

### 3 *Dilemmas of Non-Alignment: Tanzania and the German Cold War*

In January 1969, a pamphlet entitled ‘China and the Devil Slaves’ dropped into the in-trays of politicians, diplomats, and journalists in Dar es Salaam. According to its title page, it was written by Walter Markow, an East German Africanist, with the assistance of Stephen Mhando. Mhando was Tanzania’s recently appointed minister of state for foreign affairs. The publisher was named as the ‘German-African Society in the German Democratic Republic’. The pamphlet began:

Why do the Chinese, when they talk among themselves, always refer to the Africans as the ‘devil slaves?’ Because for many centuries they have regarded the Africans as inferior beings. Beings suitable only for slavery, or to be sterilised, or to be wiped off the face of the earth.

The tract offered a batch of ‘historical’ examples to back up these wild accusations.<sup>1</sup> Characteristic of much of the ‘black literature’ in circulation in Dar es Salaam, the pamphlet raised multiple questions. Was it a genuine East German production? Or a false-flag forgery by their West German counterparts? Why the attack on China? And why did it claim the co-authorship of a senior figure in the supposedly non-aligned – or, to many observers, China-inclined – Tanzanian government?

This chapter explores how Dar es Salaam became a battlefield in a Cold War subplot: the global struggle waged between the two German states. In so doing, it pushes beyond Eurocentric conceptions of the Cold War, while also not purely adopting a ‘subaltern’ view of international affairs which emphasises the agency of Third World states like Tanzania. Rather, it analyses the engagement of both German states with Tanzania through a triangular framework. On the higher plane of diplomacy, the chapter demonstrates how a Cold

<sup>1</sup> ‘China and the Devil Slaves’, enclosed in Burns to State Dept, 20 March 1969, NARA, RG 59, CFPF 1967–69, Box 1511, CSM TANZAN.

War struggle became defined in Tanzania as much by North-South divisions over issues of self-determination and economic decolonisation than the East-West rivalry in which its origins lay. At a lower level, this chapter also shows how the German Cold War was waged within the political and communication networks of Dar es Salaam, as the two rival states sought to besmirch each other in the city's public sphere while cultivating relations with local powerbrokers.

From a Tanzanian perspective, the 'German Cold War' presents an opportunity for understanding the nuanced realities involved in putting into practice a 'non-aligned' foreign policy. The diversification in approaches to the global Cold War has included a renewed interest in states which pursued alternative foreign policies outside of the ideological and geopolitical divisions of the superpower-dominated world order. Among the most prominent of these was the contested and evolving concept of 'non-alignment'. In 1961, representatives of an array of mostly Third World states met in Belgrade, where they formed a loose association of states committed to remaining outside of the rival Cold War blocs. They avowed that 'peoples and Governments shall refrain from any use of ideologies for the purpose of waging cold war, exercising pressure, or imposing their will'. But non-alignment meant remaining neither equidistant from both superpower blocs or aloof from world affairs. Rather, it was a positive, constructive policy that aimed to empower Third World states in navigating a divided international order.<sup>2</sup>

As explained in Chapter 1, non-alignment was a key pillar of Nyerere's conception of Tanzania's foreign relations, which logically arose out of his commitments to self-determination and liberation. According to Nyerere's rationale, Tanzania could only preserve its newly won independence by refusing to enter into alliances with foreign powers or accept aid with political conditions attached. Adopting a non-aligned position would also allow Tanzania to trade widely and accept development aid from any nation, rather than restrict itself to arrangements with a particular Cold War bloc. But the complex and contradictory situations thrown up by the international order meant that espousing a non-aligned position on paper was far easier than translating it into actual policy. Following recent literature, this chapter seeks to cut through the hazy conference rhetoric of solidarity to

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Westad, *Global Cold War*, 107.

understand non-alignment as it existed in practice.<sup>3</sup> As Nyerere himself urged, '[a]ny real discussion of the "non-alignment" of Tanzania's foreign policy should therefore be based on an examination of what we do, more than what is said publicly'.<sup>4</sup> We should also resist the temptation to see Third World states like Tanzania as 'playing off' the superpowers (or, in this case, the two German powers) against one another. To do so overlooks the constraints imposed on 'non-aligned' actors by global power imbalances, as well as setting the parameters of Third World foreign policymaking within the strictures of the Cold War.

The division of Germany after the Second World War was confirmed by the *de jure* creation of the Federal Republic and the GDR in 1949. The two states soon began a global struggle over the question of the international status of the GDR. Under the so-called Hallstein Doctrine, West Germany threatened to sever relations with any state that opened relations with the East. For both German states, the matter became a zero-sum game that structured their foreign policies: the GDR pressing for international recognition, the Federal Republic seeking to avoid exactly that.<sup>5</sup> Frozen out in the West, the GDR saw the wave of decolonisation that swept over Africa as a fresh opportunity. The GDR's broader anti-imperial ideological world view, informed by the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, also propelled it into supporting independence struggles and socialist development in the Third World. The GDR's goal of establishing itself as a sovereign state therefore overlapped with anticolonial campaigns for self-determination.<sup>6</sup> Its political and material support for African liberation movements

<sup>3</sup> Lüthi, 'Non-Alignment'; Lüthi, 'Non-Aligned Movement'; Robert Vitalis, 'The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah and Other Fables of Bandung (Ban-Doong)', *Humanity*, 4 (2013), 261–88; Jeffrey James Byrne, 'Beyond Continents, Colours, and the Cold War: Yugoslavia, Algeria, and the Struggle for Non-Alignment', *International History Review*, 37 (2015), 912–32.

<sup>4</sup> 'Principles and Development', in Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism*, 195.

<sup>5</sup> William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949–1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Werner Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin: Der Diplomatische Krieg zwischen der BRD und der DDR, 1955–1973* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 2001); Young-Sun Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> See George Bodie, 'Global GDR? Sovereignty, Legitimacy and Decolonization in the German Democratic Republic, 1960–1989', PhD diss. (University College London, 2019).

increased over the course of the 1960s, including to FRELIMO and the ANC. In stark contrast, West Germany maintained relations with Portugal and South Africa, clinging to the line that it separated out trade from politics. This was a major asset for East German propaganda in the Third World. The GDR portrayed itself as an anticolonial, anti-racist state committed to international cooperation in its own search for recognition, while painting the Federal Republic as a supporter of white minority rule that betrayed continuities with its imperialist and fascist past.<sup>7</sup>

In the early 1960s, the GDR went on a diplomatic offensive in Africa. Its early endeavours in the radical states of West Africa came tantalisingly close to success. In 1960, the Federal Republic required frantic efforts to prevent Guinea from recognising the GDR. The following year, an East German delegation to West Africa obtained promises from Ghana, Guinea, and Mali that their states would press the GDR's case at the upcoming Non-Aligned Conference in Yugoslavia. 'Everyone knows that there are two Germanies', argued Kwame Nkrumah in Belgrade. 'The nations of the world should therefore recognize the existence of these two States to ensure them to co-exist peacefully.' But amid the crisis over the construction of the Berlin Wall, the non-aligned states found no common position. The conference's final communique refrained from taking a firm stance on the 'German question' and simply called for a 'peaceful solution'.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, none of the GDR's supporters in Africa was willing to risk the consequences of recognition, with the explicit threat of severed relations with Bonn, the attendant loss of much-needed aid, and the

<sup>7</sup> For a clear articulation of this logic, see Sebastian Gehrig, 'Reaching Out to the Third World: East Germany's Anti-Apartheid and Socialist Human Rights Campaign', *German History*, 36 (2018), 574–97. On West German relations with Portugal and South Africa, see Rui Lopes, *West Germany and the Portuguese Dictatorship, 1968–1974: Between Cold War and Colonialism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Tilman Dederich, 'Ostpolitik and the Relations between West Germany and South Africa', in Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer (eds.), *Ostpolitik, 1969–1974: European and Global Responses* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 206–31; Susanna Schrafstetter, 'A Nazi Diplomat Turned Apologist for Apartheid: Gustav Sonnenhol, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and West German Foreign Policy Towards South Africa', *German History*, 28 (2010), 44–66.

<sup>8</sup> Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 107–115, 125–29. See also Lüthi, 'Non-Aligned Movement', 102–11; Amit Das Gupta, 'The Non-Aligned and the German Question', in Mišković et al. (eds.), *Non-Aligned Movement*, 143–60.

general opprobrium that it would bring from the West. Although several African states permitted the opening of GDR trade missions in their capitals, none chose to recognise it.

This chapter draws heavily on state archives located in today's reunified Germany. The collections of the now obsolete GDR include the records of its Ministry for Foreign Affairs (*Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten*, MfAA) and the organs of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, as well as documents from the intelligence services or 'Stasi'. West German records come mainly from the Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*), plus the archives of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. As with all the 'Cold War' state archives used in this book, these documents reveal a particularly ideologically and geopolitically slanted view on Tanzanian affairs. However, they also exhibit an extraordinary preoccupation with the activities of the 'other' Germany in Dar es Salaam. Lengthy reports written by West and East German diplomats demonstrate ultrasensitive attitudes towards even the most minor movements of their rivals. They show that the German Cold War was an all-consuming struggle for its participants, which frequently obscured the real significance of local events. The GDR was afflicted by the Marxist-Leninist frameworks of analysis through which it interpreted and reported developments in Tanzania. The strict Marxist categories which it employed not only failed to capture the realities of socialist politics in Tanzania, but also misguided the GDR's responses to them. This became especially clear after the Arusha Declaration. But to find the origins of the 'German Cold War' in Dar es Salaam, we need to rewind back to 1964 and shift our focus to Zanzibar.

