committee, he continued to enjoy the broad support of the masses – he was by then regarded as '*Baba ya Taifa*' (father of the nation) and '*Mwalimu*' (teacher). His re-election as President on 30 September showed that he had, to a reasonable extent, consolidated his power and buttressed his position through the nationwide referendum.

Pending Kaunda's acceptance of their offer, the Chinese government maintained their commitment to sponsoring the rail link, though it became increasingly awkward to be the trump card. At the Chinese National Day reception on 2 October the Secretary of the Commercial Representative of the Chinese Embassy, Li Feng, said to his British

counterparts that his government had not made a decision on the rail link. He appeared 'obviously embarrassed' and denied any firm commitment.<sup>121</sup> At the same time, an insider from State House claimed that Nyerere had not received a confirmation from the Chinese but expected it in three to four months' time. He allegedly hoped to have some offer from the West by then, lest he be under pressure to accept the Chinese offer. The Chinese Ambassador himself gave a non-committal reply. He said that the Chinese Government was willing to build the railway if they were asked to do it, stressing to his British counterparts that 'we are not a rich country like you.'<sup>122</sup> In the absence of the Chinese version of events, we can only infer that they were awaiting the findings of their technical survey before making a formal commitment.

However, Kaunda remained unconvinced. It was only Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of Rhodesian independence on 11 November that was Zambia's main 'catalyst for disengagement' which prompted Kaunda to consider the Chinese option. Going against the criticisms of nearly all of the feasibility studies of the proposed rail route, the three governments recognised that this was, above all, a project of political necessity.<sup>123</sup> It was from that point that most Chinese and African accounts of the railway as a symbol of friendship begin, with few accounts mentioning the rocky months that followed Liu's offer to Nyerere in February 1965.

Rail link discussions and political pressures aside, 1965 was a busy year for Sino-Tanzanian relations, with numerous delegations visiting China. In his June meeting with Nyerere, Zhou had said that Tanzanian ministers who had not visited China yet should make the trip, because 'seeing something once is better than hearing about it a hundred times.'<sup>124</sup> More often than not they received the highest attention from Chinese officials. The Chinese Communist Party policy at the time still did not allow for official relations with non-Communist parties, but visits by TANU party officials were facilitated through a broad range of solidarity organisations. Among the visitors to China were a TANU Youth League delegation in June, which met with Vice-Premier Chen Yi and their Chinese counterparts. The following month, the Tanzanian Women's Union, led by Mrs. Karume, was hosted by the All China Women's Union. They also met with Mao, Liu and his wife.<sup>125</sup> The Tanzanian Assistant Attorney-General, Mark Bomani visited in September, at the invitation of the China Political Law Association.<sup>126</sup> In



November, a Tanzania Zanzibar agriculture inspection group was in China and their delegation leader was received by Vice-Premier Tan Zhenlin.<sup>127</sup> The final high-level visit of the year was by Second Vice-President Kawawa, who visited China from 22 to 23 November. He arrived in Beijing with an entourage of fourteen officials, including the Minister of Economic Affairs and Development Planning, Paul Bomani.<sup>128</sup> The People's Daily reported a rousing welcome from workers, the People's Liberation Army and students who were waving colourful flags for the distinguished guests. Zhou took the opportunity to send his thanks to the Tanzanian representatives at the UN for their support in the effort to restore Beijing's lawful right represent China in the international body.<sup>129</sup>

From Liu's offer in February 1965 till the preliminary tripartite accord was signed two years later, only principles were discussed. That did not discount the importance of economic viability, just that the political imperative was of greater priority. The project's actual modalities were only agreed on in 1967 and culminated in a formal tripartite agreement signed in June 1970. Upon its completion in 1975 the railway became 'an international poster-child for East-South cooperation', though it was most notable to the African Governments as an iconic African nationalist project.<sup>130</sup> The bargaining, uncertainty and confusion which plagued the rail link proposal in 1965 eventually paled against the high, often grandiose, expectations for its completion, symbolism and how it was –and still is– remembered.

