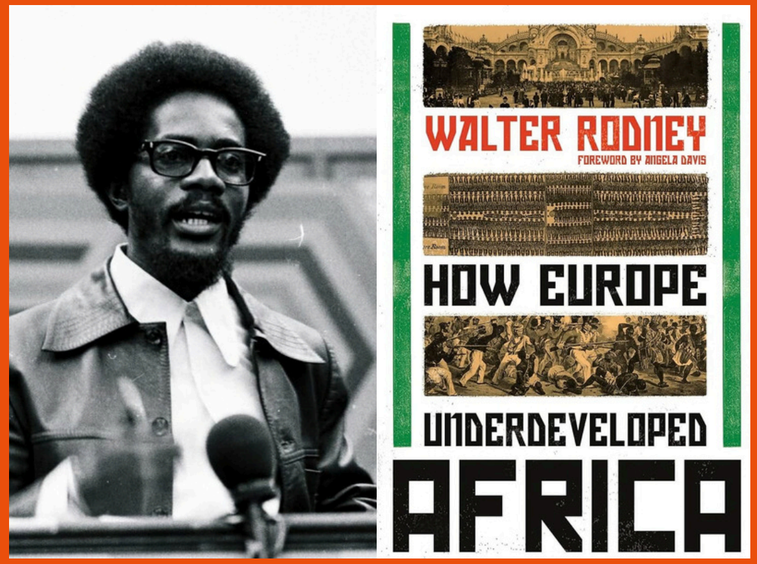


THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

- "Development" is not neutral : it implies movement towards a model of progress, defined by someone, for someone
- Colonial development takes place within unequal power relations : who defines objectives, knowledge and priorities?
- After 1945, Britain turns to its colonies to respond to its own difficulties
- The Groundnut Scheme : a huge mechanised project to produce groundnuts in Tanganyika, launched by Britain after WWII
- Remembered as a failure, but this label reproduces the view of those who designed and judged it



WALTER ANTHONY RODNEY
1942-1980

WHAT DOES THE HISTORY OF THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME REVEAL ABOUT THE MAKING, IMPLEMENTATION, FAILURE AND LEGACIES OF COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT IN TANGANYIKA ?

STRUCTURE

I. MAKING DEVELOPMENT : WHY AND HOW WAS THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME CONCEIVED?

- A. FROM COLONIAL REFORM TO DEVELOPMENT : THE BRITISH PROJECT AFTER 1945
- B. FROM DEVELOPMENT AMBITIONS TO THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME?

II. THE FAILURE OF THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME: WHEN DEVELOPMENT MEETS THE FIELD

- A. WHEN THE PROJECT MEETS THE REALITIES OF THE FIELD
- B. WHEN DEVELOPMENT MEETS PEOPLE: THE LIMITS OF COLONIAL CONTROL

III. THE LEGACIES OF FAILURE: WHAT REMAINS OF THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME ?

- A. WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TANGANYIKA'S GROUNDNUT SCHEME ?
- B. FROM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT TO HISTORICAL MEMORY

I. MAKING DEVELOPMENT: WHY AND HOW WAS THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME CONCEIVED ?

A. FROM COLONIAL REFORM TO DEVELOPMENT: THE BRITISH PROJECT AFTER 1945

Why did Britain turn to colonial development after 1945, and what did "development" mean in the context of the post-war British Empire?