### **'One of the thorniest diplomatic problems in the modern world'**

On 28 January 1964, two weeks after the Zanzibar Revolution, A. M. Babu became the first foreign minister of a non-communist state to recognise the GDR.<sup>9</sup> The move took the West Germans by surprise. Bonn had initially claimed that it would recognise the revolutionary government on the condition that no East German diplomatic mission was established in Zanzibar. Under the influence of the

<sup>9</sup> Quotation from 'Understanding Friends', editorial, *Nationalist*, 25 June 1964, 4.

hardline ambassador to Tanganyika, Herbert Schroeder, the West German cabinet announced that it would not countenance relations with a Zanzibari government that maintained them with the GDR. Meanwhile, large numbers of East German diplomats, aid workers, and intelligence officers began arriving in Zanzibar. In the context of the meagre returns on the GDR's search for recognition in the Third World, this was a major breakthrough for East Berlin.<sup>10</sup>

This triangular 'diplomacy of recognition' – *Anerkennungsdiplomatie* – was complicated further by the Tanganyika-Zanzibar union. Among the powers that Zanzibar relinquished to the mainland government was control over its foreign policy. Bonn, like its Western allies, therefore welcomed the union as an opportunity to reverse the GDR's recent success in Zanzibar. After all, Nyerere had previously shown no inclination to rock the diplomatic boat in extending recognition to East Germany. He anticipated no difficulties in relegating the GDR embassy in Zanzibar to the status of a trade mission in Dar es Salaam, similar to situations in other African states at the time. Zanzibari politicians had other intentions. The two prominent Marxists who had been appointed to the union government, Babu and Kassim Hanga, wanted to retain full relations with the GDR.<sup>11</sup> So did the president of Zanzibar, Abeid Karume, who told the East German ambassador that '[i]f Tanganyika was not prepared to recognise the GDR, then we would prefer to break the union'.<sup>12</sup> Conversely, 'moderates' within the union cabinet, like Paul Bomani and Austin Shaba, who had both been involved in negotiations for West German assistance, balked at the prospect of upsetting a major donor.<sup>13</sup>

Nyerere was therefore left in a truly German *Zugzwang*, to borrow a term from chess: he was forced to take a decision in which any of the moves available would weaken his country's position vis-à-vis the status quo. To recognise the GDR would lead to a dispute with Bonn, which had been Tanganyika's third largest bilateral donor since

<sup>10</sup> On *Anerkennungsdiplomatie*, see Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 171–214; Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 155–57, 160–61, 178–79; Timothy Niblock, 'Aid and Foreign Policy in Tanzania, 1961–68', PhD diss. (University of Sussex, 1971), 215–63; Ulf Engel, "I will not recognise East Germany just because Bonn is stupid". *Anerkennungsdiplomatie in Tansania, 1964 bis 1965*, in Ulrich van der Heyden and Franziska Benger (eds.), *Kalter Krieg in Ostafrika: Die Beziehungen der DDR zu Sansibar und Tansania* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009), 9–30.

<sup>11</sup> Memcon (Phombeah), 29 July 1964, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98130, 38–47.

<sup>12</sup> Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 195. <sup>13</sup> Pratt, *Critical Phase*, 140.

independence, as well as cast his non-aligned government as an associate of the Eastern Bloc. To refuse to do so would risk the future of the union with Zanzibar. Nyerere attempted to charter a middle course in offering the GDR a consulate in Zanzibar, which would have jurisdiction for the whole of Tanzania. But even this was rejected by Bonn. Meanwhile, Karume refused to close the GDR's embassy on the islands. He signed a 'Friendship Agreement' with the East German ambassador. This angered Nyerere. On 26 June, the TANU newspaper, the *Nationalist* claimed that it had 'evidence that the East Germans are attempting to destroy our Union in the interests of their own desires . . . Through intrigue and sharp practice they are trying to secure, through the Union, a diplomatic status in Africa which has up to now been denied them.'<sup>14</sup> The article came with Nyerere's blessing. The next day, Oscar Kambona, the union foreign minister, announced that all embassies in Zanzibar were to be downgraded to consulates by the end of June. But even after the deadline passed, the East Germans continued to operate a de facto embassy in Zanzibar. Nyerere sought time for the situation to cool. Bonn agreed, and the dispute was placed on ice until the new year.

The impasse was ultimately resolved on 19 February 1965, when the Tanzanian government announced that the GDR would be permitted to open a low-level consulate-general in Dar es Salaam, provided it downgraded its Zanzibar embassy to a consulate. Tanzania explicitly stated that this did *not* constitute diplomatic recognition. Five days later, Bonn responded by cancelling military assistance for Tanzania, where West Germany had been providing training for the air force. Nyerere's response was even stronger. Angered by what he regarded as Bonn's attempts to manipulate his foreign policy through economic pressure, Nyerere announced that Tanzania would forgo all forms of aid from West Germany, worth around \$32.5 million. On 16 March, the West German cabinet cancelled all outstanding capital assistance to Tanzania.<sup>15</sup> As Nyerere later reflected, 'we had to choose whether to become a puppet state of Germany in return for any charity she cared to give us'.<sup>16</sup> Or, as he put it in a letter to other African heads of

<sup>14</sup> 'Were We Wrong?', editorial, *Nationalist*, 26 June 1964, 4. Zanzibar responded by banning the *Nationalist*.

<sup>15</sup> This covered only federal aid and so exempted assistance from the churches, state governments, and volunteer organisations.

<sup>16</sup> 'Principles and Development', in Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism*, 190.

state, the decision was 'a rather absurd way of demonstrating that our foreign and diplomatic position has nothing to do with aid'.<sup>17</sup> In private conversation with the UN secretary-general's personal representative, Nyerere said that the experience would make the government 'doubtful' about accepting aid 'from a country that is prone to playing the cold war game'.<sup>18</sup> The episode, together with the diplomatic run-ins with Britain and the United States explained in Chapter 1, shaped Nyerere's evolving world view. The West German threat demonstrated the need for greater economic independence. It helped pave the way to the Arusha Declaration and the notion of self-reliance.

The outcome of *Anerkennungsdiplomatie* left all three participant states in varying degrees of dissatisfaction. The GDR now had half a diplomatic loaf in East Africa, where little more than a year earlier it had none, but not quite the prized embassy it had held briefly in Zanzibar. It had also been accused of meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. The Federal Republic had averted the establishment of a full East German embassy in Tanzania, but the episode had exposed chinks in the armour of the Hallstein Doctrine. It also projected the image throughout the Third World of Bonn as an uncompromising power, preoccupied with playing Cold War games rather than supporting poor post-colonies. Nyerere's bold diplomacy earned Tanzania the moral high ground, but at considerable financial cost. He immediately tried to mend fences in Bonn, although he found the West German government resolutely opposed to renewing capital aid. To many Western eyes, Tanzania confirmed its reputation as a bastion of communist subversion in Africa. Perhaps the biggest winner was Bonn's and East Berlin's mutual Chinese rival, which seized on Nyerere's gesture for propaganda capital. 'Naturally a proud people prefer lean liberty to fat slavery', remarked the *Peking Review*.<sup>19</sup>

The diplomatic struggle between the two German states did not end with the establishment of the GDR's consulate general. Instead, the unsatisfactory resolution to the crisis localised the German Cold War in Dar es Salaam, as the one African city in which both states had some form of diplomatic representation. The GDR was by far the more active. Frozen out at the diplomatic level, it launched an *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Pratt, *Critical Phase*, 141.

<sup>18</sup> Ivan Smith to Thant, 13 April 1965, Ivan Smith Papers, BL, MSS Eng. c. 6466, 171.

<sup>19</sup> 'Lean Liberty and Fat Slavery', *Peking Review*, 19 March 1965, 21.

(‘publicity work’) campaign, led by its consul-general, Gottfried Lessing.<sup>20</sup> This targeted ministers and officials who were known or likely sympathisers to Eastern European socialism. These included Babu and Hanga, whose Marxist proclivities were well established. Kambona had visited the GDR in 1962 as part of what the East Germans described as a scheme to establish ‘good working relations’ between ‘progressive forces in East Africa’ and ‘Communist parties in socialist countries’.<sup>21</sup> He became another regular GDR contact-point among the TANU leadership. The GDR also found sympathy among the radical staff at the party newspapers, some of whom socialised at the Palm Beach Hotel, a short walk from the consulate-general. The *Nationalist* occasionally attacked the West German press over its negative coverage of Tanzanian affairs.<sup>22</sup> In November 1965, it reproduced an article from *Christ und Welt* which portrayed Dar es Salaam as a centre of extremism and regional destabilisation. This was accompanied by an editorial which alleged that ‘this campaign seeks to discredit German friends of Tanzania [i.e., the GDR] by suggesting that they are unpatriotic, uninterested in German unity, and pro-Communist’.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the small size of the consulate-general, the GDR ran an intense programme of print propaganda.<sup>24</sup> A recurrent theme was the connection, often exaggerated, between West Germany and Tanzania’s principal adversaries, Portugal and South Africa. GDR bulletins,

<sup>20</sup> Lessing’s fascinating career deserves a biographical sidenote. Born in St Petersburg in 1914 of partial Jewish descent, he fled from Nazi Germany to Britain in 1938 and then moved to Rhodesia during the war. There, he worked as a lawyer, co-founded the Southern Rhodesian Communist Party, and was briefly married to the author Doris Lessing. In 1950, he relocated to the GDR and served in various government positions, including as trade representative to Indonesia. From 1962, Lessing worked as the head of MfAA’s Africa Section before taking up his position as consul-general in Tanzania in 1965. He was killed in violence during the Uganda-Tanzania war in 1979, while serving as the GDR’s ambassador to Kampala. See ‘Lessing, Gottfried’, in Helmut Müller-Enbergs, Jan Wielgohs, and Dieter Hoffmann (eds.), *Wer war wer in der DDR? Ein biographisches Lexikon* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2000), 520.

<sup>21</sup> Foreign Policy and International Relations Division, SED, 16 April 1962, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98129, 7–9.

<sup>22</sup> ‘What Enemies Say’, *Nationalist*, 18 October 1965, 4.