## Conclusion

1965 was a milestone for Sino-Tanzanian relations. At a bilateral level, their growing relationship was marked by joint agreements and through reciprocal visits of their leaders. Beijing's offer to sponsor the TanZam rail link was a show of solidarity and support for that great African nationalist project. Even more than that, it injected momentum into Nyerere and Kaunda's search for a donor, whilst at the same time provoking international attention. Nyerere's request to the Chinese was made against a background of local political contestation within his own government, which clouded the decision-making process as well as discussions with its Zambian and Chinese counterparts. Nyerere did not accept the Chinese offer right from the start. As this

article has shown, much as he appreciated what he saw during his visit to China, he kept his options open and held out for another donor while using the Chinese offer as a bargaining chip. Kaunda's reluctance to engage the Chinese lasted till Rhodesia's UDI in November. The limitation of primary sources from the Chinese side means that conclusions about their government's motivations and precise sentiments about the rail link project are not entirely clear. However, anecdotal accounts suggest that they were waiting for the survey results and more importantly, for Kaunda to accept their offer for the Zambian section. In the absence of further primary information from Beijing, while it may have been that the Chinese government saw its proposal as a way to up the ante and provoke other donors into coming forward for Tanzania and Zambia, there is as yet no firm evidence of this. But what is certain is that, from the Tanzanian perspective, Nyerere's approach was effective –the rail link was constructed– and even yielded another major infrastructural artery, the Tanzania-Zambia highway, as a bi-result of the negotiations with the Americans.

To Nyerere, non-alignment was a principle as well as a coping strategy. Even though the Tanzanian government recognised the dangers of political interference in accepting large scale aid from China, it was also aware of the danger that the West might withhold much-needed funds. Nyerere's manoeuvres into that situation were by circumstance and not design, and he had to mitigate the constraints. Bilateral aid flows were, after all, politically motivated and often altered at the whim of capricious donors. With this limited room for manoeuvre, for as long as Nyerere's own hold on leadership was clear, donors would continue working with him. The pressures and needs for domestic development finally pushed him to a decision. In summary, the episode of China's support for the TanZam railway in 1965 delineated the constraints and boundaries of Tanzania's political freedom.

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<sup>1</sup> The Tanzanians referred to the railway as the 'uhuru' (Swahili for freedom) railway, whilst the Chinese preferred the 'friendship' railway. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the IDEAS-Cold War Studies Graduate Seminar at the London School of Economics and Political Science on 23 January 2008. I would like to thank the seminar participants for their valuable comments and input. Parts of this paper will appear in a forthcoming publication on China and Africa by Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania, USA.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Pius Msekwa, 6 December 2006, Law Reform Office, Dar es Salaam.

<sup>3</sup> The army mutiny was one obvious example of expectations running ahead of realities in what Macola called the 'next phase of the struggle' in his study on Zambia's UNIP. Macola, Giacomo. 'It means as if we are excluded from the good freedom': Thwarted expectations of independence in the Luapula Province of Zambia, 1964-1966, in *Journal of African History*, Vol. 47, Issue 1, 2006, pp. 43-56.

<sup>4</sup> Tanzanian National Archives [henceforth TNA], Habari, Acc. 593, B/1269/63. Financial Assistance to Other Countries, document 7, 2/8/63, *Tanganyika aids Skopje disaster fund*. TNA. *Italy thanks Tanganyika*; Habari, Acc. 593, F1/5/6. Financial Assistance to Other Countries, document 11, 21/10/63, *Tanganyika's aid for Italian disaster relief*; Habari, Acc. 593, B/1752/63. Financial Assistance to Other Countries, document 8, 12/10/63, *Tanganyika's aid for hurricane relief work*; Habari, Acc. 593, B1756/63, Financial Assistance to Other Countries, document 9, 14/10/63.