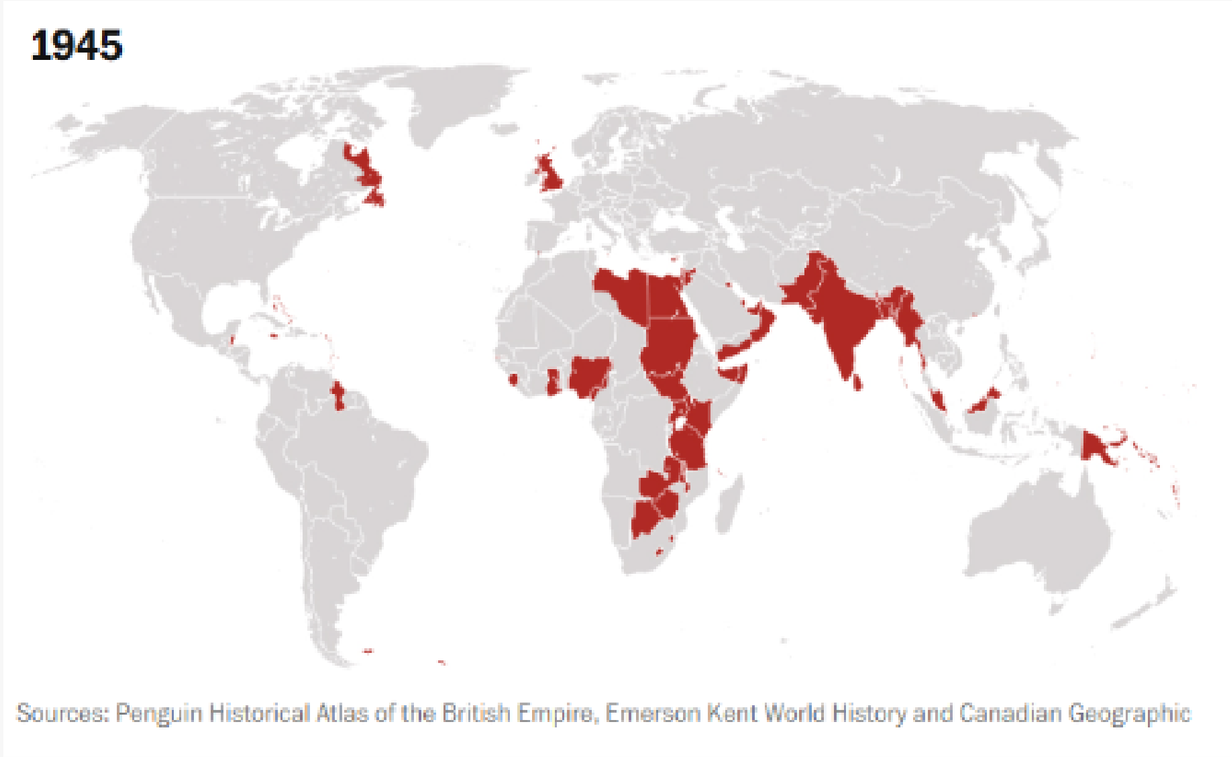
Britain after WWII: a weakened imperial power

- **Economic and financial crisis**
- **War-damaged infrastructure**
- **Food shortages and rationing**
- **Heavy foreign debt, especially to the United States**
- **Declining imperial power**
- **Beginning of a new international order**



"London's Blitz: A city at war". Starting on 7 September 1940, London faced 57 straight nights of bombing by Nazi Germany, part of a concentrated eight-month campaign known as the Blitz." https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/collections/london-stories/londons-blitz-a-city-at-war/

1945: British Empire at the end of WWII



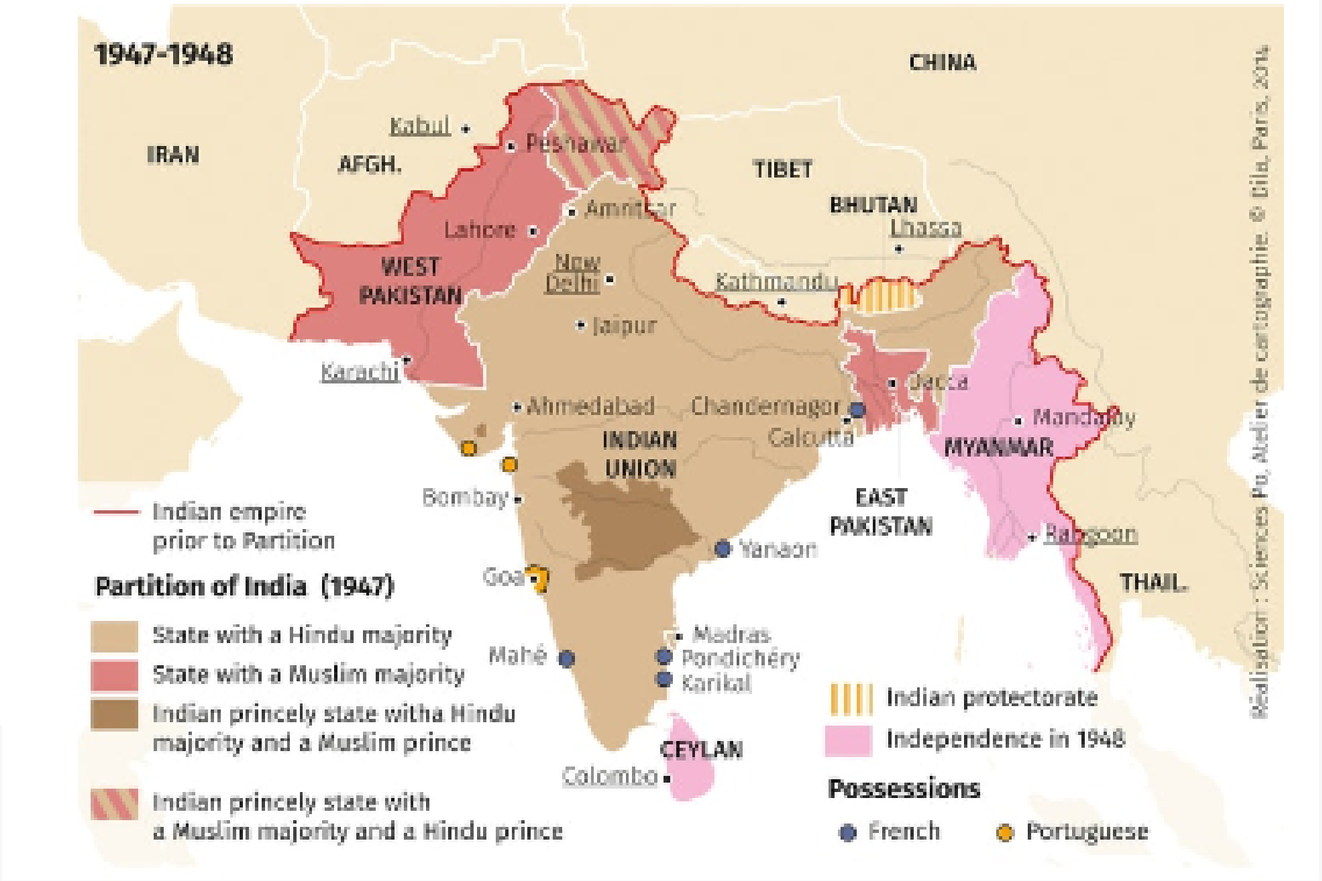
Sources: Penguin Historical Atlas of the British Empire, Emerson Kent World History and Canadian Geographic