<sup>23</sup> ‘How German Press Spreads Evil against Tanzania’ and ‘An Evil Intention’, editorial, *Nationalist*, 8 November 1965, 4.

<sup>24</sup> George Roberts, ‘Press, Propaganda and the German Democratic Republic’s Search for Recognition in Tanzania, 1964–72’, in Philip Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva (eds.), *Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War* (London: IB Tauris, 2018), 152–53.

brochures, and newspaper inserts claimed these relationships as evidence that West Germany had not escaped from its own colonial and fascist past. In an appeal to local sensibilities, this propaganda also highlighted the violence perpetrated by German colonialism in Tanganyika.<sup>25</sup> Bonn lamented the greater resources which the GDR pumped into this publicity work. After visiting Tanzania, a federal minister expressed his concern at the 'well-produced' handouts distributed by the East Germans and Bonn's incapability of mounting a comparable operation.<sup>26</sup> But the dark arts of propaganda could also backfire. In December 1965, the West German embassy complained to the Tanzanian government about the circulation of the so-called *Braunbuch*, which listed prominent West German politicians and officials who had associations with the Nazi regime. After Nyerere banned the book, Lessing was hauled before the Tanzanian authorities and severely reprimanded. Shortly afterwards, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a circular prohibiting attacks on third-party states in Tanzania. 'We will have to be more cautious and reserved from now on', wrote an East German diplomat, tellingly.<sup>27</sup>

For all this publicity work, the GDR made little progress in Tanzania during the two years after the opening of the consulate-general. Its aid remained concentrated in Zanzibar, but it understood that full recognition could only come about through negotiation with the more circumspect union government. Talks in late 1965 over long-term aid, technical assistance, and trade agreements gave little encouragement.<sup>28</sup> In March 1966, the GDR tabled an aid package worth £600,000 to Tanzania, one-third in 'humanitarian relief' for homeless people, the rest in an interest-free loan. Despite divisions in cabinet, Tanzania rejected the offer, holding out hope of future aid from Bonn.<sup>29</sup> At the turn of 1967, a Stasi report observed that the Federal Republic's hard-line policy had been ultimately successful. No other African states had since established official ties of any sort with the GDR. Meanwhile, Bonn had been 'gradually and quietly improving its

<sup>25</sup> Hong, *Cold War Germany*, 290–94.

<sup>26</sup> Leber to Brandt, 21 March 1967, PAAA, NA 6408.

<sup>27</sup> Roberts, 'Press', 153–54.

<sup>28</sup> Helmut Matthes, 'Zur Entwicklung außenpolitischer Grundlagen der Beziehungen zwischen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Vereinigten Republik Tansania bis Mitte der siebziger Jahre', in van der Heyden and Bengel (eds.), *Kalter Krieg*, 73.

<sup>29</sup> Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 219.

relations with Tanzania'.<sup>30</sup> More generally, the Eastern Bloc looked at China's growing importance in Tanzania with concern. For the GDR, the situation on the eve of the Arusha Declaration was gloomy.

### The Arusha Declaration and the Eastern Bloc

The events of 1967 provided the GDR with new hope, while also exposing the shortcomings of its political and ideological approach in Tanzania. As we saw in the previous chapter, Western observers in Dar es Salaam received the Arusha Declaration with alarm. In contrast, the Soviet Union and its allies responded with quiet optimism. The document's idea of African socialism may not have been congruent with Marxist doctrine, but they welcomed its revolutionary intent all the same. On the basis of flawed ideological assumptions, the GDR sensed an opportunity and intensified its publicity work in Dar es Salaam. However, this led them into the bitter post-Arusha disputes among the Tanzanian elite. Guided by rigid Marxist-Leninist assumptions, GDR diplomats attempted to strengthen their influence among what they believed to be the Tanzanian 'left'. The result was that East Germany's reputation in the eyes of Nyerere was sullied further still.

The Eastern European socialists greeted the Arusha Declaration as an opportunity for increasing their limited foothold in Tanzania.<sup>31</sup> The East Africa specialist at the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Lessing that after the Arusha Declaration, the Warsaw Pact states had to 'strengthen their cooperation with Tanzania, in order to encourage progressive development and to counter the influence of China'.<sup>32</sup> The Stasi believed that encounters with the leaders of Guinea, Mali, and the United Arab Republic had all been influential in shaping Nyerere's turn to socialist revolution. It presented the Arusha Declaration as the continued effect of events in Zanzibar three years earlier. 'The fact is that without the existence of the Zanzibar Revolution, the present developments on the mainland would have been unthinkable.'<sup>33</sup> This 'diffusionist' understanding of developments in the region ironically shared much ground with the hyperbole about communist encroachment that characterised the Western responses to Arusha. It was hopelessly wide of the

<sup>30</sup> 'Uschi', 13 January 1967, BStU, MfS, HV A, no. 221, 438–39.

<sup>31</sup> 'Tanzania: Soviet Views on the Arusha Programme', *Mizan*, 9 (1967), 197–201.

<sup>32</sup> Lessing, 24 February 1967, PAAA, MfAA, M3, 136, 1–8.

<sup>33</sup> 'Oskar', 25 February 1968, BStU, MfS, HV A, no. 222, 318–23.

mark: the Arusha Declaration had a totally different ideologically trajectory from the Marxism and racialism of the Zanzibar Revolution. Nonetheless, the GDR responded to these rays of hope by increasing its publicity work in Dar es Salaam. The ADN, the East German news agency, introduced a new Swahili-language bulletin. It also provided Tanzanian bureaucrats with copies of articles from the West German press which were critical of the Arusha Declaration.<sup>34</sup>

More importantly, the GDR consulate-general intensified efforts to forge links with ‘progressive politicians’ in Tanzania. It singled out Babu, Hanga, and Kambona.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the first half of 1967, East German diplomats held a series of meetings with these individuals, as they attempted to establish the shifting power dynamics in the post-Arusha landscape.<sup>36</sup> Even after Kambona’s resignation from government in June, GDR officials continued to consult him on fast-moving developments. Kambona explained that Tanzania was heading to the ‘right’. He cited the retention of ‘reactionaries’ in key positions in the government as evidence. Such descriptions tallied with the GDR’s own ideological outlook.<sup>37</sup> This ‘contact work’ with the likes of Kambona proved to be a major misjudgement. As the previous chapter established, the Arusha Declaration opened up a number of rifts among the Tanzanian political elite, which did not split along the ‘left-right’ political spectrum through which the GDR interpreted events. The ideological readings of East German diplomats led them to cooperate with politicians whose influence waned after Arusha: at best, they were marginalised; at worse, they became pariahs.

For Kambona, the GDR also offered a potential means of extricating himself from his dispute with Nyerere. Shortly after the reshuffle, Kambona sought to engineer an invitation to East Germany. He did so via his close ally, Dennis Phombeah, a civil servant and the GDR’s key contact in Tanzania, as well as sometime Czechoslovakian intelligence informer.<sup>38</sup> At an international trade meeting in Geneva, Phombeah

<sup>34</sup> Fischer to Press Division, MfAA, 6 April 1967, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 121.

<sup>35</sup> Lessing to Kiesewetter, 14 February 1967, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 58–59.

<sup>36</sup> Lessing to Kiesewetter, 27 February 1967, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 94–97.

<sup>37</sup> Fischer to Kiesewetter, Kern, Schüssler, 4 July 1967, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 160–62.

<sup>38</sup> James R. Brennan, ‘The Secret Lives of Dennis Phombeah: Decolonization, the Cold War, and African Political Intelligence, 1953–1974’, *International History Review*, 43 (2021), 153–69.

approached a representative of the East German delegation. He said that Kambona had resigned from his government and party positions after major disagreements with Nyerere, particularly over Hanga's departure from government. Phombeah asked whether the GDR might be able to provide Kambona with an excuse to travel to East Germany, perhaps for further medical treatment or a 'study visit'.<sup>39</sup> East Berlin told the consulate-general in Dar es Salaam that this would not be possible.<sup>40</sup> The GDR seemed to have already realised that it had backed the wrong horses in Tanzania.

Too late, the East Germans began to question their post-Arusha strategy of consolidating their ties with a 'progressive' faction of the Tanzanian political elite. 'This contact work could at the present time be used by right-wing forces and the West Germans against the position of the GDR', noted a MfAA report, which also questioned Kambona's motives and trustworthiness. East Berlin therefore instructed the consulate-general to break off all contact with the 'Kambona group'.<sup>41</sup> Yet even after Kambona's flight into exile, the GDR did not cut all ties with his associates. For example, on 27 July, an East German diplomat met Oscar's brother, Otini, for dinner at the Palm Beach Hotel.<sup>42</sup> The acrimonious war of words between Nyerere and the exiled Kambona left the GDR in no doubt that continued contact of this type was dangerous. By October, the GDR seemed to have learned its lessons, when it blocked an attempt by Hanga and Kambona to fly to East Berlin. The pair had been in Conakry and obtained tickets from Air Guinée to return to London via the GDR. However, the East Germans intervened to amend their tickets. When Kambona and Hanga changed aeroplanes in Algiers, they found they had been rerouted to London via Paris instead. But by this point the damage to the GDR's reputation had already been done.<sup>43</sup> Kambona and Phombeah were in exile; within days of his ill-fated return to Tanzania in December, Hanga was in prison.

Nyerere's opinion of the GDR had never been high. East Germany's attempts to cut deals directly with the Zanzibari authorities at the height of the crisis over recognition in 1964 had already drawn the

<sup>39</sup> Rose to Scholz, 16 June 1967, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C1469/72, 13–15.

<sup>40</sup> Fritsch to Rose, 5 July 1967, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C1469/72, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Africa Division, 10 July 1967, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C763/74, 16–24.

<sup>42</sup> Uhlig, 1 August 1967, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 178–81.