<sup>5</sup> TNA, Habari, Acc. 593, B/1152/63. Financial Assistance to Other Countries. Document 6A, 17/7/63, *Tanganyika buys UN bonds*.

<sup>6</sup> This was spelled out in Kambona's discussion with the State Department's Africa expert Wayne Fredericks during the latter's visit to Tanzania in end-July. PRO, DO185/4, British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, to CRO, 30 July 1965.

<sup>7</sup> Hugh Cudlipp was Chairman of the *Daily Mirror*. Nyerere intimated to Cudlipp that Karume himself felt that he would be safer under the Union's umbrella. PRO, DO185/4, Hugh Cudlipp on Nyerere, Kambona, the Chinese and the Railway, 4 August 1965.

<sup>8</sup> PRO, DO185/56, ZAN.012/18/1. Crosthwait to Sandys, 22 July 1964, pp. 7, DO185/59, A Note on the Zanzibar Revolution; PRO, DO185/69, 50f., 6 September 1972; Chase, H. The Zanzibar Treason Trial. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 6, May-August 1976, pp. 17-18.

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, A. Abdul Rahman Mohamed Babu: Politician, Scholar and Revolutionary, *Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 9, 2007, pp. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Public Records Office, Kew, United Kingdom [henceforth PRO], DO214/116, *Visit to China of Vice-President Kawawa of Tanganyika and Zanzibar*, June 10-19, FC1063/17.

<sup>11</sup> He was the East Africa correspondent for the New China News Agency and headed the Chinese-sponsored bulletin Zanews from around 1962 to 1963.

<sup>12</sup> This decision followed a resolution passed at the OAU's Addis Ababa summit of Heads of African governments to establish an African liberation committee in the (former) Tanzanian capital. Sebastian Chale, the Tanganyikan delegate to the UN in New York was seconded to establish the Secretariat and it opened at Ingles House, Dar es Salaam. TNA, Habari, Acc. 593, B/963/63. Financial Assistance to Other Countries. Document 3, 12/6/63, press release, Tanganyika Information Services.

<sup>13</sup> African Liberation Notes: The role played by Tanzania in the African Liberation Struggle, Hashim Mbita Centre, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Mazrui, Ali. A. Anti-Militarism and Political Militancy in Tanzania, in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 12, No. 3, September 1968, p. 277.

<sup>15</sup> Bailey, Martin. *Freedom Railway: China and the Tanzania-Zambia Link*, Collings, London, 1976, p. 15.

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<sup>16</sup> Until 1965, all the surveys concluded that the project would be economically unviable. The Maxwell Stamp report, completed in 1966 after Rhodesian unilateral declaration of independence (UDI), was the only one which concluded that there could be economic feasibility. Mutukwa, Kasuka, S. *Politics of the Tanzania-Zambia Railproject: A study of Tanzania-China-Zambia relations*, University Press of America, 1977.

<sup>17</sup> The People's Daily article said of Sino-Tanzanian relations, 'Like the snowy peaks of Kilimanjaro and the Himalayas, our peoples' friendship shine with an even brighter radiance.' RMRB, 中国和坦桑尼亚友好合作的新阶段, 25 February 1965.

<sup>18</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC, USA [henceforth NARA], Central Intelligence Agency [henceforth CIA], Directorate of Intelligence, Memorandum: Chinese Communist Activities in Africa, OCI No. 1211/65, 30 April 1965, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Twesigye, Christopher B. *Tanzania-Zambia Relations 1964-1979: A Case Study in Inter-African Cooperation*, PhD Thesis, London School of Economics, University of London, 1980, p. 206.

<sup>21</sup> In May 1964, a Chinese loan of £5 million was announced and the following month an agreement on economic and technical cooperation was signed with a loan of US\$28 million. These figures exclude the military aid which was given, but that was not on a large scale.

