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## ASPECTS OF NYERERE'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: A Study in the Dynamics of African Political Thought

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**ABSTRACT** Plato and Aristotle described a society's leader as naturally selected by Divine Providence. They called him a "Prince" or the "Philosopher King". These characterizations remotely size-up Tanzania's Julius Kambarage Nyerere whose rise to prominence is quite fascinating. A "King" he was not. A "Prince" that he was. His own people rendered him great respect and called him "Mwalimu", the "philosopher", the "thinker". The term "Mwalimu" ordinarily means "teacher" but when reverence is injected into it, it means "thinker" or "philosopher".

Nyerere schooled in adulthood and became the first Tanganyikan to earn a Master of Arts degree. He accomplished the feat in 1952 at Edinburgh, Scotland. The five years he spent in colonial Britain were years of genuine universal nationalism. Pan-Africanism was in full swing since 1945 calling for self-determination for African peoples then under European imperialism and colonialism. And, following World War II and the formation of the United Nations in 1945, the flame of Tanganyika's nationalism was lit and Nyerere was its bearer. He led Tanganyika to independence by 1961 and to union with destabilized Zanzibar in 1964 to form the current Tanzania. Nyerere was at the helm in Tanzania for over two decades earning for himself and for his country international respectability and domestic tranquility.

### INTRODUCTION

At the time of this writing, Julius Kambarage Nyerere was the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairman of the country's lone political party, "CHAMA CHA MAPINDUZI". Nyerere had been at the helm of Tanzania's political life from the time of the rebirth of his country as a nation-state. From that vantage point, he was the guiding spirit in all societal activities of political, economic or military consequence. His leadership was paternal and guardian based on an adherence to predetermined moral and civic principles. And, once a commitment was made public, Nyerere always lived up to it even if in so doing he risked adverse impinging consequences. It is important that we make these points clear at this outset in order to comprehend the nature of the man's political philosophy which has not always enjoyed a smooth ride in its progression. In fact, the authenticity of his philosophies qualified him for a special reverence among his people who continuously looked upon him in practically everything they did.<sup>(1)</sup> This endearment was capped by the investiture of the only title that lingered on from even before independence: "MWALIMU" which literally means "the teacher". The Mwalimu was certainly an outstanding social scientist and a statesman who commanded respect within his own country and abroad as he contributed immensely to the growth of those social attitudes which underlie harmonious living for men in an ordered society.

To a casual public opinion analysis, Nyerere could be described as a truly non-aligned political philosopher oscillating between Western democracy and Eastern Communism. He already previously dismissed both "capitalism" and "dogmatic socialism" as not proper developmental strategies for developing Tanzania to copy. In opting for "socialism" in its "Ujamaa" form, Nyerere declared his opposition "to capitalism which seeks to build a hap-

py society on the basis of exploitation of man by man". Nyerere was also "opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build a happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man" (J. K. Nyerere, 1966: 170-171). In other words, Nyerere dismissed the class analysis which is the basis of Marxism-Leninism. In his appearance on the campus of the University of Dar-es-Salaam in September, 1978, Mwalimu Nyerere stated in no uncertain terms that he was not a Marxist but that he was a "bourgeois liberal".

A staunch Africanist, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, lived for "the honour of Africa" in more than one sense. After independence, he committed himself soul and mind and his country's meagre resources to aid morally and materially the liberation movements in countries that were still under colonial yoke, especially in Africa. His own country's National Anthem prayed "God Bless Africa!" He was both outward and inward looking. Internally, he projected a primarily African image and personality and believed that his "Ujamaa" ideology was an African personality face-lifted. The African had to regain his place of honour in the human civilization. "Yes-manism" had to stop and African originality and innovation had to excel. Consequently, he did not consider African socialism as an ideology that was born out of class struggle. Rather, he was absolutely convinced that it resulted from the very nature of the traditional African system which was to be Africa's guide. Thus the African was at least restored by Nyerere to being capable of being original.

#### A BIOGRAPHY OF JULIUS

The typical Africanness of Julius Kambarage Nyerere was reflected in his being born the traditional way with no proper record to determine his birthday. He was born after World War I and sometime during British efforts to establish themselves firmly in place of the then defeated German Empire in East Africa. Nyerere himself confirms the year 1922 as his year of birth at Butiyama village off the eastern shores of Lake Victoria (Nyanza). Under traditional African systems, Nyerere was born of a royal family minus the pomp of a real prince. He was the son of a fourth wife among twenty-two wives of a Zanaki Chief. He, therefore, was not an heir apparent. In fact he was reared in a humble manner like many of his fellow countrymen he was destined to lead later in his life. However, being the son of a Chief did bestow upon him some air of respectability and recognition among his contemporaries. Nevertheless, he was a heardsman anyway at the early age of 8, like many of his friends, looking after his father's goats. He began schooling at 12 attending the Native Authority Boarding Primary School at Mwisenge, Musoma and influenced enough in Catechism to become converted to Roman Catholicism getting the name "Julius" at baptism (R. Segal, 1961: 215-216).