1947: A changing Empire

Partition of British India.

India + Pakistan become independent.

Decolonisation was accelerating, but Britain still sought to preserve imperial power.



https://espace-mondial-atlas.sciencespo.fr/en/topic-strategies-of-transnational-actors/map-3C02-EN-identity-mobilization-driving-the-partition-of-india.html

Why did the Empire still matter after 1945?

A new international order

After WWII:

- United States- New global power
- Britain- Weakened, but seeking to remain a global power
- Soviet Union - New global power

The Empire remained strategically important

- Resources
- Markets
- Production
- Political & strategic influence

Britain needed to preserve its global position.

From colonial reform to development

Before 1945

COLONIAL REFORM

Welfare

Administration

Social improvement

↓

After 1945

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth

Productivity

Infrastructure

Technology

Planning

Development became a new language for governing the Empire.

Development for whom?

WHO DEFINES DEVELOPMENT?

Colonial governments + experts

↓

What should be transformed?

Agriculture · Infrastructure · Productivity

↓

For whose benefit?

Britain/ Empire ↔ Colonial territories

Tanganyika: from German to British administration

Timeline:

German East Africa → British Mandate (1922) → UN Trust Territory (1945) → Independence (1961)

- Relatively poor territory
- Limited European settler population compared with Kenya
- Limited infrastructure and investment
- Predominantly agricultural economy
- Remained under British administration after 1945