<sup>43</sup> Hüchel, 25 October 1967, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C1469/72, 1–2.

president's wrath. He was wary about reports of the GDR's subversive activities elsewhere in Africa. In 1966, after the coup in Accra, it was revealed that Ghanaian intelligence officers were being trained at a special school by the Stasi. Nyerere responded by reducing the number of employees at the consulate-general in Dar es Salaam from ten to six.<sup>44</sup> The GDR's shadowy relations with Kambona and Hanga during the unrest of 1967 confirmed these doubts. So, too, did further suspicions that the GDR was spreading rumours to smear West Germany's supporters in Tanzania. In December, a leaflet signed by the 'Revolutionary Committee of the TANU Youth League' alleged that '[i]mperialists and bootlickers have formed a perfidious conspiracy to divert our nation from its socialist way'. It accused Austin Shaba, the minister of housing, of working for the CIA.<sup>45</sup> Shaba was among the most pro-West German members of cabinet. An official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the American ambassador that Nyerere thought that the GDR was behind the flyer, which was denounced in the Tanzanian press.<sup>46</sup> At the time, these doubts only reached the GDR through murmurs in Dar es Salaam. It was not until 1970, when confronted with the GDR's foreign minister's desperate appeals for diplomatic recognition, that Nyerere brought up the issue. He accused the East Germans of 'meddling' in Tanzanian affairs in 1967, by talking to 'disloyal MPs and other officials' in order to encourage them to do 'stupid things'.<sup>47</sup>

The GDR's mistakes in Tanzania were more than just a series of blunders. They were the product of the inflexible Marxist-Leninist framework through which the East Germans interpreted politics in the country. As explained in the previous chapter, Tanzanian politics in the time of *ujamaa* did not fit neatly into the left-right Cold War grids favoured by foreign observers. The language of scientific socialism induced East German officials to force Tanzanian politicians into pigeonholes which did not reflect their ideological leanings and flattened out all manner of personal disagreements. This problem affected Western diplomats' understandings of Tanzanian affairs too, but their

<sup>44</sup> Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 189.

<sup>45</sup> Enclosed in Burns to State Dept, 7 December 1967, NARA, RG 59, CFPF 1967-69, Box 151, CSM TANZAN.

<sup>46</sup> Memcon (Nyakyi, Pickering), 27 December 1967, NARA RG 59, CFPF 1967-69, POL TANZAN-US.

<sup>47</sup> Memcon (Nyerere, Winzer), 10 April 1970, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C779/75, 12-23. Nyerere referred to 'some of your officials', hinting that he meant junior diplomats, rather than the senior consul general, Lessing.

approach was more tolerant than their Eastern counterparts. Tanzanians were adept at touching the correct ideological buttons here: both Phombeah and Kambona told GDR diplomats that the ‘right’ had gained ground after the Arusha Declaration.<sup>48</sup> Reflecting back on events, an East German news agency correspondent identified that Lessing’s reliance on ‘Kambona and other “left” forces proved quite detrimental’.<sup>49</sup>

If at first glance the Arusha Declaration represented grounds for optimism for the GDR, by the end of 1967 its outlook in Tanzania was more negative. An East German report coldly concluded that Tanzania’s ‘conception of socialism does not comply with modern science’ and so ‘will not lead to the construction of socialist society’.<sup>50</sup> Yet, pessimistic though this forecast was, the GDR still regarded Tanzania as a ‘key point’ in its foreign policy towards sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>51</sup> After all, its primary task was not to help build a Marxist-Leninist state, but to gain diplomatic recognition. Prospects looked better for the West, including the Federal Republic. Nyerere emphasised that Tanzania still remained receptive to offers of aid, provided they came without strings attached. He stressed that ‘self-reliance and socialism’ did not mean severing aid relationships with any potential partner, including in the West. ‘Tanzania has not said it does not want international assistance’, clarified Nyerere, pointing to the example of the railway to Zambia. ‘Overseas capital will also be welcome for any project where it can make our own efforts more effective – where it acts as a catalyst for Tanzanian activity.’<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, West Germany rather than East Germany emerged the stronger in this new stage in Tanzania’s postcolonial history.

### *Ostpolitik in Afrika*

While Tanzania experienced the internal transformations of the Arusha Declaration, West German foreign policy was also going through

<sup>48</sup> Rose to Scholz, 16 June 1967, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C1469/72, 13–15; Fischer to Kiesewetter, Kern, Schüssler, 4 July 1967, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 160–62.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Spacek, ‘Die Anfänge in Sansibar und in Dar es Salaam’, in van der Heyden and Benger (eds.), *Kalter Krieg*, 177.

<sup>50</sup> Africa Division, 5 January 1968, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98137, 1–27.

<sup>51</sup> Africa Division, 11 April 1968, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C751/74, 10–36.

<sup>52</sup> ‘The Purpose Is Man’, in Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism*, 322.

something of a revolution. In December 1966, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) formed a 'grand coalition' government in Bonn, led by the CDU's Kurt Georg Kiesinger. Willy Brandt, the chairman of the SPD, was appointed foreign minister. His entry into government prefigured a major rethinking in West Germany's relations with Eastern Europe, which had overspill effects on its policy towards the Third World.

As mayor of Berlin since 1957, Brandt had long sought a way out of the Cold War impasse that divided his city and country. He sensed a grassroots desire for a fresh approach to foreign policy – a 'New Eastern Policy', or '*Neue Ostpolitik*'. Rather than isolate the communist regimes, Brandt wanted to reach out to Eastern Europe, building connections through trade negotiations and cultural exchanges across the Cold War divide. In a Europe stalemated by nuclear stand-off, Brandt believed that opening dialogue with communist societies would spread Western consumerism and liberal values to the East. In the short-to-medium term, this would lead to improved relations with the Warsaw Pact states and a *modus vivendi* with the GDR. In the long term, it might even pave the way for German reunification. The policy was encapsulated in the words of Egon Bahr, Brandt's close associate: 'change through rapprochement'.<sup>53</sup>

The historiography on Brandt's *Ostpolitik* overwhelmingly focuses on its European elaboration at the centre of the Cold War. Yet, as Sara Lorenzini acknowledges, *Ostpolitik* had much broader implications for West German foreign policy.<sup>54</sup> Bonn's decisions to establish relations with Romania in January 1967 and Yugoslavia in January 1968 were key steps in Brandt's initiative. But they contradicted the core principle of the Hallstein Doctrine, which hitherto had governed West Germany's foreign relations (even if, as the Tanzanian example demonstrated, it was scarcely watertight). This global dimension to *Ostpolitik* was problematic for West Germany: in the light of the agreements with Bucharest and Belgrade, other states might be tempted to recognise the GDR, with less fear of repercussions from Bonn. West German policymakers believed that this would weaken their

<sup>53</sup> The literature on *Ostpolitik* is vast. Among recent English-language work, see Gottfried Niedhart, 'Ostpolitik: Transformation Through Communication and the Quest for Peaceful Change', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 18 (2016), 14–59.

<sup>54</sup> Sara Lorenzini, 'Globalising Ostpolitik', *Cold War History*, 9 (2009), 223–42; see also Fink and Schaefer (eds.), *Ostpolitik*.

bargaining position in Europe, since the GDR would be less prepared to make concessions to Bonn if international recognition was already forthcoming across the Third World.<sup>55</sup>

*Neue Ostpolitik* was paralleled by a shift in West Germany's *Afrikapolitik*. This was laid out by Brandt at a conference of West German ambassadors to sub-Saharan Africa held in early 1968 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. There, as Lorenzini notes, 'the clash between the old thinking of the diplomatic establishment and the more open attitude of the new political leadership became manifest'. Brandt told the meeting that the priority of West Germany's relations in Africa was to drum up support for its stance on the German question. This, as such, was nothing new. But now it was to be linked to development assistance and West Germany's revamped image of an outward-looking social democratic welfare state. Brandt did not mention the Hallstein Doctrine. In contrast, a senior official at the *Auswärtiges Amt* restated West Germany's commitment to the Hallstein Doctrine and claimed that Bonn's policy towards Tanzania had been a success.<sup>56</sup> His line was characteristic of the *Auswärtiges Amt*'s conservative approach to foreign policymaking in the late 1960s, which maintained an overriding concern for European Cold War geopolitics and a scepticism towards Africa.<sup>57</sup>

In these circumstances, the appointment of a new West German ambassador to Dar es Salaam in October 1967 gave Bonn's approach to Tanzania a shot in the arm. Norbert Hebich was much more relaxed than his predecessor, who had overseen the crisis of 1965. Hebich told the Soviet ambassador that he accepted the existence of two German states and believed that the Hallstein Doctrine was unsustainable.<sup>58</sup> In December, he set out the case for bringing Tanzania in from the cold to the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Hebich expressed concern at East Germany's expanding presence in the country at the same time as more West German technical experts were being withdrawn. He noted that given the questions he was receiving about the Hallstein Doctrine, the Tanzanians had noticed the 'new orientation of our *Ostpolitik*'. Just as Yugoslavia was considered a special case in the communist world, he

<sup>55</sup> Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 199–201.

<sup>56</sup> Lorenzini, 'Globalising Ostpolitik', 228–29.

<sup>57</sup> Schrafstetter, 'Nazi Diplomat'; Lopes, *West Germany*.