<sup>22</sup> Renminribao (People's Daily, 人民日报) [henceforth RMRB], 坦桑尼亚总理10 February 1965. Saidi Tewa arrived in Beijing on 6 February 1965, RMRB, 坦桑尼亚首任驻中国大使到京, 7 February 1965.

<sup>23</sup> RMRB, 坦桑尼亚议长等雷总统访华发表谈话, 17 February 1965.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, Amrit. *US Foreign Policy and Revolution: The Creation of Tanzania*, Pluto Press, London, 1989, p. 109.

<sup>25</sup> RMRB, 尼雷尔总统10 February 1965; PD, 由尼雷尔总统访华先遣组负责人巴布部长率领, 8 February 1965.

<sup>26</sup> LSE Archives [henceforth LSE], Hetherington/9/14, Note of a meeting with President Nyerere at State House, Dar es Salaam, 13 March 1965.

<sup>27</sup> Zhou Enlai nianpu (周恩来年谱, 1949-1976, 中共中央文献出版社1997, p. 707-708.

<sup>28</sup> Zhou had said (to the Chinese representative) that if someone else wanted to construct the railway, that was fine because China had limited resources. But if not, then China would see the project through. Nyerere spoke about this in a recorded interview which was featured in China Central Television's documentary on the railroad. Video footage viewed at Television ya Taifa (TVT), National Film Library and Archive, Dar es Salaam, 17 April 2007. *Stories of China and Africa – Tanzania-Zambia Railway*, 央视 CCTV documentary.

<sup>29</sup> The article quotes an interview with Jin Hui, a former Vice-Director of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway construction team. 'Railway Symbolizes Sino-African Friendship', 'Railway Symbolizes Sino-African Friendship', Xinhua News Agency, 23 June 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/wenjiabaoafrica/172496.htm> [accessed on 23 April 2009].

<sup>30</sup> Zhou Enlai nianpu (周恩来年谱, 1949-1976, 中共中央文献出版社1997, p. 709.

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<sup>31</sup> Hu, Changming. 和胡常明 <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/146570/147953/8899833.html> (Communist Party of China News, <http://cpc.people.com.cn>), 3 March 2009 [accessed on 28 April 2009].

<sup>32</sup> RMRB, 中国改革报, 21 February 1965.

<sup>33</sup> Nyerere said of his first visit: 'The thing which impressed me most of all when I was in China in 1965 – and the thing which impresses Tanzanians about the Chinese workers who are now in our country– is their hard work.' Nyerere, Julius K. *The Supremacy of the People*, in Nyerere, Julius K.: *Freedom and Development/Uhuru na Maendaleo*. Oxford University Press, Dar es Salaam, 1973, p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> Nyerere, Julius. K. State visit to the People's Republic of China, 26 February 1965, in: *ibid.* p. 323 and p. 333.

<sup>35</sup> RMRB, 中华人民共和国联合国联合公报, 24 February 1965.

<sup>36</sup> These policies paved the way for the implementation of specific aid projects under the Treaty. The State Council plenary session's 154<sup>th</sup> conference on 27 March proposed to establish the State Capital Construction Commission and to divide the China Construction Engineering Department into the construction engineering department and building material ministry of industry, for higher level consideration. RMRB, 中国改革报, 28 March 1965. The Third Standing Committee of the National People's Congress held its fifth conference on 31 March and authorised the Treaty. RMRB, 人大常委会举行第五次会议, 1 April 1965.

<sup>37</sup> LSE, Hetherington/9/14, Note of a meeting with President Nyerere at State House, Dar es Salaam, 13 March 1965.

<sup>38</sup> RMRB, 庆祝坦桑尼亚联合共和国成立一周年, 28 April 1965.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Ambassador Charles A. Sanga, 7 December 2006, State House, Dar es Salaam. Sanga was private secretary to Nyerere from 1992 and spent a total of nine years in China, first as a junior embassy officer (1985-88) then as Ambassador (2000-2006).