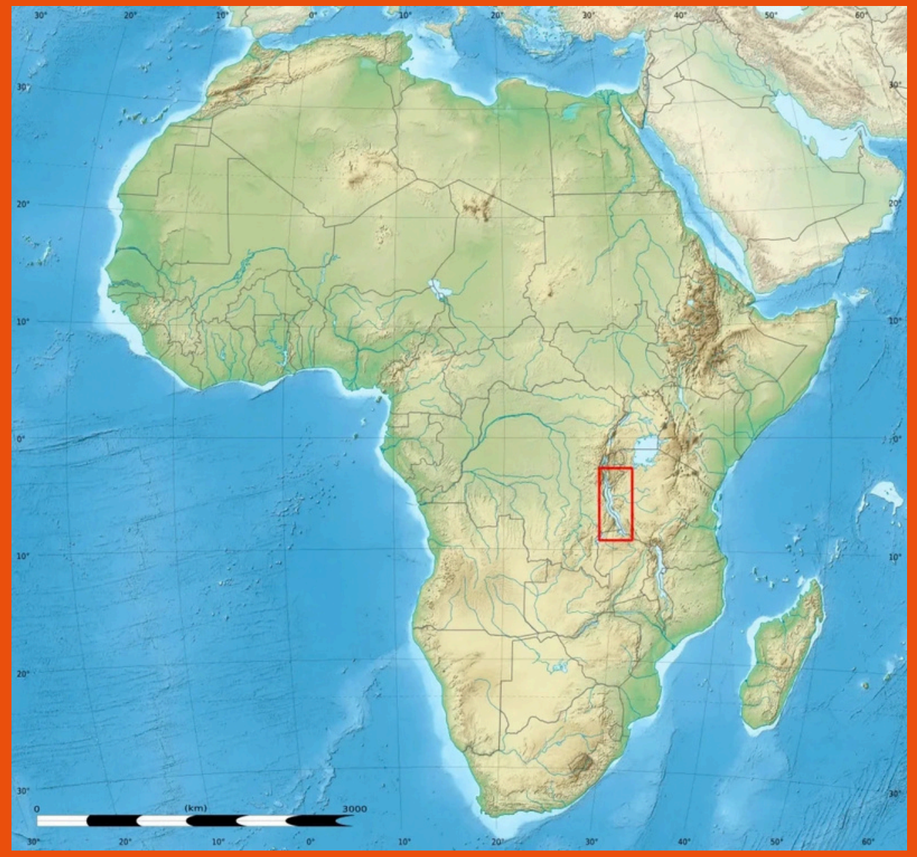
1946 → Groundnut Scheme conceived

1947 → Scheme launched

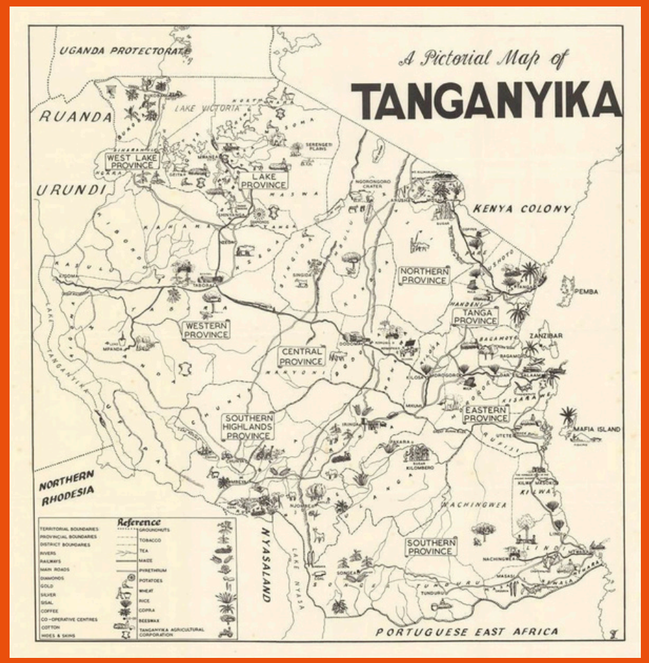
B. FROM DEVELOPMENT AMBITIONS TO THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME?



Vehicle park, Kongwa, Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme, c. 1948
unitedrepublicTanzania.com



Map by Animalia.bio





Matteo Rizzo



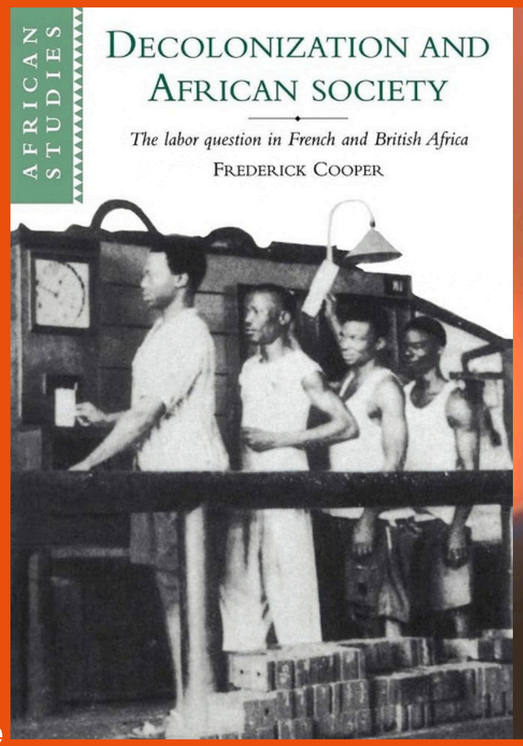
Tanganyika Territory: Proposed Areas for Groundnuts Production Scheme
Map planned by A. E. Kelleway, Historical Section, Cabinet Office.

- Tanganyika seemed to offer extensive areas (no large settler population, unlike Kenya)
- But this availability is a colonial perception of land as "available" or underused, not an absence of population
- The question was not what Tanganyika needed, but how its land could serve a productive objective
- post-war shortages of vegetable oils and fats, serious financial constraints
- reduce import dependence and generate savings, sO British needs rather than local agricultural requirements
- about 3.2 million acres, 600,000 to 800,000 tons a year, with roads, railways and infrastructure, built on mechanisation, expertise and centralised planning

Map 2 Administrative boundaries of the Southern Province in 1947



DEVELOPMENT :
"TO AND FOR AFRICA, NOT WITH IT"