Julius had a special intellectual curiosity that enabled him to outsmart his classmates and complete his elementary school education in three rather than the normal four years. In 1937, Julius attended the famous Tabora Government School for sons of Chiefs. When he became a Prefect in his dormitory his potential leadership qualities surfaced. He succeeded in having Prefects' aristocratic privileges abolished and became the admiration of his peers (J. Listowell, 1965: 175). He then became active in debating societies and sharpened his ideas in political discussions. In 1943, Julius was enrolled at Makerere College, Uganda, the only University College for East Africa at the time. At Makerere, he was in the company of such Heir Apparents as Abdallah Fundikira, Ibrahim Sapi and Kidaha Makwaia who later became prominent Chiefs. Himself not being an Heir to the Throne, Julius, "was something of a lone wolf. By birth an aristocrat, by inclination a reformer, he shared the nationalistic views of

the commoner" (J. Listowell, 1965: 183). This combination of molding qualities propelled him into intellectual aggressiveness. He introduced international politics in debates and became Makerere's star debater. His commitment to Catholicism was almost leading him to becoming a Priest. Consequently, Julius "did not play games and he did not go to dances.... The usual pursuits of young people held no attraction for him" (J. Listowell, 1965: 183). His behaviour was better summarized later by one of his close friends, Vedasto Kyaruzi, in these words:

"[Nyerere] was deeply religious. He had an outstanding mind and his academic achievement was a remarkable one. He won first prize in the Regional Literary Competitions with an essay on the application of John Stuart Mills arguments...." (J. Listowell, 1965: 196)

When he was a second year student at Makerere College, Julius was a co-founder of the Tanganyika African Welfare Association (TAWA) which was in opposition to the already existing Tanganyika African Association (TAA) which was a College Students' Wing of the Association then in existence in Tanganyika. His TAWA organization was soon abolished and Nyerere joined the parent organization to strengthen it by introducing a new vigorous reorganization programme. His own ability to abolish a political party in favour of the dominant one was an experience that was to mold him into a one party adherent.

In 1945, having completed his College work, Julius was appointed a teacher at St. Mary's College, Tabora, Tanganyika, where he taught biology and history. His religious background made him opt to teach at the Mission school rather than teaching at the lucrative Government schools. Sensing the disparities in the teaching conditions between missionary and government schools, Nyerere refused to switch retorting that "if there is such a discrepancy between salaries and promotions of government teachers and mission teachers, I shall have to fight for the rights of mission teachers" (J. Listowell, 1965: 196). His option to stand on the side of the underdogs was to lead him to the fight against oppression, colonialism and racism in all their manifestations.

In 1948, Nyerere was awarded a fellowship to study in Great Britain being the first Black Tanganyikan to ever venture into the metropolises in pursuit of high learning. He read at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and graduated in 1952 with a Master of Arts degree. Upon his return he married Miss Maria Magige on January 24, 1953, and joined the teaching staff at St. Francis College, Pugu, near Dar-es-Salaam. At Pugu, Julius did both: teach and engage in politics. "He was politically-minded from birth because of the colonial regime. He wanted answers to such questions as to why his country was not free [and] why there was a colonial administration (J. Listowell, 1965: 208)." He was thus a political philosopher in the making.

## FACING POLITICAL REALITY

The political reality that unveiled itself during Nyerere's childhood, adolescence and manhood was in actual fact the saga of Africa's struggle against imperialism and colonialism. Julius K. Nyerere came to the world only to find a discrepancy that the colour of a man's skin was a major determinant of his human rights and his privileges as a social being. Nyerere was born under colonial subjugation where a tripartite social stratification was the order of the day with whites enjoying first class rights and privileges followed by Asians with the Africans counting practically as lesser human beings. As third class citizens, Africans including Mr. Nyerere, were looked down upon contemptuously. The Europeans considered it undesirable

to give Africans equal representation or the right to vote! In the face of this reality, Nyerere had this to say:

“Our struggle has become a struggle for the right of man...we are struggling against a tiny minority which has established its dominance over a large majority.... There are countries where a man's civil rights are determined by the colour of his skin.... In Tanganyika we believe that only evil Godless men would make the colour of a man's skin the criteria for granting him civil rights,”<sup>(2)</sup>