<sup>41</sup> Nujoma's mention of 'American subversion' refers to the foiled plot which two American diplomats were charged for, under questionable evidence. RMRB, 非洲论坛, 1 March 1965.

<sup>42</sup> PRO, DO185/4, Zambia: Visit of the Minister of Overseas Development, 3 June 1965. The Zambian Government also hoped to promote an economic association of East and Central African states that would reduce communist infiltration, especially in Tanzania. PRO, CAB148/21, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations: Tanzania/Zambia Rail Link, 14 June 1965.

<sup>43</sup> Bailey, Martin. *Freedom Railway: China and the Tanzania-Zambia Link*, Collings, London, 1976, p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> Twesigne, cited in Hall, R. and Peyman, H. *The great Uhuru Railway: China's showpiece in Africa*, Victor Gollanz Ltd., London, 1977, p. 45.

<sup>45</sup> Segal, Aaron. The Tanganyika-Zambia Railway Project, in *Africa Report*, 9:10, November 1964, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> RMRB, 坦桑尼亚总统接见, 15 May 1965.

<sup>47</sup> RMRB, 应尼雷尔总统邀请, 22 May 1965.

<sup>48</sup> According to British records, Zhou was not invited to stop-over by the other East African countries. Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta did not allow Zhou's plane to make a one-hour refuelling stop in

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Nairobi. Kenyatta's response to the request was apparently, "The answer is no, with capital letters." PRO, DO213/224, From Nairobi to Commonwealth Relations Office, No. 1064, 8 June 1965.

<sup>49</sup> By this time, the preparatory meetings for the conference were beleaguered by politicking between the major countries, as well as Sino-Soviet tensions. Mackie covers this in more detail. Mackie, Jamie.

Bandung 1955: Non-Alignment and Afro-Asian Solidarity. Editions Didier Millet, Singapore, 2005.

<sup>50</sup> RMRB, 周恩来总理赴坦尼亚 8 June 1965. Gao later authored a monograph on Tanzania, one of the first Chinese books on Africa written from firsthand experience.

<sup>51</sup> Premier Zhou Enlai's visit to Tanzania, 1965, in Kiswahili, Tanzania Film Unit. Video footage viewed at Television ya Taifa (TVT), National Film Library and Archive, Dar es Salaam, [viewed on 17 April 2007].

<sup>52</sup> Zhou Enlai nianpu (周恩来 1949-1976, 中央文献出版社 1997, pp. 735-736.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> RMRB, 周恩来总理赴坦尼亚 8 June 1965.

<sup>55</sup> Zhou Enlai nianpu (周恩来 1949-1976, 中央文献出版社 1997, pp. 735-736.

<sup>56</sup> Nyerere, Julius K. *Nyerere: Freedom and Socialism*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 33.

<sup>57</sup> RMRB, 坦桑尼亚舆论欢呼周总理访问成功, 11 June 1965.

<sup>58</sup> RMRB, 中国开始建交 10 June 1965.

<sup>59</sup> RMRB, 两国关系进一步发展 9 June 1965.

<sup>60</sup> PRO, CAB148/18, Minutes of a meeting held at 10 Downing Street on 16 June 1965.

<sup>61</sup> PRO, DO185/4, Note of a meeting between the Minister of State and Wayne Fredericks at the CRO, 30 June 1965.

<sup>62</sup> Dennis Grennan was returning to Zambia to be Kaunda's personal advisor. PRO, CAB148/46, Copy of a letter from Mr. J. O. Wright, Prime Minister's Office, to Mr. C. Adams, CRO, 25 February 1965. This letter was later circulated to the Cabinet Defence and Oversea Policy Committee Sub-Committee on Africa, PRO, CAB148/46, Aid to Tanzania: Note by the Secretaries, 9 March 1965.