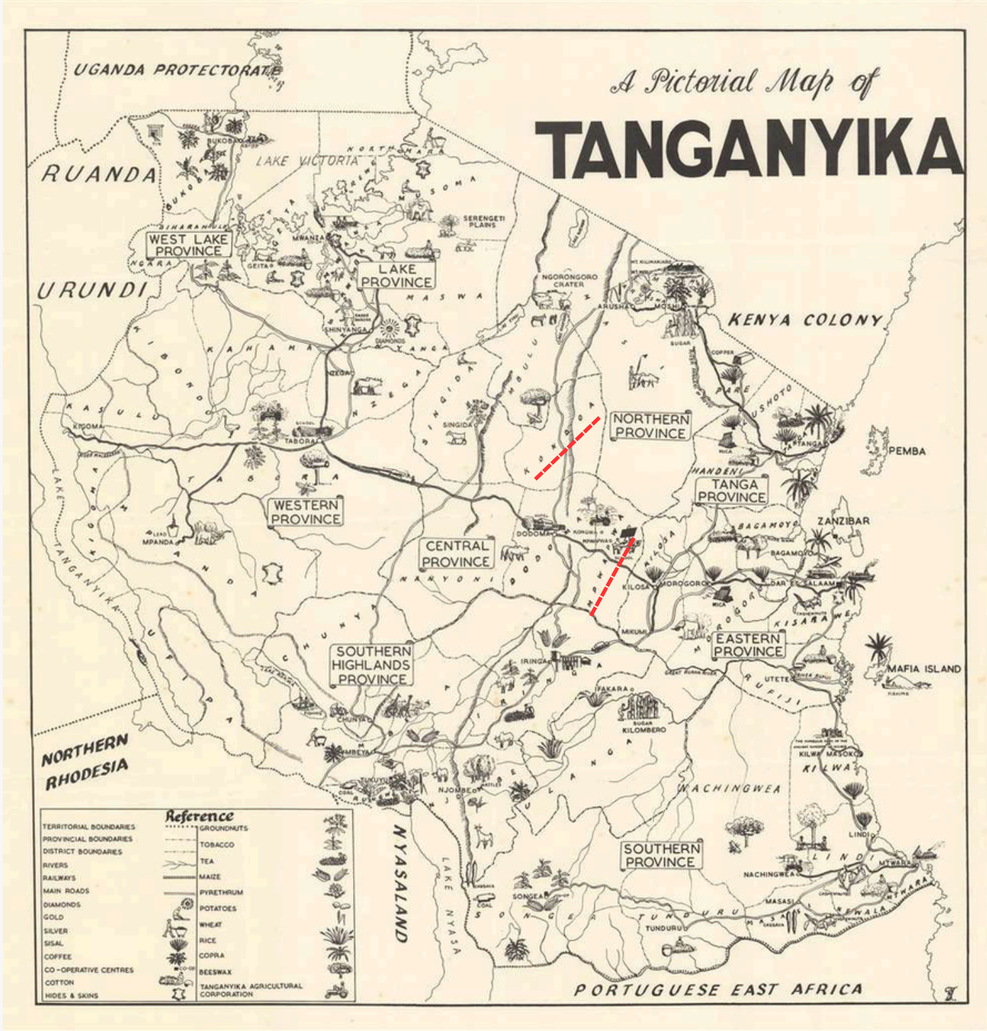
FREDERICK COOPER

- **Cooper (1997): development as a way of renewing colonial rule**
- **African agriculture seen as backward**
- **1947 Governors' Conference: the era of "the individual family working with primitive tools" is over. Agriculture needs larger scale, more machinery, higher productivity**
- **The Scheme was launched the same year, resting on a distrust of African farmers**
- **Contradiction: the language of development, within a colonial framework. Britain decides what is produced, how land is used, which technologies count as modern**
- **On paper, coherent: economic need, available land, modern technology. In the field?**

II. THE FAILURE OF THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME: WHEN DEVELOPMENT MEETS THE FIELD

A. WHEN THE PROJECT MEETS THE REALITIES OF THE FIELD

- The data inquired for agricultural production feasibility was made in an area called Mpwapwa, which is close to Kongwa the largest production site in the Central Province
- *"Had scheme planners consulted local people prior to implementation, they would have learned that the locals referred to Kongwa as "the country of perpetual drought."*



A. WHEN THE PROJECT MEETS THE REALITIES OF THE FIELD



Equipment for the groundnut scheme.
Source: Charlie MacDonald

- The machines the UK wanted to use weren't in the market due to low mechanical production in a time of post-war so they decided to kind of recycle tanks and war machines
- The clay in the Tanganyika's soil had an abrasive substance in it that caused the machines rapid deterioration