Although Nyerere termed the segregationist behaviour as “evil” and “Godless”, the British colonialists in 1958 announced the first legislative Council elections based on the colour line. And, Nyerere went along with it! The British had introduced a system of “Tripartite voting” in which an eligible voter was forced to vote for a white person, an Asian and an African in the same constituency. Failure to follow these guidelines nullified his vote. The elections took place between September 1958 and February 1959 in ten constituencies. This episode reveals to us one of the major choices that Julius Nyerere faced in his political life in Tanzania. “Nyerere Accepts the Challenge” was the headline in the *Tanganyika Standard*, the daily newspaper in May 1958, that announced the acquiescence of TANU which was Nyerere's political party, “The Tanganyika African National Union” to participate in the elections even though the criteria were contrary to what the indigenous population wanted. Anyway, the results of the elections showed that all candidates: whites and Asians and Africans who stood on the banner of TANU won in all the ten constituencies. TANU then went on to chart the future of Tanganyika and to effect the country's independence three years later (December 9, 1961). The point which Nyerere brought forward here is that sometimes by participating and being included you can help bring about the desired changes from within. In contrast, in 1961, colonial elections were boycotted by nationalists in Southern Rhodesia. As a result, an apartheid inclined white minority party led by Ian Smith emerged victorious and refused to bring about constitutional changes that would have written itself out of the ruling circles in Rhodesia. Consequently, the Africans, having been effectively closed out legitimately, had to go underground and emerge in liberation struggles. It took bloody fifteen years to wrest power from the white minorities through the barrels of guns, and reclaim Zimbabwe. This is where Nyerere's wisdom needs to be studied seriously especially the way he grapples against the crests and troughs of political life. There is a saying that opportunity knocks but you must open the door, and that “opportunity comes but once”. Thus if chances are grasped at their opportune moments, it may not be necessary to bring about freedom “through the barrel of a gun!” Nyerere's decision above is exemplary.

## PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Nyerere's political philosophy was not only theoretical but practical as well. It was put into practice when he founded the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) on July 7, 1954. Hardly two years had passed since his return from overseas had Nyerere transformed the socially oriented Tanganyika African Association (TAA) founded in 1929, whose membership he held since his Makerere studentship, into a viable political party, TANU. Apparently, when Nyerere was returning home from Edinburgh as the first Black African from Tanganyika with an M.A. degree, his mind was already set to enter the political arena:

“there was no alternative but to be politically minded, and at one point or another, to become politically active. On my return in 1952 from Scotland I was determined to go into politics, in fact to make politics my career.” (J. Listowell, 1965: 208.)

At the time when Nyerere decided to become a politician, colonial Tanganyika was not

ripe for political activities of a nationalistic nature. For, at the turn of the Century, nationalist Africans who founded and utilized the "Maji Maji" Association to resist against German imperialism were so ruthlessly devoured by German imperialists that most Africans in the territory were so intimidated that they became quite fearful of any kind of political activity. The phobic syndrome abound in many other dimensions. Traditional rulers (the Chiefs) who were enjoying their ruling positions with prestige and special privileges feared that a nationalist movement would usurp their positions. This fear was well founded as after independence Chieftaincy was abolished in Tanganyika.<sup>(3)</sup> Another quarter that harboured fears was the minority privileged sector of Europeans and Asians who logically assumed that under an African majority Government, things could become uncomfortable for them. However:

"Nyerere's wisdom, modesty and quiet humour, his political strategy and the strength of his determination to set an example of racial equality for Africa helped to quiet these fears." (R. C. Keith, 1959: 8)

Nyerere used TANU to overcome fears and give hope to the millions of humiliated Tanganyikans. His leadership was quickly recognized throughout the country and many Chiefs, Asians and Europeans began to associate themselves with TANU. TANU had committed itself to bring about independence, to build a united nationalism free of tribalism or racialism, and to establish a democratic form of Government. "Nyerere's qualities, his integrity, his intellect, his organizing talents and his ability to translate his idealism into popular practical terms played in this advance (A. J. Hughes, 1963: 61)."

The ranks and file and trade unions were all mobilized in a new bond with the Party. TANU's cry reverberated throughout the world and into the Halls of the United Nations Organization which eventually decided to invite an oral petitioner from the oppressed of Tanganyika who were mounting anti-colonial sentiments. At the time, Tanganyika was being administered by the British as a Trust Territory under the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In 1955, TANU sponsored its president, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, to petition on its behalf. That was accomplished on March 7, 1955 (J. K. Nyerere, 1966: 35).