<sup>58</sup> Lessing to Kiesewetter, 14 October 1967, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 275–76.

argued, so Tanzania should be treated as such in Africa. He recommended a 'broad-minded policy towards Tanzania', to provide 'greater freedom of manoeuvre to defend our interests than the present insistence on barely tenable standpoints'.<sup>59</sup> Similar views could be found in the West German press. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* argued that there was little to be gained by 'crying over spilt milk'. It suggested that the change in ambassador was an opportunity for improving relations with Tanzania.<sup>60</sup>

However, the Auswärtiges Amt remained implacable in its stance towards Tanzania. In March 1968, it prepared a lengthy report on relations with Tanzania in response to a request made by Kai-Uwe von Hassel, the federal minister for expellees. Von Hassel had a personal interest in the matter: he had been born in Tanganyika in 1913 and then returned there to work as a businessman between the wars.<sup>61</sup> During the crisis of early 1965, von Hassel had spoken out in cabinet against imposing sanctions on Tanzania.<sup>62</sup> However, the Auswärtiges Amt proved unsympathetic. New capital aid for Tanzania would come at the expense of states which had greater respect for West German interests, it argued. Tanzanian policy was increasingly anti-Western and the country was becoming a 'military bastion for Red China'. It did nothing to stop the GDR's campaign against West Germany. Moreover, providing new capital aid to Tanzania would encourage other African countries to institutionalise contact with the GDR. There was therefore to be no immediate rapprochement with Tanzania.<sup>63</sup> Cold War concerns about Tanzania's orientation towards the socialist world and memories of 1965 prevented the Auswärtiges Amt from recommending the more conciliatory approach advised by Hebich. This changed as Brandt's *Ostpolitik* gathered momentum.

On the Tanzanian side, *Ostpolitik* appeared to represent a fresh opportunity to revive its relationship with West Germany. Ever since the crisis of 1965 Nyerere had sought to mitigate his damaged relationship with Bonn, albeit without much success. As argued earlier, he had

<sup>59</sup> Hebich to Auswärtiges Amt, 8 December 1967, PAAA, NA 6408.

<sup>60</sup> Herbert Kaufmann, 'Worüber zwischen Bonn und Tansania gesprochen werden könnte', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 December 1967, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Britta Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany: Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 113–14.

<sup>62</sup> Engel, "I will not recognise", 24.

<sup>63</sup> Wever, 8 March 1968, PAAA, NA 6408.

also emphasised after the Arusha Declaration that Tanzania still welcomed no-strings-attached foreign aid. This becomes clear from encounters between senior Tanzanian politicians and Yugoslav officials. The Yugoslav ambassador reported to East German colleagues that he had pressed the GDR's case to the Tanzanian government. The second vice-president, Rashidi Kawawa, responded by stating that recognition was a pragmatic rather than an ideological question, as Tanzania wished to investigate economic cooperation with West Germany.<sup>64</sup> The external pressures placed upon Tanzania also contributed to this pragmatic position. On a visit to Belgrade in April 1968, Amir Jamal, the minister for finance, stressed to his Yugoslav hosts that a 'certain amount of frank talking was necessary'. Referring to Rhodesia and Portugal, Jamal drew attention to 'the geopolitical circumstances of our country' and 'the hostilities surrounding us', in asking for a degree of flexibility in straying from stringent non-alignment in economic matters.<sup>65</sup> Senior figures within the government felt that having taken on the burden of supporting Africa's liberation movements, Tanzania required some leeway in developing a non-aligned foreign policy. This included accepting aid from states that continued to work with the white minority regimes, like West Germany. Indeed, just prior to his visit to Belgrade, Jamal had discussed the implications of Bonn's renewed relations with Yugoslavia and Romania with Hebich, the West German ambassador. Jamal also raised the possibility of a visit to Bonn. In the new conditions created by *Ostpolitik*, the relationship between Tanzania and West Germany was beginning to thaw.<sup>66</sup>

### **'No recognition by the backdoor': The GDR's Travails in Tanzania**

As Tanzania put out feelers to West Germany, the GDR continued to struggle for a diplomatic breakthrough. A belief that the recalibration involved in *Ostpolitik* might open up the possibility of Tanzanian recognition proved ill-founded. Instead, it experienced a series of

<sup>64</sup> Lessing, 17 October 1967, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C1467/72, 56–63.

<sup>65</sup> 'Resume of the Minister of Finance's Visit to Yugoslavia and Attendance in the Consultative Group Meetings in Paris', n.d. [April 1968], NRC, PMO, Box 312, T3/42, 4A.

<sup>66</sup> Hebich, 5 March 1968, PAAA, NA, 6408.

public relations disasters in the aftermath of further propaganda scandals and then the fallout from events in Czechoslovakia. This came against the backdrop of China's perceived rising influence in Dar es Salaam. The Tanzanian response to this nadir in its relations with the GDR is instructive: it sought to reassure the Eastern Bloc that it remained true to its non-aligned credentials, but this rapprochement fell short of the recognition of the GDR. Despite the GDR's support for African liberation movements, Nyerere calculated he had nothing to gain from its recognition, especially as *Ostpolitik* provided opportunities to re-engage with Bonn.

The Soviet Union and the GDR initially reacted to Brandt's *Ostpolitik* with concern. In the short-term, East Berlin believed that Bonn wanted to bypass and thereby isolate the GDR from its allies. Taking a longer-term perspective, the East German leadership also worried about the integrity of the communist bloc should Brandt succeed in opening up perforations in the Berlin Wall. After Romania opened relations with West Germany in January 1967, Eastern Bloc leaders gathered in Warsaw, where they adopted a common position in order to prevent any repetition. Moscow sent a memorandum to selected non-aligned leaders, including Nyerere, warning them of the 'neocolonial' nature of the Hallstein Doctrine, which was 'an expression of great power policy', in the same mould of Second Reich imperialism and Third Reich fascism. It called on the memorandum's recipients to recognise the GDR, without success.<sup>67</sup>

Navigating the implications of *Ostpolitik* became part of the GDR's routine diplomacy and publicity work in Dar es Salaam. Lessing reported that there seemed to have been a 'rethinking process' and 'change in tactics' in Bonn's policy in Tanzania.<sup>68</sup> The GDR noted an intensification in West German propaganda activity, including the launch of a Swahili-language news bulletin.<sup>69</sup> On the one hand, this posed a danger to the GDR. The consulate-general highlighted West Germany's practice of 'bridge-building', by which Heibich cultivated ties with Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, and Polish diplomats in an attempt to isolate the GDR. On the other hand, the thaw in Bonn's relations with Eastern Europe provided the GDR with

<sup>67</sup> Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 200–201.

<sup>68</sup> Lessing to Kiesewetter, 12 February 1968, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98136, 428–34.

<sup>69</sup> Zielke to Fischer, 5 June 1968, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98136, 441–44.

precedents which lent themselves to the argument that the Hallstein Doctrine no longer applied. A senior Tanzanian bureaucrat told Lessing in September 1967 that the West German government 'only formally maintains the Hallstein Doctrine and no longer believes in it'.<sup>70</sup> The GDR sought to capitalise on this perceived openness in Tanzanian attitudes. In early 1968, it used the example of Yugoslavia in both printed material and meetings with Tanzanian officials to make the case for recognition.<sup>71</sup> However, Nyerere seemed more interested in taking advantage of re-engaging with Bonn than using the relaxation of the 'German question' to strengthen relations with East Berlin.

Just as these openings offered the GDR a glimmer of hope, its standing in Tanzania suffered further blows. In mid-1968, the appearance of several anonymous pamphlets in Dar es Salaam stirred up minor controversy. The first, entitled 'Outlook from the Pamirs', contained a vicious assault on China. It claimed that Beijing planned to build an 'Asiatic Reich' and described Mao as a 'Socialist Genghis Khan'. Two Swahili tracts followed: one criticised government policy, the other was a scurrilous personal attack on Nyerere. Owing to its reputation, suspicion for this 'black literature' immediately fell on the GDR. An editorial in the *Nationalist* warned the Eastern Bloc against interfering in Tanzanian affairs. 'We did not fight against the Western colonialists to become the playthings of any Eastern country', it stated. Diplomats of all Cold War stripes felt it was written by Nyerere himself and addressed to East Germany.<sup>72</sup> This reflected the president's general dissatisfaction with East German propaganda, both overt and covert. When Hebich, the West German ambassador, complained about the content of the GDR's news bulletins, Nyerere did not hide his displeasure. He thought that East German propaganda was counterproductive: it was 'slapping itself in the face' and 'showing its inferiority complex'.<sup>73</sup>

Nyerere's disdain for the GDR went beyond just its propaganda activities. He was a firm supporter of German reunification, acknowledging that the country had been split in two by Cold War politics. As

<sup>70</sup> GDR consulate-general, Dar es Salaam, 14 November 1967, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98136, 409–23.

<sup>71</sup> Lessing to Kiesewetter, 11 March 1968, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 431–35; Lessing, 3 April 1968, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 439–42.

<sup>72</sup> Roberts, 'Press', 159.

<sup>73</sup> Hebich to Auswärtiges Amt, 6 July 1968, PAAA, NA 6408.

early as December 1964, in the midst of the *Anerkennungsdiplomatie* saga, Nyerere compared the union between the previously divided peoples of Tanganyika and Zanzibar with the German situation. He told a rally in Dar es Salaam that 'when people cross the [Berlin] Wall to rejoin their brethren on the other side of the wall, they rejoice'.<sup>74</sup> Tanzania's ambassador to Bonn recalled similar sentiments. 'We were the United Republic of Tanzania', he said. 'So as a country which seeks to unite its people, we had every sympathy for [*Ostpolitik*]. That's why we welcomed the efforts of Willy Brandt.'<sup>75</sup> But this went hand in hand with a more negative view of the GDR. Nyerere believed that East Germany was fundamentally an illegitimate state. In July 1968, Nyerere told Heibich, that the East German government did not represent the people of the 'Zone' and was merely a Soviet puppet. In August, he drew a comparison between the GDR and the situation in South Korea or South Vietnam. Whereas the latter two countries were dependent on American support yet could at least claim to govern their own territory, he told Kai-Uwe von Hassel, the GDR was simply under Soviet occupation.<sup>76</sup>

The GDR's reputation in Tanzania was therefore already at a low when, on the morning of 21 August, news reached Dar es Salaam that a Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia had brought a swift end to the reformist socialism of the 'Prague Spring'. Among African states, Tanzania was especially vocal in its condemnation.<sup>77</sup> Editorials screamed outrage and a demonstration led by university students ended with stones being thrown at the Soviet embassy. The Warsaw Pact states were accused of betraying the causes of international socialism and anti-imperialism. For the GDR, which flaunted its commitment to self-determination via its support for Third World liberation movements, this was a bitter blow. From an East German angle, the invasion also undermined its claims to be an advocate for self-determination. As Nyerere later pointed out to the West Germans, events in Czechoslovakia showed the narrow limits of freedom for the nominally sovereign states of the Eastern Bloc.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> 'President's Speech at the 1964 Republic Day Rally', 10 December 1964, enclosed in NAN, 2.05.253/254.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Anthony Nyakyi, Masaki, Dar es Salaam, 28 July 2015.