A. WHEN THE PROJECT MEETS THE REALITIES OF THE FIELD

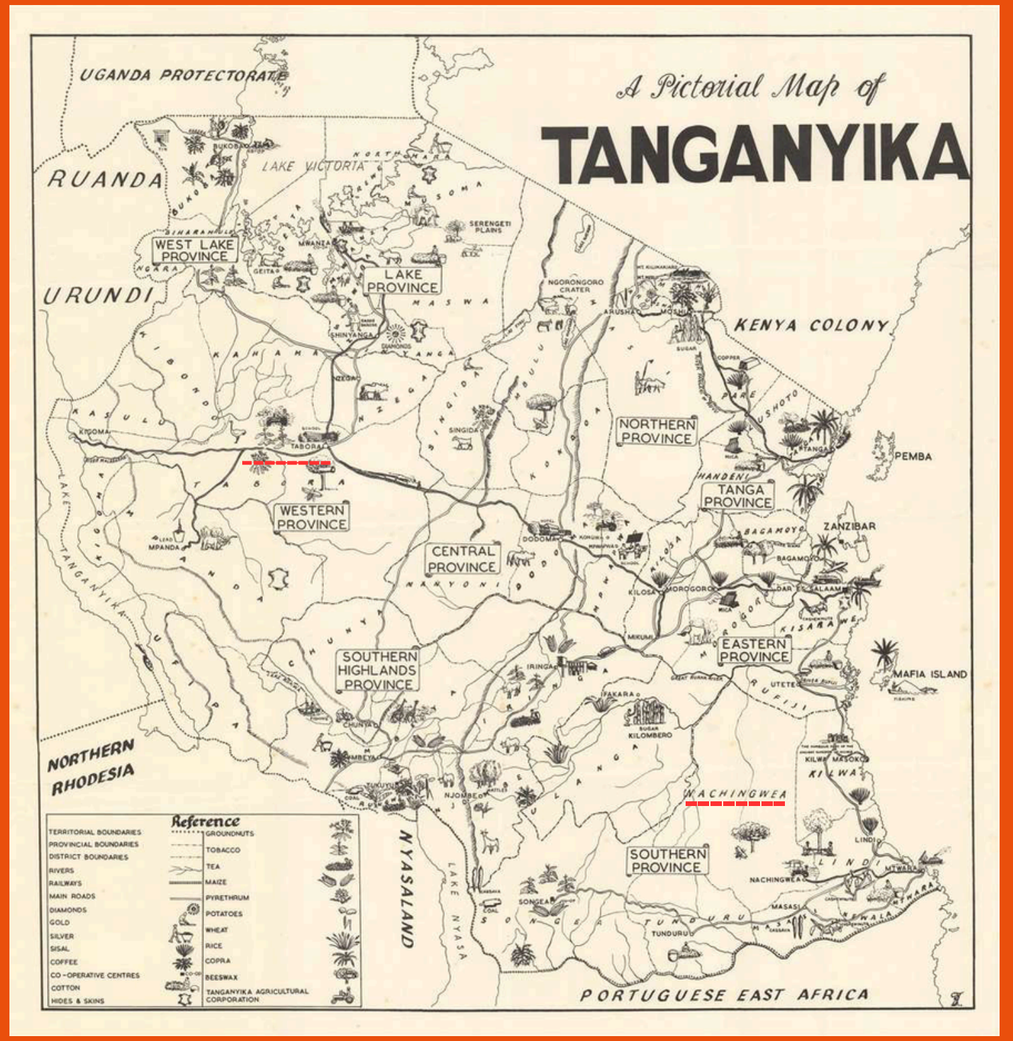
- **A lack of infrastructure to facilitate the exportation of the goods**



- **Mombasa and Dar es Salaam were already overused meaning using them would only delay the project even more**

A. WHEN THE PROJECT MEETS THE REALITIES OF THE FIELD

- The groundnuts waiting to be harvested at the sites of Urambo and Nachingwea were affected by the Rosette disease
- It highlights the lack of cooperation with local authorities
- The director of agriculture in Tanganyika had warned the British that no variety of groundnuts resistant to the disease was available



A. WHEN THE PROJECT MEETS THE REALITIES OF THE FIELD

Hogendorn, Jan S., and K. M. Scott. "Very Large-Scale Agricultural Projects: The Lessons of the East African Groundnut Scheme." In *Imperialism, Colonialism, and Hunger: East and Central Africa*

Correctable vs. fundamental mistakes	**Shifting perspective**
• Costly but correctable: isolated inconveniences • Fundamental: no local study and overly rapid planning • Hasty planning, disconnected from local knowledge = doomed from the start	• Evaluation criteria (productivity, economies of scale, profitability) = set by the British planners • Distinguish the project's product from its practical effects • The EAGs was also an intervention on pre-existing structures • Key question: what happens when British objectives meet local social and economic realities?



National Archives (UK), 1950 : « Groundnuts Scheme, termite destruction of sunflower crop at Urambo, Tanganyika » (ref. CO 691/213/5 (27))



B. WHEN DEVELOPMENT MEETS PEOPLE

THE LIMITS OF COLONIAL CONTROL

B. WHEN DEVELOPMENT MEETS PEOPLE

THE SCHEME DID NOT ENTER AN EMPTY TERRITORY.
IT ENTERED A SOCIETY WITH:

- **FARMS AND HOUSEHOLDS**
- **EXISTING ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**
- **EXISTING WAYS OF ORGANISING LABOUR**

WHAT DID THE BRITISH THINK A WORKER WAS?

