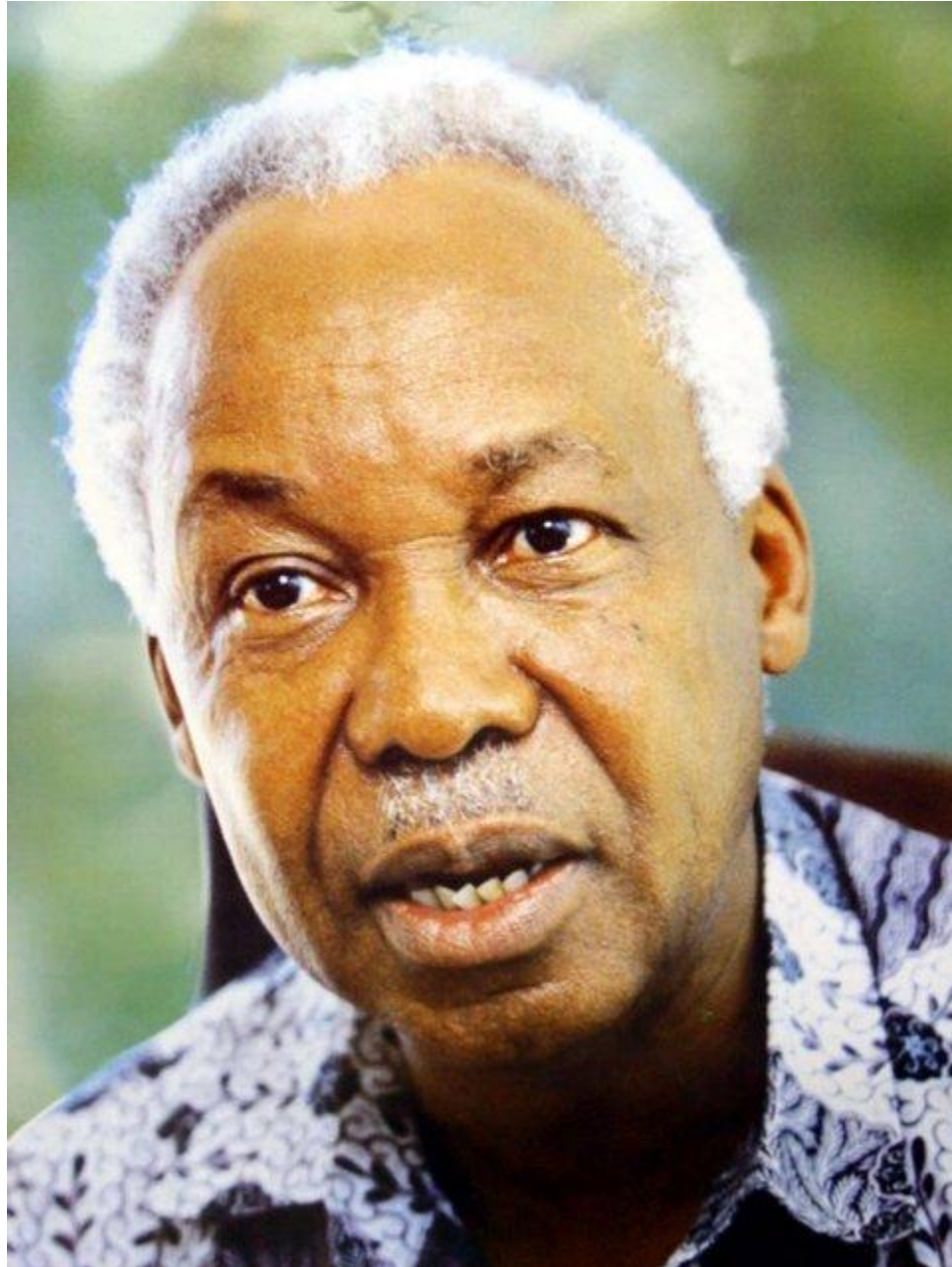


INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONHOOD IN TANGANYIKA
FROM PLANNING TO IMPLEMENTATION

By Sizwe Dumisani



Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere

This essay briefly describes the political and social environment that Nyerere was faced with immediately after independence. The essay then examines the plan that Julius Nyerere conceived to guide the state of Tanganyika from a former British colony to a true nation with a nationhood mentality among its citizens. The paper focuses especially on Nyerere's concept of African socialism (Ujamaa), self-reliance (Kujitegemea) and their codification by the Arusha Declaration. This essay also examines how Nyerere implemented his plan. This paper also examines Nyerere's work in support of armed liberation fighters in their efforts to remove colonizers from African soil. Lastly, this paper briefly describes the results of implementing the plan, by reviewing some Quality of Life Index (QLI) metrics.