<sup>76</sup> Von Hassel to Kiesinger, 9 September 1968, BA-K, B136/3001.

<sup>77</sup> The Tanzanian reaction to the invasion is considered in detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>78</sup> Extracts from report on Eppler's visit to Tanzania and Kenya, April 1970, enclosed in BA-K, B213/7673.

However, this defiant Tanzanian response to the invasion of Czechoslovakia also posed a public relations problem for Nyerere. These frictions with the Eastern Bloc came at a time when Tanzania's non-aligned credentials were being questioned due to its close relationship with China. The conclusion of the TAZARA railway agreement was only the most eye-catching of a plethora of Sino-Tanzanian initiatives. In February 1969, the Tanzanian government decided that, on the expiration of arrangements with Canada, it would accept military aid from Beijing alone.<sup>79</sup> Nyerere therefore tried to dampen talk of Chinese influence in Tanzania. He told a reporter that 'we are a stubborn people. The Chinese will learn that if they want to control us they will get into trouble.'<sup>80</sup> Nyerere recognised the added layer of complexity that the Sino-Soviet split had added to the Cold War. Speaking at a meeting of non-aligned states in Dar es Salaam in 1970, he noted that the rise of China had complicated the Cold War: 'the so-called "Iron Curtain" has become less solid', he noted, with an implicit reference to *Ostpolitik*. Nyerere continued: 'whether a "Bamboo Curtain" exists or does not exist, the People's Republic of China does exist. The "Power Game" has become three-sided, and those wishing to stand outside it have further complications to deal with.'<sup>81</sup> Continuing to work with the Soviet Bloc was therefore an essential aspect of maintaining a triangular balancing act between the superpowers, especially as Eastern European states continued to finance, arm, and train African liberation movements.

The appointment of Stephen Mhando as minister of state for foreign affairs in a November 1968 cabinet reshuffle was part of this strategy to rebuild Tanzania's relations with the Eastern Bloc. Born in 1918, Mhando was one of the first Tanganyikans to have travelled what became the well-worn path from Makerere College into nationalist politics. He was among the most sympathetic members of TANU's inner circles to Eastern Europe, especially the GDR. Between 1961 and 1963, Mhando had taught Swahili in Leipzig, where he had married an East German. On his return to Tanzania, he had served in editorial positions for the TANU press. This gave him good

<sup>79</sup> CIA, 'Nyerere's Plans for Tanzania', 16 January 1970, RNL, NSCF, Box 745, Folder 3.

<sup>80</sup> 'Tanzania Stubborn – Nyerere', *Standard*, 7 May 1969, 1.

<sup>81</sup> 'Developing Tasks of Non-Alignment', in Nyerere, *Freedom and Development*, 161.

connections with Horst Schlegel, the local ADN correspondent.<sup>82</sup> Subsequently, Mhando was appointed the managing director of the Tanganyika Sisal Marketing Association, where he proposed a restructuring of trade arrangements which, according to the British high commissioner, would have facilitated sales to the socialist world.<sup>83</sup> He was also the president of the GDR's All-African Initiative Committee, a network of African elites committed to developing 'friendship' with the GDR.<sup>84</sup> Mhando privately told the East Germans immediately after the invasion of Czechoslovakia that the Tanzanian government's response had been inappropriate.<sup>85</sup>

In short, Mhando was the perfect intermediary for Nyerere as he attempted to demonstrate to the Soviet bloc that he was committed to the principle of non-alignment and sought only friendly relations with Eastern Europe. According to one former Tanzanian diplomat, Mhando used his background to maximise aid connections with the Eastern Bloc.<sup>86</sup> In January 1969, Mhando told Schlegel that Nyerere had given the all-clear to the conclusion of government-level agreements between the GDR and Tanzania.<sup>87</sup> The GDR recognised that these steps should not be seen as representing any sea change in the Tanzanian position. After all, Nyerere still retained full oversight over foreign relations (as with all foreign affairs ministerial appointments after Kambona relinquished the portfolio, Mhando was a 'minister of state', rather than full cabinet member). An East German delegation sent to attend the anniversary of the Zanzibar Revolution therefore perceived the olive branches offered by Nyerere and Mhando as being rooted in 'tactical-pragmatic considerations' rather than ideological inclination.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, this was clear progress from the nadir to which relations had slipped in mid-1968. It was in these circumstances that 'China and the Devil Slaves' appeared. Schlegel interpreted the 'forgery' as 'the first reaction among imperialist circles' against Mhando's appointment. The pamphlet's origins remained a mystery.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Schlegel, 15 December 1968, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98131, 185–88.

<sup>83</sup> Phillips to Le Tocq, 20 November 1968, UKNA, FCO 31/434/4.

<sup>84</sup> Wessel, 13 January 1969, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C756/74, 9–14.

<sup>85</sup> Wessel, 26 August 1968, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C749/74, 65–66.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Paul Rupia, central Dar es Salaam, 3 August 2015.

<sup>87</sup> Schlegel, 25 January 1969, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98143, 601.

<sup>88</sup> Flegel, 22 January 1969, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98129, 213–26.

<sup>89</sup> Roberts, 'Press', 161–62.

While Tanzania mended fences with the Eastern Bloc, the GDR won a flurry of diplomatic victories in the Third World. Between April and July 1969, Iraq, Cambodia, Sudan, and Egypt all recognised the GDR.<sup>90</sup> In Dar es Salaam, Eric Butzke, the new consul-general, told journalists that this string of recognitions reflected the fact that Third World governments now recognised ‘the undisputable reality’ that there were two German sovereign states.<sup>91</sup> However, Nyerere was resolute in his resistance to elevating the GDR’s diplomatic status. In June, Mhando suggested to Nyerere that the GDR should be invited to send a ministerial-level delegation to the upcoming Saba Saba trade fair in July. Mhando argued that following the decisions taken elsewhere to recognise the GDR, the gesture would be a symbolic means of demonstrating the GDR’s improved status. Mhando passed Nyerere’s terse response to the East Germans. ‘We do not recognise the GDR’, wrote Nyerere. ‘Certainly, the day will come when we recognise it’, he admitted. But that decision ‘will be taken in Tanzania and not in Cambodia or Sudan. And there will be no recognition by the backdoor.’<sup>92</sup>

The weakness of the GDR’s position vis-à-vis Tanzania was exposed by the experience of Otto Winzer, the foreign minister, on a visit to the country in April 1970. He arrived in Dar es Salaam from Somalia, where he had secured recognition from Siad Barre’s pro-Soviet regime. To the public eye, Winzer’s brief stay in Tanzania seemed a glowing success. He signed bilateral agreements on trade and technical cooperation. Facilitated by Mhando, they represented the first intergovernmental agreements between Tanzania and the GDR.<sup>93</sup> But behind closed doors, the GDR’s hopes of recognition were dashed. Nyerere offered various excuses and explanations for the non-recognition of East Germany. ‘One must accept that the question of the development of relations between Tanzania . . . and the GDR is not a cricket match, but rather an extraordinarily serious matter, which cannot simply be resolved by a simple cabinet decision.’ In any case, if the German question was to be answered, the solution had to come from the

<sup>90</sup> Gray, *Germany’s Cold War*, 205–12.

<sup>91</sup> ‘G.D.R. Envoy Explains Recognition’, *Standard*, 17 June 1969, 5.

<sup>92</sup> Information Division, MfAA, 30 June 1969, BA-B, SAPMO, DY 30/98131, 454.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Trade Agreement Signed with GDR’, *Nationalist*, 10 April 1970, 1; ‘Tanzania Signs Pact with the GDR’, *Nationalist*, 11 April 1970, 8.

major Cold War players. 'There could be two hundred recognitions from Malawi and Tanzania without the German problem being resolved', Nyerere told Winzer. Finally, Nyerere referred back to 1967, when East German diplomats in Dar es Salaam had 'meddled' in Tanzanian affairs. 'It is very easy to overthrow an African government', he warned. 'We are sensitive to any subversive activity.' Winzer left the meeting disappointed.<sup>94</sup>

Despite making advances elsewhere in the Third World, the GDR remained frustrated in Tanzania. The GDR continued to highlight Bonn's compromised relationship with Portugal and South Africa by disseminating its own propaganda and feeding stories to the local press.<sup>95</sup> It also increased its own commitment to African liberation movements, including FRELIMO, as the next chapter shows. Yet while these gestures won over the more radical elements of TANU, they made no tangible impressions with Nyerere and other more technocratically minded ministers. East Germany's relationship with Zanzibar deteriorated as the GDR's development projects fell flat and the government tired of its over-assertive behaviour.<sup>96</sup> On the mainland, the GDR lost its most committed supporter in November 1970, when Mhando was dismissed as minister of state for foreign affairs. The French ambassador noted that Mhando was prone to heavy drinking and occasionally engaged in 'scandalous' behaviour. But he also suspected that there were political reasons too: having initially been appointed to stabilise Tanzania's relationship with Eastern Europe, Mhando had overstepped his remit, and now appeared a threat to Nyerere's intention to build aid relationships across all superpower blocs.<sup>97</sup> Regardless of the truth of the French ambassador's explanation, the case of Mhando shows that keeping up the appearances of non-alignment was a delicate balancing act.

<sup>94</sup> Memcon (Nyerere, Winzer), 10 April 1970, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C779/75, 12–23.