MORE MECHANISATION → CONTINUED DEPENDENCE ON LABOUR

B. WHEN DEVELOPMENT MEETS PEOPLE

RIZZO: LABOUR IS NOT SIMPLY A RESOURCE



GROUNDNUT SCHEME
↓
LARGE-SCALE PRODUCTION
↓
NEED FOR LABOUR

BUT WORKERS WERE ALSO:
- **FARMERS**
- **MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLDS**
- **ECONOMIC ACTORS**
- **PEOPLE WITH THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND CHOICES**

RIZZO → LABOUR MARKET + PEASANT ECONOMY OF SOUTHERN TANGANYIKA

B. WHEN DEVELOPMENT MEETS PEOPLE

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT = MORE THAN PRODUCING GROUNDNUTS

LAND → LABOUR → TIME → ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR

THE BRITISH COULD PLAN:

- **PRODUCTION**
- **INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **TECHNOLOGY**
- **LAND USE**

BUT - THEY COULD NOT COMPLETELY PLAN:

- **HOW PEOPLE USED THEIR LABOUR**
- **HOW HOUSEHOLDS ORGANISED THEMSELVES**
- **WHETHER WORKING FOR THE SCHEME WAS WORTH IT**

THE ADMINISTRATION COULD PLAN PRODUCTION, BUT IT COULD NOT PLAN PEOPLE IN THE SAME WAY THAT IT PLANNED LAND.

III. THE LEGACIES OF FAILURE: WHAT REMAINS OF THE GROUNDNUT SCHEME?

A. WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TANGANYIKA'S GROUNDNUT SCHEME ?

Rebuilding from the ruins

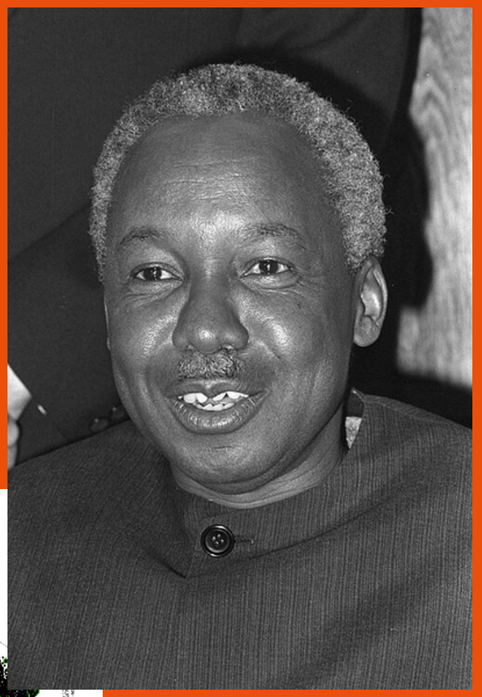
- Mtwara kept its place as the administrative center of the Mtwara region

- Kongwa, Urambo, Nachingwea still partially used for agricultural production to this days



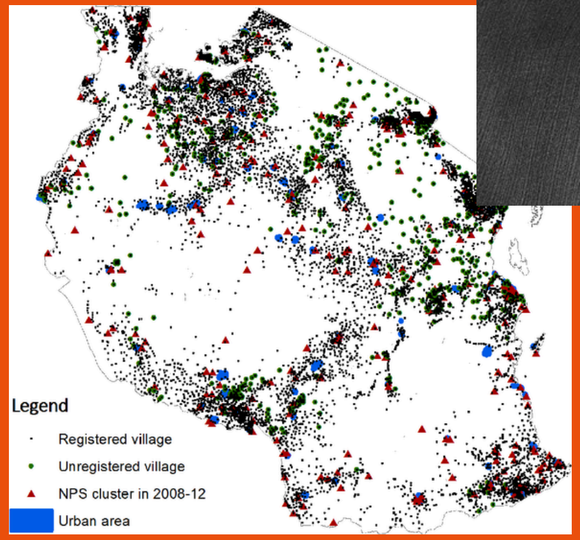
Continuities between colonial and postcolonial development projects and gouvernance

Julius Nierere in 1967



Ujamaa : "*institutionalization of social, economic, and political equality through the creation of a central democracy; the abolition of discrimination based on ascribed status; and the nationalization of the economy's key sectors*" (Cranford, 1999)

- Structures, quotidian routines, practices, and more hidden normative theories of governance
- Resemblance between Ujamaa and colonial rethoric of the late 1940's
- Disregard of traditional knowledge



Locations of villages and urban areas in Tanzania, 1978

Legacy of the Groundnut Scheme outside of tanzania

- Exemple of a failed political project now embedded in british politac culture

- Mythical status of the Groundnut scheme amongst all of the failed development projects in the scientific community



Stefan Esselborn



Millenium Dome, Londres

B. FROM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT TO HISTORICAL MEMORY

"The train was like development for us. We could travel long distances quickly and cheaply, but this is no longer possible today. The train was good, much better than what we have today."