"The impression created by Julius Nyerere when he first stepped on the world stage, without experience in public life or even advice from some one with such experience laid the foundation of his career." (J. Listowell, 1965: 250)

He returned home to a tumultuous reception cementing the fact that Nyerere had indeed become an undisputed political leader committed to the just cause of bringing "UHURU" (independence) to his country. In 1957, the colonial Governor, Sir Edward Twining, appointed Nyerere to the Legislative Council possibly to tame him. To his surprise, Sir Edward found out that Nyerere was too slippery. Nyerere resigned from Membership of the Legislative Council in December the same year while declaring that,

"During the last four months I have made a series of compromises to demonstrate my understanding of the spirit of give and take.... I would feel that I am cheating the people, cheating my own organization, if I remain on the Council."<sup>(4)</sup>

The Governor and the colonial Government took it as a slap on the face and worked to undermine Nyerere and TANU. Some local TANU branches were closed in a deliberate harrassment tactic. Nyerere took to the pen to fight back. He isolated some three District Commissioners, those who closed down the local TANU branches, termed them "Bush Governors" and charged,

"These same officials would have people committing perjury in court if only to vilify TANU. These same people who intimidate and punish innocence, cajole and reward crookery, have the temerity to invoke law and order."<sup>(5)</sup>

The colonial Government took Nyerere to court charging him with "criminal libel". He was given alternative sentences of either going to gaol for six months thus join the traditional graduation of most influential politicians as a "Prison Graduate" or "P.G." in the line of Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Patrice Lumumba, Kenneth Kaunda, Kamuzu Banda, Namdi Azikiwe, etc; or pay a three thousand shillings fine. Nyerere opted for the latter contending that:

"My going to prison would have meant certain trouble. I chose to pay the fine after all.... I cannot honestly say I have ever regretted my decision."<sup>(6)</sup>

What we learn here is that Nyerere had the foresight to foresee the reality of the situation and face it accordingly. He knew, for instance, that his appointment to the Legislative Council was intended to take him out of political activeness. Yet, Nyerere did not take that assumption for granted. Instead, he gave the colonialists the benefit of the doubt. He couldn't lick them so he joined them! But when it was proved to him that his working within the colonial regime was indeed a vain effort, he did not hesitate to withdraw and return to the arena of political activity. This is a departure from the earlier position when he acquiesced to allow his Party to participate in the "Tripartite Elections". Another thing we learn here is the fact that Nyerere was a prognosticator. He had a hunch that had he gone to prison there might have ensued civil disobedience and other political agitations that probably could have gone out of hand with him out of the driver's seat and could have brought about bloodshed in Tanganyika. This might have been reason enough for the colonial regime to ban TANU altogether. Nyerere was not selfish enough to opt to go to jail for cheap heroism. He took the fate of his people more honourably than his own self-interest.

That there was militancy in TANU was confirmed by the resignation of the Party's Organizing Secretary, Mr. Zuberi Mtemvu. Mtemvu went on to form a splinter group called the "African National Congress (ANC)". The break with TANU was the result of the feeling that Nyerere was too conciliatory, too moderate and not militant enough especially in regard to the prevailing racism. Mtemvu was supported by some other former TANU members and other members of the general public.

The colonialists also formed a new political organization which was called "The United Tanganyika Party (UTP)". This Party was designed to oppose TANU and it had a multiracial membership. It was led by a prominent Englishman, Mr. Brian Willis.

The battle of the "Giants", if we may so briefly designate the three contending political parties in Tanganyika of old, came to a climax in the tripartite elections of 1958-59. The elections were actually supposed to favour UTP which was already a multiracial Party. The electoral constituencies had candidates patterned after the structural set-up of UTP. The end result, however, was sour grapes for both ANC and UTP which even lost deposits in some of the constituencies. Both Parties went "kaput" soon after. So, naturally, TANU's victory brought about a "Responsible Government" in 1960 with Julius Nyerere as the Chief Minister. In March 1961, a Constitutional Conference was held in London. The ensuing timetable granted "self-government" in May 1961, and complete independence ("UHURU") on December 9, 1961. Due to Nyerere's own sensible handling of politics, the transfer of power and responsibility into the hands of the indigenous Tanganyikans from colonial Britain, was smooth and tranquil.