<sup>95</sup> Roberts, 'Press', 162–66.

<sup>96</sup> Hong, *Cold War Germany*, 298–316; Eric Burton, 'Diverging Visions in Revolutionary Spaces: East German Advisers and Revolution from Above in Zanzibar, 1964–1970', in Anna Calori, Anne-Kristin Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, James Mark, and Jan Zofka (eds.), *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War* (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2019), 85–115.

<sup>97</sup> Naudy to MAE-DAL, 10 November 1970, CADN, 193PO/1/11 K1.

## Socialism and Détente: West Germany's Rapprochement with Tanzania

As the GDR's star fell in Tanzania, so the Federal Republic's rose. This was not simply a see-saw consequence of Nyerere's distaste for East Germany. Instead, the rapprochement between Bonn and Dar es Salaam was facilitated by Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and the extension of West German social democracy into its approach to the Third World. In the late 1960s, Brandt's and Nyerere's world views came into remarkable – though never total – alignment. Both leaders were non-doctrinaire socialists. Both believed there was a serious and widening gulf in the socio-economic trajectories of the global 'North' and the postcolonial 'South'. And both were committed to the broader goal of détente. Although Tanzania kept up its fierce criticism of West Germany's relationships with Portugal and South Africa in public, Nyerere prioritised deepening aid relations with Bonn in his pursuit of economic independence.

This change in West Germany's stance towards Tanzania was part of a continuing evolution of its broader foreign policy over 1969, as Brandt's SPD built a Third World development dimension into its *Ostpolitik*. Reflecting a wider interest shown by European social democrats and radical '68ers in the Third World, Brandt argued that a relaxation of tensions in Europe would free up resources for aid policies abroad. He suggested that détente 'might naturally bring to bear Europe's technological and research capabilities on development tasks much more strongly than hitherto'.<sup>98</sup> His hand was strengthened by the SPD's strong performance in September's federal elections, after which Brandt became chancellor. A distinction here needs to be made between the public image of change in West German development policy and the fundamental continuity which characterised its practice. As Heide-Irene Schmidt has shown, West German development aid had never been driven by the narrow goals of its Cold War struggle against the GDR. From the late 1950s onwards, West Germany had developed an overseas aid policy which combined a moral duty to the Third World with the development of Western economic interests, which would also guard against the spread of communism. The Brandt government's shift in approach was therefore more one of presentation

<sup>98</sup> Willy Brandt, 'Problems of the Second Development Decade', *Intereconomics*, 4 (1969), 244.

than substance. The proportion of West Germany's gross domestic product that was committed to aid actually fell under Brandt. But its public image was transformed.<sup>99</sup>

A key figure in the association of *Ostpolitik* with development policy was Erhard Eppler. In 1968, Eppler was appointed Bonn's minister for economic cooperation, a move engineered by Brandt in order to secure more support for his *Ostpolitik* from within the cabinet.<sup>100</sup> Even more so than Brandt, Eppler believed that West Germany could carve out a mutually beneficial niche as a development partner to the decolonised world. 'We do not forget for a moment that we are neither a supermarket nor a superpower', he said shortly after taking up his post. 'But this cannot mean that we avoid the task which others, especially in the Third World, ascribe to us. Now more than ever before, we cannot lose sight of the East-West conflict, but now more than ever before our foreign policy cannot be reduced to its function in this conflict.'<sup>101</sup> This ideological shift was accompanied by increasing West German confidence in the superior quality and quantity of its aid to that offered by the GDR. As Eppler said, West Germany did not have 'the slightest reason to be afraid of the GDR in the Third World', since what it could offer 'far exceeds the performance of the GDR'.<sup>102</sup>

Brandt's personal relationship with Nyerere assisted in the revival of a strong partnership between West Germany and Tanzania. Brandt was familiar with the country: as mayor of Berlin, he had visited Dar es Salaam in 1963 and spoke of the parallels between anticolonial struggles in Africa and Bonn's fight for reunification. The mayor of Dar es Salaam responded by repeating President Kennedy's phrase, 'Ich bin ein Berliner'.<sup>103</sup> In an interview with the *Nationalist* in December 1965, Brandt revealed that he had received a friendly letter from Nyerere. Referring to the Tanzanian president as 'a great and able statesman',

<sup>99</sup> Heide-Irene Schmidt, 'Pushed to the Front: The Foreign Assistance Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1958–1971', *Contemporary European History*, 12 (2003), 473–507. Schmidt does however accept that there were instances when Bonn attempted to use aid for leverage over the 'German question', with Tanzania being the most prominent.

<sup>100</sup> Erhard Eppler, *Links Leben: Erinnerungen eines Weltkonservativen* (Berlin: Prophyliën, 2015), 130.

<sup>101</sup> SPD press release, 20 December 1968, AdsD, SP, 2897. See also Erhard Eppler, *Not Much Time for the Third World* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1972).

<sup>102</sup> SPD press release, 30 April 1971, AdsD, SP, 2897.

<sup>103</sup> Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 118.

Brandt said he hoped that a normalisation of relations would take place. Brandt added that developing countries had ‘considerable moral weight in the world’ which could bring about a peaceful resolution to the German question.<sup>104</sup> The two leaders had thus developed a promising relationship even before Brandt entered government in Bonn.

In seeking to rebuild its relationship with Tanzania, the West German government also took confidence from the GDR’s public relations travails. In September 1968, von Hassel wrote to Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger about his conversation with Nyerere in July. Referring to both the ‘Hands Off’ editorial and the Tanzanian response to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, von Hassel argued that Tanzania’s attitude towards the communist world was consistent with its approach to the West: it would fiercely protect its independence, regardless of Cold War alignment. As Tanzania ‘would not be getting into communist waters in the foreseeable future’, von Hassel recommended that Bonn should resume the suspended capital aid programme.<sup>105</sup> From Dar es Salaam, Hebich pointed out that Nyerere had held good to his position on the non-recognition of the GDR.<sup>106</sup> Having previously opposed the resumption of aid to Tanzania, the Auswärtiges Amt now swung behind this proposed shift in approach and instructed Hebich to explain West Germany’s U-turn to Nyerere.<sup>107</sup>

Given notice of Bonn’s revised position in January 1969, the Tanzanian government began to court aid in public as well as in private. ‘You live in a rich country’, Nyerere half-joked with a group of West German journalists in April, ‘and therefore it would be good if you could give us a little more of your money!’<sup>108</sup> Nyerere entrusted the role of brokering this renewed relationship to his finance minister, Amir Jamal. After a visit to Bonn in October, Jamal told the West German Ministry for Economic Affairs that he now had ‘a clear conviction’ that the Federal Republic was ‘committed to play the fullest part in assisting Tanzania in her self-development endeavours’.<sup>109</sup> Yet

<sup>104</sup> ‘Brandt Hopes for Normalisation of Dar-Bonn Relations’, *Nationalist*, 21 December 1965, 3.

<sup>105</sup> Von Hassel to Kiesinger, 9 September 1968, BA-K, B136/3001.

<sup>106</sup> Hebich to Auswärtiges Amt, 24 October 1968, PAAA, NA 6408.

<sup>107</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, 24 October 1968, BA-K, B213/7672; Berger to various, 2 January 1969, BA-K, B213/7672.

<sup>108</sup> Timmerman to Auswärtiges Amt, 29 April 1969, BA-K, B102/86803.

<sup>109</sup> Jamal to Schiettinger, 27 October 1969, BA-K, B102/86803.

Nyerere's support for the change in course in West German foreign policy was not simply an aid-seeking tactic. He shared Brandt's view that détente in Europe could permit a reorientation of global politics away from East-West tensions and towards the widening gulf between North and South. In November 1969, Nyerere wrote to Brandt to congratulate him on becoming chancellor. In his message, Nyerere talked up the connection between *Ostpolitik*, détente, and Third World development.

Many of us elsewhere in the world welcome your intention to work for the building of new and more harmonious relationships with Eastern European countries. . . . For the truth is that even small states like mine are affected by world conflict centering in Europe. Indeed, the friendship between Tanzania and the Federal Republic has in the past been adversely affected by decisions relating to a divided Germany . . . I am glad that in recent years our friendship has been growing stronger again, but there is room for much further improvement and I look forward to co-operation with your Government in affecting this.<sup>110</sup>

After Brandt became chancellor, *Ostpolitik* entered a new, more assertive phase. In March 1970, he met the chairman of the GDR council of ministers, Willi Stoph, in East Germany. The talks produced no concrete results – indeed, they were decidedly icy. But they carried symbolic capital around the world, as photographs of the two men meeting at Erfurt Hauptbahnhof were carried in the international press, including in Tanzania. Anthony Nyakyi, Tanzania's ambassador to Bonn, recalled the 'electrified' atmosphere of the visit. The crowd in Erfurt were chanting 'Willy! Willy! Willy!', he remembered. 'You didn't know which "Willy" they were talking about, Stoph or Brandt.'<sup>111</sup>

By chance, Erhard Eppler arrived in Dar es Salaam four days after the Erfurt talks. His reception was by no means cordial. Brandt's government had attracted criticism in Africa for providing credit for West German firms controversially involved in the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric scheme in Portuguese-occupied Mozambique. The previous month a Tanzanian representative had opened a meeting of the OAU Liberation Committee by condemning West German involvement in

<sup>110</sup> Nyerere to Brandt, 10 November 1969, BA-K, B136/6290.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Anthony Nyakyi, Masaki, Dar es Salaam, 28 July 2015. There was little doubt that the crowd were chanting for Brandt, however.

the dam's construction as a 'slap in the face of Africa'.<sup>112</sup> In Tanzania, Eppler was handed a bitterly worded open letter to Brandt from FRELIMO and faced fierce questioning from local journalists.<sup>113</sup> When Eppler trotted out his government's usual line that its trade policy towards South Africa should be seen as separate from its political stance on apartheid, the recently nationalised *Standard* declared that Tanzania could not 'differentiate between principles and pfennigs'.<sup>114</sup>