Salumu Hassan Sululu, 72, former village chairman, Dihimba, interviewed on 18 September 2009, in R. Ahearne (2014), p. 41 (interview in Swahili, translated into French by the author; English translation mine)

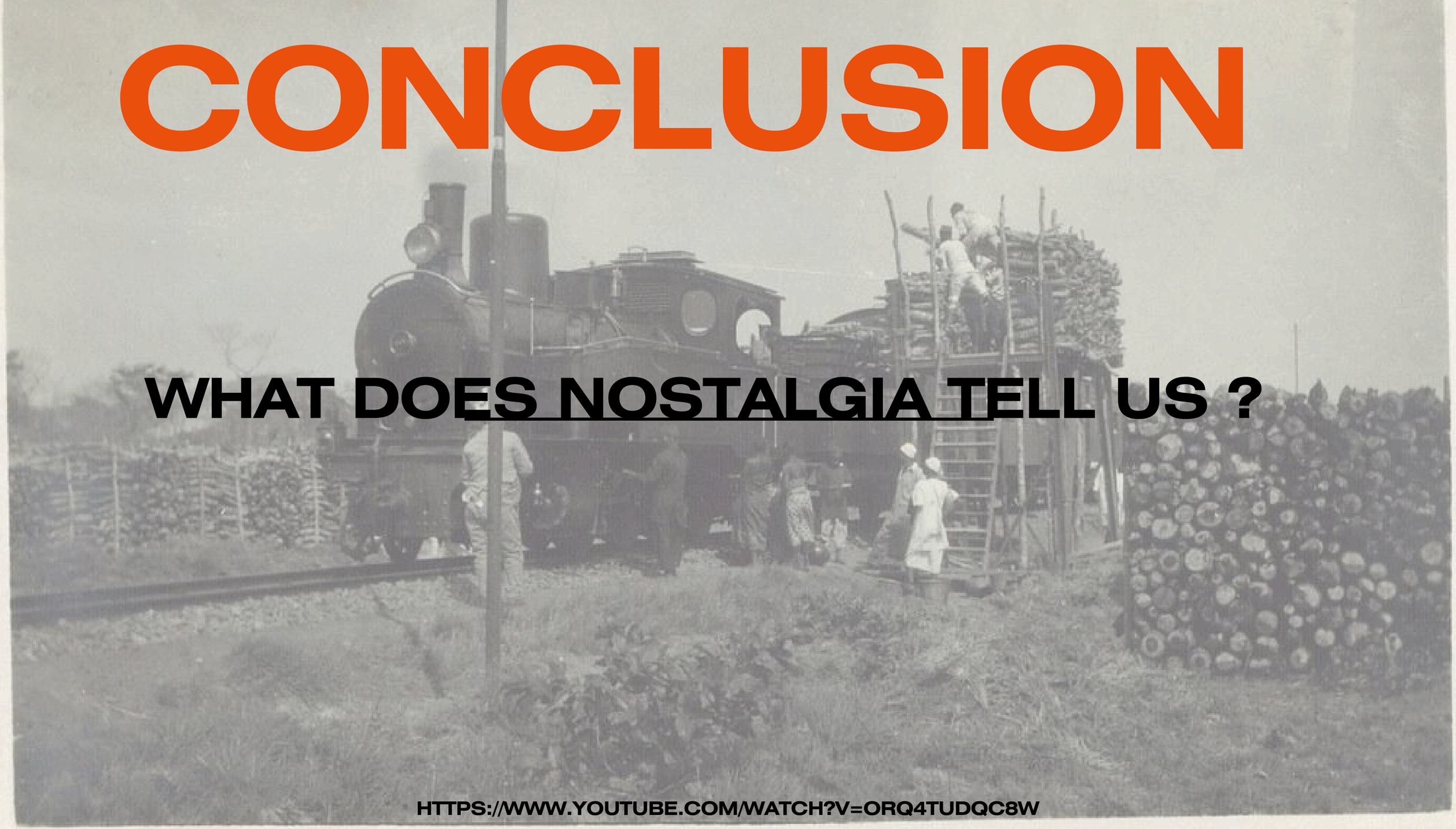
B. FROM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT TO HISTORICAL MEMORY

- *Whose memory? Elders (wazee) of Mikindani and Dihimba, near Mtwara : 60 interviews, 2009-2012*
- *One project, two criteria : a "total failure" for its designers, but the railway and jobs remain a reference point for local people*
- *The comparison is with ujamaa (villagisation of the 1970s), not with independence*
- *Nostalgia as a critique of the present: unpaid cashew subsidies, unfinished road, cost of living*



Dr Rob AHEARNE

CONCLUSION



WHAT DOES NOSTALGIA TELL US ?

HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=ORQ4TUDQC8W

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THANK YOU