## MATURATION OF NYERERE'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The gaining of independence did not lay fallow the intellectual dexterities of Mwalimu Julius Kambage Nyerere. It instead furthered his philosophical prognostications. The first thing

he did was to invoke what came to be known as "The Nyerere Doctrine of State Succession to Treaties" (E. E. Seaton & S. T. Malati, 1973; A. H. Che-Mponda, 1972: 149-150). In a speech before the National Assembly on the eve of independence (December 8, 1961), Nyerere declared that "the Government must be vigilant to ensure that where international law does not require it, Tanganyika shall not in future be bound by pre-independence commitments which are no longer compatible with their status and interest." He then rejected the British Government's suggestion that Tanganyika conclude an "inheritance agreement" which would have enabled third parties to make demands on Tanganyika but without Tanganyika being able to obligate third parties to discharge toward her "the obligations which they assumed under the original treaty." The Nyerere Doctrine laid down the principle that,

"we are willing on a basis of reciprocity to continue in force for a period of two years from independence day all valid bilateral treaties which would otherwise have ended when we became independent state. During that two year period, we will negotiate with the states concerned with a view, where appropriate, to continuing or changing these treaties in a mutually acceptable manner."<sup>67</sup>

Many other countries that became independent after Tanganyika especially, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho and Jamaica, etc., followed Tanganyika's example in regard to their own accession to pre-independence treaty obligations. Nyerere's approaches, thus, became exemplary beyond his own country's borders. This was in line with his ambition of putting a "candle" on top of Mount Kilimanjaro on independence day to give "hope where there is despair, love where there is hate and human dignity where before there was only humiliation" (J. Listowell, 1965: 321). The flame was indeed placed on Kilimanjaro's highest Mawenzi Peak at the moment of Tanganyika's independence.

About two weeks after Tanganyika's independence, on December 25, 1961, Nyerere convened a Chiefs' Conference in Dar-es-Salaam to release to them a political bombshell that he could hardly see a place for them in the local government of an independent Tanganyika. The Chiefs were "stunned,... They put forward a number of counter suggestions, but these made little impression on Nyerere. The meeting ended on the understanding that the Chiefs were to abdicate their positions of their own free will although they might retain their courtesy title" (J. Listowell, 1965: 321). Yet, the abolition of Chieftaincy did not shock the nation and in most instances it was welcomed since many of the Chiefs were not traditional but were created by the colonial regime to further their colonial selfish exploitative ends. Nyerere did absorb some of the prominent Chiefs into Government service, as Ministers, Ambassadors and as officials of varied levels in the bureaucratic hierarchy.

## NYERERE'S DOMESTIC PANACEUM TO THE RACE FACTOR

One sensitive point that ached the nation at independence was the lingering racism and the identification of a white face with anything to do with the Government. Under Nyerere's leadership, racial segregation and discrimination were abolished in 1961, and a programme of "Africanization" was introduced in October, 1960.<sup>(68)</sup> This was intended to have the structure of the civil service reflect a local look.<sup>(69)</sup> During those early years of independence, Africanization was meant to meet the demands by the indigenous for the immediate replacement of expatriates and non-African personnel by Black Africans. This was probably intended to satisfy the revolution of rising expectations in Tanganyika.

Unfortunately it just happened that not too many Tanganyikans were educationally qualified to fill many of the vacancies called for under the Africanization programme. It was dangerous to be promiscuous with job offers and Nyerere was quite concerned with the state of affairs. In the face of this reality, Nyerere killed the Africanization programme declaring it "a dead issue" and ordered it to be brought to an end, adding:



"The nation must use the entire reservoir of skill and experience.... The skin in which this skill is encased is completely irrelevant.... It would be wrong of us to continue to distinguish between Tanganyikan citizens on any grounds other than character and ability. We cannot allow the growth of first and second class citizenship."<sup>(9)</sup>

Naturally, Nyerere's pronouncement helped the minority community members to feel at home and have their confidence restored. It was thus a good working atmosphere for the Europeans and Asians in Tanganyika to join hands with their fellow Tanganyikan majorities in developing and building the nation. Skin colour became irrelevant. Rewards were based on the principle "to each according to his ability". Well, not quite! You see, in a Governmental reorganization that followed independence, there were created new titles to replace colonial titles of Provincial Commissioners and District Commissioners. The new titles are Regional Commissioners and Area Commissioners respectively. Occupation of these positions were by political appointments. It was based on Party loyalty and by being a confidant of those who counted. Therefore, scholarship or academic merit or even proven experience became irrelevant though sometimes helpful if the possessor of such qualities was already in the pipeline. This approach to filling of vacancies opened out for a measure of tribalism, sectarianism, patronization and operation know-who and operation come from-where! Many an educated fellow felt frustrated. The situation continued on as there was artificially created antagonism against the elite up to the close of the 1970's decade. The term "wasomi" was injected as a negative reference against those with university education. This in a way did help retard the country's progress as many trained manpower were given jobs quite irrelevant to their training backgrounds. Those in power, including Nyerere himself, forgot the fact that no country can ever develop without a corps of dedicated educated elite.