However, in private talks with Eppler, this is precisely what Tanzanian leaders did. Leaving the public vitriol to TANU's radicals, Nyerere isolated the anticolonial and aid-seeking stands of Tanzania's foreign policy to strengthen relations with West Germany. While Eppler faced a barrage of criticism from the Tanzanian press, behind closed doors his hosts refrained from mentioning the Cahora Bassa dam project. This allowed a positive discussion about West German capital aid to Tanzania. Eppler made clear Bonn's commitment to assisting Tanzania with the implementation of its Second Five-Year Plan. The two states established a framework for regular bilateral consultations. Jamal told Eppler that he was impressed by West Germany's understanding of Tanzania's development policy, which was unmatched by any other industrialised country.<sup>115</sup> Eppler's trip was presented as a success in West Germany: *Die Zeit's* correspondent wrote that it 'set something right for the Federal Republic' after the breakdown of relations in 1965.<sup>116</sup>

Relations between Bonn and Dar es Salaam flourished in the early 1970s. In 1971, a West German briefing paper described Tanzania as a 'focus country [*Schwerpunktland*] for German development aid'.<sup>117</sup> That year, West Germany gave grants worth \$4.1 million and pledged a further \$3.7 million in development loans, figures which set it among Tanzania's most important bilateral aid partners once more.<sup>118</sup> In his memoirs, Eppler wrote glowingly of his favourable impression of Arusha

<sup>112</sup> 'Step up Liberation Struggle, O.A.U. Told', *Standard*, 19 February 1970, 1.

<sup>113</sup> Extracts from report on Eppler's visit to Tanzania and Kenya, April 1970, enclosed in BA-K, B213/7673.

<sup>114</sup> Editorial, *Standard*, 24 March 1970, 1. The article sat alongside the famous photograph of Brandt and Stoph meeting at Erfurt Hauptbahnhof.

<sup>115</sup> Extracts from report on Eppler's visit to Tanzania and Kenya, April 1970, enclosed in BA-K, B213/7673.

<sup>116</sup> Peter Grubbe, 'Reicher Onkel aus Germany', *Die Zeit*, 10 April 1970, 9.

<sup>117</sup> Hanemann to Schiller, 13 October 1971, BA-K, B102/95608.

<sup>118</sup> Coulson, *Tanzania*, 350–51.

socialism, Nyerere's vision for Tanzania, and Jamal's ability to explain the state of the global economy from the perspective of the South.<sup>119</sup> The Cold War and the GDR played little role in Eppler's calculations. 'I never mentioned [to Nyerere] what the GDR did in Tanzania', he remembered. 'Our cooperation was built on mutual trust and sympathy.'<sup>120</sup> These sentiments were reflected in public statements made by Tanzanian officials. When a West German dignitary visited Tanzania in 1972, the minister for health, Lawi Sijaona, praised 'a friendship between a people determined to stand up and grow in the world and a people who in recognition and appreciation are putting out a helping hand'.<sup>121</sup> In the seven years since the *Anerkennungsdiplomatie* crisis, the Tanzanian-West German relationship had come full circle.

This improvement in relations only came about because of the flexibility in Bonn's global foreign policy initiated by Brandt. In transforming West Germany's image from cold warrior to broker of détente, he repositioned his government as a development-friendly partner to the Third World. This challenged the East-West model of international affairs with a North-South vision that chimed with Nyerere's own world view. In Brandt, Nyerere saw another leader committed to transcending the Cold War order, and so swung behind *Ostpolitik*. Nyerere conveyed to Heibich his admiration for Brandt as 'one of the few statesmen, who on the basis of a vision, wanted to overcome daily political problems to bring about fundamental change in Europe'. Nyerere also said that he had asked Yugoslavia's Tito to back *Ostpolitik*.<sup>122</sup> Despite their very different backgrounds, Brandt and Nyerere shared common cause. During the 1970s, the pair emerged as two of the most prominent and articulate voices in the campaign for the restructuring of the global economy. Later, after they relinquished power, both men also headed major international commissions into the widening gap between the global North and South.

## Conclusion

On 18 December 1972, Tanzania finally recognised the GDR. The decision owed nothing to the GDR's policy in East Africa and

<sup>119</sup> Eppler, *Links Leben*, 148; Erhard Eppler, *Komplettes Stückwerk: Erfahrungen aus fünfzig Jahren Politik* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1996), 259–60.

<sup>120</sup> Email correspondence with Erhard Eppler, 31 December 2016.

<sup>121</sup> 'Sijaona Praises West German Friendship', *Standard*, 9 February 1972, 1.

<sup>122</sup> Heibich, 1 April 1971, PAAA, NA 13469.

everything to developments in Central Europe, propelled by the effects of *Ostpolitik*. Under the 'Basic Treaty', the two German states recognised each other's sovereignty. A deluge of Third World states almost immediately opened full diplomatic relations with the GDR.<sup>123</sup> Mhando wrote to consul-general Butzke to convey the 'great pleasure and excitement' with which he had received the news, adding in parentheses that 'this could have happened a few years ago'.<sup>124</sup>

In his authoritative history of 'Germany's Cold War', William Glenn Gray correctly concludes that East Germany did not "win" the fight for recognition. But his assessment that West Germany 'threw in the towel' underestimates the strength of Bonn's position in the Third World after Brandt came to office as chancellor.<sup>125</sup> In part, this reflects the fact that Gray brings his analysis to a close with the SPD's election victory in 1969. He therefore stops before Brant and Eppler set about reorienting West German development aid policy at the same time as *Ostpolitik* gathered pace. By the early 1970s, West German aid was simply superior to anything the GDR could offer in response, notwithstanding the latter's growing commitment to the liberation struggle in southern Africa. The constructive turn in Bonn's foreign policy marked by *Neue Ostpolitik* brought about a more flexible approach to the Third World, which opened up space for the outward extension of West German social democratic welfare politics. Ultimately, the levelling of the diplomatic playing field created by the Basic Treaty and the formal break with the Hallstein Doctrine strengthened rather than weakened Bonn's presence in Africa.

Beyond its contribution to the liberation struggles in southern Africa, the story of East Germany's experience in Dar es Salaam is essentially one of failure. The breakthrough moment of 1964, when it briefly opened an embassy in Zanzibar, proved a false dawn. The GDR's propaganda operations tested Nyerere's patience, while its association with a number of controversial figures due to its mistaken ideological reading of the local political scene also damaged its reputation. As long as recognising East Germany remained among the most controversial diplomatic steps which a Third World leader could take, Nyerere saw no reason to deepen Tanzania's relationship with East Berlin. Instead,

<sup>123</sup> Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 226.

<sup>124</sup> Mhando to Butzke, 21 December 1972, PAAA, MfAA, M1, C61606, 23.

<sup>125</sup> Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 5.

he tried to placate the GDR, the Soviet Union, and its allies. Following the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Nyerere recognised the commitment they had made to Africa's liberation movements, as well as the danger that he appeared too close to China. That is not to say that non-alignment was simply a façade. Rather, it required a public calibration that did not necessarily map onto its underlying political dynamics.

From a Tanzanian perspective, navigating the 'German Cold War' was a question of juggling different priorities and conceptions of national sovereignty. In 1965, Nyerere rejected West German aid in a moral gesture intended to demonstrate his nascent state's political sovereignty. The GDR, in its own drive for international recognition as a sovereign state, pointed to its own demonstrated support for self-determination in Africa, which it contrasted with West Germany's connections to colonial rule. Yet Nyerere himself believed that the GDR was an illegitimate state under the de facto occupation of the Soviet Union, a superpower that maintained its own empire in Eastern Europe. Moreover, at the core of Tanzania's socialist project was the belief that economic sovereign independence could only be achieved through the development of a self-reliant economy, which required the input of foreign aid. The emergence of a West German government with a substantial aid budget and an ideological outlook that overlapped with Nyerere's own world view therefore paved the way for a revival of close relations between Bonn and Dar es Salaam.

This history also shows the potential contradictions involved in pursuing non-alignment, supporting the liberation of Africa, and trying to build a self-reliant economy. In theory, all three principles followed in logical fashion, being intended to secure political sovereignty and genuine economic decolonisation in Africa. But putting them into practice was much more difficult and threw up apparent paradoxes. Tanzania had far better economic and diplomatic relations with West Germany, despite Bonn maintaining connections with Portugal and South Africa. Meanwhile, the GDR shared Tanzania's commitment to anticolonial struggles in the Third World yet remained out in the cold. These complex circumstances thrown up by the entwinement of anticolonial and Cold War agendas precluded any attempt by Third World states simply to play East and West off against one another in search of aid and arms, as non-alignment is sometimes crudely depicted. For Nyerere, non-alignment was a profoundly ideological project, which permitted Tanzania to transcend Cold War divisions

in pursuit of constructive relations with governments that shared a world view with his own. These included China, as an anti-imperialist Third World power, but also states committed to addressing economic injustices at home and in the world, like the social democratic regimes of Scandinavia and Brandt's West Germany.

Finally, an analysis of Tanzania's conduct of foreign policy towards the 'German question' reveals the extent to which Nyerere kept control over his country's external relations. He was far from the only Tanzanian involved in the matter: as we have seen, the 'German Cold War' touched the working lives of politicians, journalists, and government officials. But as much as the GDR tried to work around Nyerere through its 'publicity work' in Dar es Salaam, they found these activities ultimately had little bearing on the fundamental issue of recognition that was at stake. Indeed, the East Germans' substitute for diplomatic negotiations – clumsy propaganda operations and clandestine meetings with controversial politicians – marked them out to Nyerere as Cold War actors who did not respect Tanzania's sovereignty. In these matters, the president's judgement was decisive. However, when we shift our gaze away from Tanzania's 'official' foreign policy and towards the more ambiguous area of liberation movement politics in Dar es Salaam, a more complex, contested picture emerges, as the next chapter shows.