<sup>63</sup> Aside from obvious ideological differences with Nyerere and TANU, Babu's memoirs highlight the impossibility of independent decision-making within the Tanzanian Government because expatriate staff dominated the key ministries. He was later removed from active political participation in 1972 because of events in Zanzibar. Babu disagreed with Nyerere's brand of socialism and was incarcerated in 1972 by other Revolutionary Council members, allegedly for Karume's murder, which removed him from active participation in Tanzanian politics. Othman, H. (ed). *I saw the future and it works: Essays celebrating the life of Comrade Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, 1924-1996*, E&D, Ltd., Dar es Salaam, 2001, p. 18.

<sup>64</sup> PRO, CAB148/46, Copy of a letter from Mr. J. O. Wright, Prime Minister's Office, to Mr. C. Adams, CRO, 25 February 1965. This letter was later circulated to the Cabinet Defence and Oversea Policy Committee Sub-Committee on Africa, PRO, CAB148/46, Aid to Tanzania: Note by the Secretaries, 9 March 1965.

<sup>65</sup> PRO, CAB148/46, Defence and Oversea Policy (Official) Committee, Sub-Committee on Africa, Tanzania/Zambia Relations, 12 March 1965.

<sup>66</sup> Castle, Barbara. *The Castle Diaries 1964-1970*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, p. 18.

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30. Nyerere explained later that he did not want to be seen as blackmailing the British into making a counter-offer. Ironically, he was seen by the British as the one trying to blackmail them to secure the rail link, in contrast to Kaunda who had 'played the game straight'. PRO, DO185/4, Meeting with Zambian Ministers on 29 April 1965.

<sup>68</sup> This was revealed by Gordon Goundrey, a Canadian economic advisor to Kaunda. The offer was made during Barbara Castle's trip to Tanzania in April. PRO, DO183/730, Note on a discussion with President Nyerere and Mr. Goundrey, 24 June 1965.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> LSE, Hetherington/10/16, Note of a meeting with the Prime Minister on June 28, 1965.

<sup>71</sup> Castle, Barbara. *The Castle Diaries 1964-1970*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, pp. 43; Wilson, H. *The Labour Government 1964-1970: A Personal Record*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson and Michael Joseph, p. 116.

<sup>72</sup> LSE, Hetherington/10/16, Note of a meeting with the Prime Minister on June 28, 1965.

<sup>73</sup> Castle, Barbara. *The Castle Diaries 1964-1970*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, p. 44.

<sup>74</sup> LSE, Hetherington/10/16, Note of a meeting with the Prime Minister on June 28, 1965.

<sup>75</sup> Shariff had been recalled in February after a diplomatic scuffle between the Tanzanian and American governments.

<sup>76</sup> PRO, DO185/4, Hugh Cudlipp on Nyerere, Kambona, the Chinese and the Railway, 4 August 1965.

<sup>77</sup> PRO, PREM13/611, Tanzania and the Chinese, 8 July 1965.

<sup>78</sup> LSE, Hetherington/10/16, Note of a meeting with the Prime Minister on June 28, 1965.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> PRO, DO185/4, Letter from Foreign Office to the CRO, 1 July 1965.

<sup>81</sup> PRO, DO185/4, Telegram from CRO to British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, 2 July 1965; *The Guardian*, The Zam-Tan Railway: Plan for a consortium. 2 July 1965.

<sup>82</sup> *The Financial Times*, No Firm Chinese Aid offer: U.K. to survey Zambia-Tanzania rail link, 2 July 1965.

<sup>83</sup> PRO, DO183/730, From Lusaka to CRO, No. 984, 3 July 1965.

<sup>84</sup> PRO, DO183/730, *Reuters*, Dar es Salaam, 2 July 1965; *The Observer*, China stalled by Nyerere, 11 July 1965.

<sup>85</sup> NARA, CIA Records, The Tan-Zam Railway, September 1971, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> PRO, DO183/730, Private talk with Kenneth Kaunda in Lusaka, 29 April 1965.

<sup>87</sup> However it was only in 1967 that the cleavages became clearer, after the implementation of Nyerere's *ujamaa* –African socialism– that he resigned from the government and left the country. PRO, PREM13/612, CRO to British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, 21 January 1965 and PRO, PREM13/612, 11 January 1965.