#### NYERERE'S BACK-STEP DIPLOMACY

The period immediately after independence was filled with surprises of great political significance. Perhaps the most striking of all such events was the one that took place about six weeks since Tanganyika gained her independence and it involved Julius Kambarage Nyerere personally. He abdicated his Premiership (*aling'atuka*). His resignation as Tanganyika's first Prime Minister in less than two months after the country's attainment of independence caught Tanganyikans and the world at large by surprise. An editorial appearing in the *Asian and African Review* of April 1962, may have told the expressive feelings of nationals and foreigners alike:

"Nobody who has the interest of Tanganyika at heart would deny to the Tanganyikans the right to choose any form of government or any Prime Minister that they want. Nevertheless one cannot help feeling that the developments in that country are a warning to other emergent countries in East Africa."<sup>(10)</sup>

Some observers speculated that Nyerere's resignation was a silent palace coup d'états and wondered, "What may happen to Tanganyika if Nyerere does not keep control can only occasion the gravest misgivings."<sup>(11)</sup> Others felt that may be Nyerere was overwhelmed by the demands of his more militant colleagues in the Party and Government that he had to get out.<sup>(12)</sup> They gave a possible reason of what to them was the matter that

"The outpouring of grievances from upcountry delegates and the stringent demands for Africanization of the administration suggested that Tanganyika was on the brink of a serious crisis."<sup>(12)</sup>

Fears of the prevailing chaos in the Congo (the present Zaire) where that country's Premier, Patrice Lumumba, was bonded in hostile enemy hands and later killed, were being asso-

ciated with the changed circumstances resulting from Nyerere's resignation. Speculations ran far and wide.

Nyerere himself had a very simple explanation for his resignation saying that it was "because I wanted to stop the identification of Tanganyika with Nyerere. The attitude that Nyerere and Tanganyika were synonymous was a false basis for a new country to start making its way."<sup>(14)</sup> Nyerere's statement made sense since he also had handpicked his most trusted lieutenant, Rashid Mfaume Kawawa, to succeed him as the new Prime Minister. And, actually, Nyerere had wanted to mobilize the masses of his people under a strengthened TANU party to help Tanganyika forge forwards into a successful modernization. His resignation was another original of Nyerere's political philosophy. He philosophized that,

"We know that it is unusual for a Prime Minister to step down from his position as a leader of the government to undertake leadership in the country of the party which supports the new government. But we do not believe that it is necessary for us to copy the institutions of other countries. We believe that we must work out our own pattern of democracy and that the step we have announced today is the best way to proceed at the present."<sup>(15)</sup>

Nyerere was of the opinion that he could have been a better cohesive factor for national unity through organizational abridgement than through the positions of leadership of the government machinery. His resignation reduced him to an ordinary citizen although in reality the fact that he was "Julius Kambarage Nyerere" made a big difference. Nevertheless, it does show his selflessness in forsaking the luxury of power for the sake of peoples' mobilization and a future that hung on the balance as anything could have happened while he was out of power. However, his gamble paid off handsomely as after almost a year's hard work of rebuilding TANU party, Nyerere was returned with love to the helm of his country's political and governmental organs. He was sworn-in as Tanganyika's first executive President on Tanganyika's Republic Day on December 9, 1962.

Looking at Nyerere's resignation from another angle, Nyerere was actually trying to postpone the revolution of rising frustrations around the country. For, in that first year of Tanganyika's independence, he sensed that it was possible for the "revolution of rising expectations" to deteriorate into the "revolution of rising frustrations". This was the case because to many Tanganyikans, independence had meant economic relief, getting good jobs held by Europeans, moving into European style of housing such as Oysterbay in Dar-es-Salaam, getting shops owned by Asian merchants, etc. Now, such kind of relief could not possibly have been attained by each and every Tanganyikan. Top political notches were indeed rewarded in the division of the spoils. But the masses of the people were to remain where they were and furthermore, they were being asked to work even harder and to sacrifice even more. With the leadership group getting fatter and fatter while the masses of the people were getting thinner and thinner, the public could have become uneasy and therefore the country could have expanded the gap between the haves (the new African (black) bourgeoisies) and the have-nots (the prevailing proletarian masses of workers and peasants).

Consequently, when Nyerere resigned as Prime Minister and returned to the grassroots, it meant that at least for that year the Government was out of the focus of public scrutiny as everyone followed Nyerere's activities closely. The young Government then was able to make a more smoother transition. Meanwhile, with Nyerere in their midst as an ordinary citizen, the people were imbued with a new spirit. Nyerere paid visits to almost every corner of the country. This enabled him to become an effective President and for the people to be more receptive to his ensuing policies. He was also able to consolidate contacts which he made between TANU and the people in the villages. He thus also paved the way for Tanganyikans to accept willingly his eventual call for a "One Party" state.

## NYERERE RATIONALIZES A "ONE PARTY" SYSTEM

Having consolidated the Party's base, Nyerere then could turn to the question of ideology. He had already by then cemented the fact that TANU was to be an elite Party nor a Vanguard Party but a "Mass Movement". As a mass movement, TANU was not to be like an umbrella party to oversee all national activities. It must be reminded here that TANU was by then a defacto single party in the country and Tanganyika was therefore literally an unofficial "one-party state". In time it was necessary to make it official. President Nyerere appointed a Presidential Commission for the Establishment of a Democratic One Party System. The Commission reported in April 1965 in a report which became the Interim Constitution of Tanzania (as by then Tanganyika had already united with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania). The Interim Constitution was *Act 43 of 1965* passed by Parliament seating on July 5, 1965. Henceforth, Tanzania became officially a one party state. In making its recommendations the Committee members concluded that "we do not see TANU as an elite but as a mass party through which any citizen of good will can participate in the process of government."

To test the authenticity of the contention that a one party system could also be democratic, a general election was held in September 1965. An analysis of a foreign observer saves the day when he summed up thusly,

"The results of the elections showed a dramatic turn-over in the National Assembly, a change far more sweeping than the parliamentary shifts usually encountered in multi-party systems, Barely a quarter of the incumbent members were re-elected as a result of decisions not imposed from above, but freely taken by the voters." (R. Morgenthau, 1965; 12)

Among those who lost in that election was a famous founding father, Paul Bomani. Whereas, a European, the late Dereck Bryceson and an Indian, Mr. Amir Jamal, handily defeated their African opponents in their respective constituencies. The success of the one party system was attributed to Nyerere's personal leadership qualities and to his balanced political philosophy:

"President Nyerere plays a large part in maintaining a climate of reasonable compromise. Even those who do not believe the hero makes history must admit that without him it is unlikely the new system would have gone into effect." (R. Morgenthau, 1965: 13)

The mere mention of a "One-Party" state usually raises eyebrows in Western systems of Governments. Nyerere squarely faced this fallacy and did comment on it when he unveiled the report of the One Party Commission. He said, "those who cannot think of democracy without thinking of many parties, will regard this announcement as the death of democracy in Tanganyika". Later, in an interview with a Western correspondent, Nyerere said, "When you mention a one party state to the West it is like hoisting a red flag in front of a Spanish bull."<sup>16</sup> Here Nyerere was skeptical of the Western interpretations of "democracy". His skepticism of Western viewpoints regarding the new developments in Tanzania were confirmed when he said,

"For people in the West, who shrink naturally and rightly from the whole idea of one party state it is important to understand both the seriousness with which Tanzanians are debating their embryonic political ethos and the details of their debate. For it is too simple to write-off their system as just another dictatorship...they are debating, and taking sides, and moving."<sup>16</sup>

That Tanzania's one party introduction was not a mimic of any other existing system but its own original, was confirmed by the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* of May 27, 1965 (p. 8):

"Among the developing countries which have adopted one-party systems the Republic of Tanzania has probably given most thought to the consequence and pitfalls. It is odd that this should be so. Tanzania, having been spared the divisive influence of tribalism, is probably as well placed as

any African country to develop on Westminster lines, with the parties representing ideological motives rather than place of origin."<sup>17</sup>

But then, were Tanzanians to follow scrupulously the Westminster model. they, according to Nyerere, could have been thrown into chaos and democratic irresponsibility even within the highest organs of law making. Nyerere argued,

"If we had to have the British style opposition here in Tanzania, we could come to blow in Parliament." (H. Lombard, 1963: 7)