<sup>88</sup> PRO, DO185/59, From Cabinet Office London, East Africa, JIC64, 23 January 1964.

<sup>89</sup> PRO, DO185/4, British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, to CRO, 4 August 1965.

<sup>90</sup> The link to Nyerere's position at home was also suspected in an account from the Deputy High Commissioner in Lusaka, J. A. Molyneux, PRO, DO185/4, British High Commission, Lusaka, to CRO, 16 July 1965.

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<sup>91</sup> PRO, DO185/4, Hugh Cudlipp on Nyerere, Kambona, the Chinese and the Railway, 4 August 1965.

<sup>92</sup> This would be done by a British company, Maxwell Stamp. PRO, DO185/4, British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, to CRO, 22 July 1965.

<sup>93</sup> *Daily Mail*, 'China holds up survey on rail link', 13 July 1965.

<sup>94</sup> PRO, DO185/4, Rail Link with Tanzania, 14 July 1965. The establishment of the Inter-Governmental Ministerial Committee, comprising ministers from both countries, was agreed to on 12 March, 1965. Cited in Osei-Hwedie, Bertha Z. and Osei-Hwedie, Kwaku. *Tanzania-Zambia Railroad (TAZARA): An Analysis of Zambia's Decision-Making in Transportation*, Brunswick Publishing Corporation, U.S.A., 1990, p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> PRO, DO185/5, Note on talk with President Nyerere, held on 29 October 1965.

<sup>96</sup> NARA, African Affairs Bureau, Entry 5235, DSLAM JUN9/65; PRO, PREM13/614, Note on talk with President Nyerere, 5 August 1965.

<sup>97</sup> PRO, PREM13/614, Note on talk with President Nyerere, 5 August 1965.

<sup>98</sup> PRO, DO214/95, British Embassy, Washington D.C., to CRO, 28 May 1965.

<sup>99</sup> Wayne Fredericks and Governor Harriman also suggested convening a conference of American, British, German, Italian and Japanese representatives before end-June in Washington to consider the whole question of Tanzania-Zambia communication links. They believed that this would be a sign of active interest to Nyerere and Kaunda and stymie a possible firm offer from Zhou on his June trip. The British did not support the idea. PRO, DO183/730, From Foreign Office to Washington, No. 4541, 1 June 1965.

<sup>100</sup> PRO, DO185/4, From British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, to CRO, 30 July 1965.

<sup>101</sup> PRO, DO183/730, British Embassy, Washington D.C., to Foreign Office, 26 June 1965.

<sup>102</sup> PRO, DO214/95, British Embassy, Washington D.C., to CRO, 28 May 1965.

<sup>103</sup> PRO, DO183/730, From Lusaka to CRO, No. 820, 1 June 1965.

<sup>104</sup> The Maxwell Stamp survey was eventually carried out and concluded that the rail link was worth building. The report was submitted to the governments in July 1966. PRO, PREM13/614, From Kenneth Kaunda to Harold Wilson, 11 August 1965. See also: Osei-Hwedie, Bertha Z. and Osei-Hwedie, Kwaku. *Tanzania-Zambia Railroad (TAZARA): An Analysis of Zambia's Decision-Making in Transportation*, Brunswick Publishing Corporation, U.S.A., 1990, p. 13.

<sup>105</sup> Nyerere, Julius K. *Freedom and Socialism*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 51.

<sup>106</sup> PRO, DO183/730, From Dar es Salaam to CRO, No. 1089, 3 July 1965.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Yu, George. Working on the Railroad: China and the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, in: *Asian Survey*, Vol. 11, No. 11, November 1971, p. 1104.

<sup>110</sup> PRO, DO183/730, Tanzania Fortnightly Summary, Part I, 15-28 August 1965; PRO, DO183/730, From Dar es Salaam to CRO, No. 1297, 23 August 1965.

<sup>111</sup> PRO, DO183/731, Wire from Dar es Salaam, Zambia-Tanzania Railway, 24 August 1965; PRO, DO183/730, Dar es Salaam to CRO, No. 1305, 24 August 1965.



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<sup>112</sup> PRO, DO183/730, Dar es Salaam to CRO, No. 1305, 24 August 1965; PRO, DO183/730, From Dar es Salaam to CRO, No. 1297, 23 August 1965.

<sup>113</sup> The report from the Chinese survey team was submitted to the Governments in October 1966. It said that railway construction was feasible from an engineering point of view but no mention was made of its economic prospects. Osei-Hwedie, Bertha Z. and Osei-Hwedie, Kwaku. *Tanzania-Zambia Railroad (TAZARA): An Analysis of Zambia's Decision-Making in Transportation*, Brunswick Publishing Corporation, U.S.A., 1990, p. 14.

<sup>114</sup> 'Railway Symbolizes Sino-African Friendship', 'Railway Symbolizes Sino-African Friendship', Xinhua News Agency, 23 June 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/wenjiabaoafrica/172496.htm> [accessed on 23 April 2009].

<sup>115</sup> Nyerere mentioned this for example in his meeting with British politician Humphrey Berkeley. Nyerere was also anxious to have the Maxwell Stamp survey carried out as soon as possible. PRO, DO185/4, British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, to CRO, 22 July 1965; PRO, DO185/4, British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, to CRO, 30 July 1965.

<sup>116</sup> PRO, DO185/4, US/Tanzanian Relations and Tanzanian Railway, 30 July 1965.

<sup>117</sup> Zhou Enlai nianpu (周恩来年谱, 1949-1976, 中央文献出版社, 1997, p. 750.

<sup>118</sup> PRO, DO185/5, Interview with President Nyerere by Joseph MacSween, Canadian Press, 31 July 1965.

<sup>119</sup> PRO, DO183/731, From Lusaka to CRO, No. 1327, 22 September 1965.

<sup>120</sup> PRO, DO183/730, From Lusaka to CRO, No. 1340, 25 September 1965.

<sup>121</sup> PRO, DO183/730, Tanzania Railway, 20 October 1965.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>123</sup> Ibrahim Kaduma, the Tanzanian Director of External Finance and Technical Co-operation who was involved in the rail link discussions from 1967, felt very strongly about this. Interview with Ibrahim Kaduma, Dar es Salaam, 28 May 2007. China eventually granted 988 million yuan (US\$124 million) in interest-free loans to finance the railway. 'Railway Symbolizes Sino-African Friendship', Xinhua News Agency 23 June 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/wenjiabaoafrica/172496.htm> [accessed on 23 April 2009].

<sup>124</sup> Zhou Enlai nianpu (周恩来年谱, 1949-1976, 中央文献出版社, 1997, pp. 735-736.

<sup>125</sup> RMRB, 毛主席接见坦桑尼亚桑给巴尔妇女代表团, 25 July 1965.

<sup>126</sup> RMRB, 坦桑尼亚, 27 September 1965.

<sup>127</sup> RMRB, 请柬, 10 November 1965.

<sup>128</sup> Zhou Enlai nianpu (周恩来年谱, 1949-1976, 中央文献出版社, 1997, p. 766.

<sup>129</sup> In 1971, Beijing finally won the General Assembly vote to replace Taipei in the China seat. The Tanzanian delegation at the UN was very active in canvassing for the PRC throughout.

<sup>130</sup> Monson, Jamie. Defending the People's Railway in the Era of Liberalization: Tazara in Southern Tanzania, in: *Africa*, Vol. 76, Issue 1, 2006, p. 114.

<sup>130</sup> Mutukwa, Kasuka. S. *Politics of the Tanzania-Zambia Rail Project: A study of Tanzania-China-Zambia relations*, University Press of America, 1977, p. 42.