## NYERERE'S MISCELLANEOUS PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS

Nyerere's position on the one party statehood was maintained throughout his political life. For he did not merely limit it to Tanganyika, but carried it through to Tanzania. Reminiscences show that an important event took place in 1964 following the overthrow of an Arab Sultan's regime in neighbouring Zanzibar in the aftermath of a coup d'états barely a month after the British granted a phony independence to Zanzibar. The independence was a sham and shambles because the "independence" was granted to the handful of Arabs to rule over the masses of politically aware indigenous Africans. The latter were united in an Afro-Shiraz Party which was in opposition to the Arab intrigues. The Afro-Shiraz Party was in close contact with TANU which was led by Julius Nyerere. On January 12, 1964, the Afro-Shiraz Party took over power in Zanzibar and established a Peoples' Republic of Zanzibar. Being that the Zanzibaris were brothers in the kin-n-kith sense with those of mainland Tanganyika, it was logical for President Nyerere and President Abeid Amani Karume of Zanzibar to agree to unite their two countries into one nation-state. The union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar came into being on April 26, 1964. In October, 1964, the name of the new combined nation-state became "The United Republic of Tanzania". The National Anthem remained "God Save Africa" which was Tanganyika's national anthem. Nyerere became president of the new United Republic and Karume was his first Vice-President. TANU on the mainland and Afro-Shiraz Party on the isles remained sole political parties in their respective territories. Eventually, the two parties merged to form the new CHAMA CHA MAPINDUZI (CCM) which was officially launched on February 5, 1977. Nyerere's political philosophy and his balanced leadership had a lot to do with all these happenings.

## CONCLUSION

With the consolidation of the political climate in the country, Nyerere had succeeded to lay out the infrastructure needed for launching a fervent ideology. Nyerere carefully readied the people for what was to be the basis of development. It was the introduction of "UJAMAA" which is a Tanzanian brand of African socialism, born out of the womb of true African traditions, theorized and applied via Nyerere's political and economic thought. Since the introduction of socialism in the Arusha Declaration of February 5, 1967. Nyerere's political philosophy went hand in hand with his economic thought as his political decisions were primarily responses to the prevailing economic conditions. A forthcoming paper on Nyerere's Economic Thought rounds things up.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** This work comes out of my own personal interest in trying to understand the man who made Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere. He was also responsible for my education in America as he signed the check that paid my fare to America in September 1959. I have fol-

lowed his political philosophies since 1954 when he launched TANU and I was in Standard X at Chidya, Masasi. In 1970, meeting him at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, he suggested that I should return home to Tanzania. While back in Tanzania I have kept my interest in him and decided to put some of it in writing, hence this paper. The fruition of this paper is a credit to Dr. Junichiro Itani, professor in the Faculty of Science, Kyoto University who saw the paper and submitted to two readers who did recommend it for publication. At Kyoto University, I was accepted in the Faculty of Law by Professor Shigeru Kozai to spend my sabbatical year as a Fellow of the Japan Foundation from May 1, 1984 to April 30, 1985. Currently, I am Senior Lecturer Grade I in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

#### NOTES

- (1) Even on simple hygiene it had to take Nyerere himself to tell Tanzanians to keep their surroundings clean, to hang certificates on clean walls, to boil their drinking water, etc.
- (2) Julius Nyerere as quoted by Italiaander, *The New Leaders of Africa* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 84.
- (3) It was also the first time that an African leader abolished Chieftaincy. Other countries, e.g. Ghana had a House of Chiefs, for instance.
- (4) *African Profiles* (New York: Penguin African Library, 1963), p. 110.
- (5) *Sauti ya TANU* (May 27, 1958), No. 29.
- (6) Julius Nyerere, Letter to Governor Sir Richard Turnbull (December 4, 1962).
- (7) Julius Nyerere, Speech before the 35th Session of the Leg. Co., *Hansard* (October 22, 1959).
- (8) Julius K. Nyerere, Address to the Leg. Co., "Africanization of the Civil Service", *Hansard*, 36th Session. (October 19, 1960).
- (9) Julius Nyerere, "Africanization", *Circular Letter to All Ministries and Public Bodies*, (January 7, 1964).
- (10) Editorial, "East African Uncertainties" *Asian and African Review* (April 1962. Vol. 2 No. 41), p. 7.
- (11) Editorial, *The London Times* as cited by R. Segal, *African Profiles*, op. cit., p. 116. (i.e. note (4) above).
- (12) *African Report*, 7-2, February 1962, p. 7.
- (13) *Ibid.*, p. 7., "Why Did Julius Nyerere Resign?" Editorial.
- (14) Julius Nyerere as quoted by Clair Sterling, "Tanganyika: The Tribulations of a Good Man". *The Reporter*, (April 9, 1964) p. 22.
- (15) Julius Nyerere as quoted in the *Kenya Weekly News* (January 26, 1962), p. 6.
- (16) Editorial, "Tanzania: Party of the First Party". *The Economist* (April 10, 1965), p. 157.
- (17) Editorial Comment, "Politics in One Party State" *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, (May 27, 1965), p. 8.

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