Julius Nyerere was selected by the people of Tanganyika to lead them to independence from the British. Just after midnight on December 9, 1961 Tanganyika became independent with Julius Kambarage Nyerere, a former teacher (Mwalimu), leading the new African state. Soon after independence, simmering racial tension just below the surface bubbled to the surface of the new state: The people wanted the new state to Africanize—quickly: African managers in state jobs; African military officers to replace White British officers in the Tanzania military—it is said that this was one of the reasons that caused the soldiers to mutiny three years after independence; arrogant Europeans and other non-Africans should be deported if they can't adjust to the new order of an independent, African-led government. Some were actually deported, for racist behavior. Some members of opposition parties, and even members of Nyerere's ruling party the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), pushed for a government-sanctioned policy of discrimination against non-Africans. Mwalimu was vehemently against such a policy. This was the political and social cauldron that Nyerere found himself immersed in immediately after independence. Nyerere's vision for Tanganyika, included a non-racial Tanganyika, where each person is treated equal—regardless of race. Race-baiting (by opposition politicians and even TANU members) "threatened Nyerere's carefully cultivated

racial harmony.”¹ Nyerere threatened to resign, and did, six weeks after independence, putting the government in the hands of former labor leader Rashidi Kawawa. Nyerere took a year off, to personally transform “TANU from a nationalist movement into an institution of governance”² before returning to lead Tanganyika as president for the next twenty three years—which included (within two years of his return), a violent, bloody revolution erupting on Zanzibar, an army mutiny, and Tanganyika uniting with Zanzibar, forming the United Republic of Tanzania.

During Mwalimu’s year-long sabbatical, he was planning; he was attempting to personally mold TANU and provide it with “...an ideology of citizen obligation”³ that would “define what it meant to be Tanganyikan”⁴, he was exposed to the writings of Petro Itosi Marealle and his book *The Life of The Chagga, Here on Earth and After Death*⁵. In this book, Marealle (a Chagga) describes the concept of familyhood (Ujamaa) ingrained within the Chagga people of Tanzania. Nyerere embraced this concept of Ujamaa and formally incorporated it as the foundational economic policy of TANU—rejecting the legacy of capitalism, inherited from the British, and rejecting the equally foreign concept of ‘scientific socialism’ of Marxism (which Nyerere often said was “neither scientific nor socialist”⁶) from the Eastern bloc. Ujamaa (African socialism) became an integral ideological and economic component in Nyerere’s plan to lead the nation. Mr. Nyerere believed that what Tanganyika needed, and what post-colonial Africans needed was to reach back to tradition to reshape their minds and recover a traditional attitude of mind to be applied to building the new nation: “Our first step, therefore, must be to re-educate ourselves; to regain our former attitude of mind.”⁷ The former attitude of mind that Mr. Nyerere is referring to is the attitude of familyhood. The attitude of an extended national

¹ Paul Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960-1964*. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2015), 75.

² Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 45

³ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 97

⁴ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 97

⁵ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 98

⁶ Colin Legum and Geoffrey Mmari. *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*. (Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania: Mkuki Na Nyota, 1995), 190

⁷ Julius Nyerere, “Ujamaa—The Basis of African Socialism,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.1, no.1 (1987):7, <https://www.jpanafrican.org/docs/vol1no1/thejournalofpanafricanstudies1987.pdf>

family. Mwalimu is reaching back to traditional African society, the society that he himself was born and raised in—based on an ethnic (tribal) society; the critically-new component that Mr. Nyerere is inserting into this familyhood tradition is: extending this ethnic-based familyhood (Ujamaa) and replacing the tribe with the entire nation: “It was in the struggle to break the grip of colonialism that we learnt the need for unity. We came to recognize that the same socialist attitude of mind which, in the tribal days, gave to every individual the security that comes of belonging to a widely extended family[the tribe], must be preserved within the still wider society of the nation.”⁸ Mwalimu Nyerere was leveraging the ‘familyhood’ attitude of mind, based on ethnic affiliations, and extending this familyhood attitude of mind to the entire nation: The nation is now the tribe. This is the attitude of mind that Mr. Nyerere wanted to burn into the hearts of each citizen. With the ideology of Ujamaa in the minds and hearts of each citizen, Nyerere will have built the framework to achieve two significant goals: 1) The creation of and belief in a socialism, historically rooted in African traditional thought and practice 2) The transformation of a Tanzanian state from a collection of over 150 disparate ethnic groups, self-conscious of their respective ethnic identities , into the Tanzanian nation—where the self-conscious sense of Tanzanian nationhood replaces the tribe; this is the nationhood mentality that Mwalimu and enlightened TANU members were working to achieve. It’s worth restating that to be an African socialist in Tanzania, to follow the principles of Ujamaa, you must “reject the capitalist attitude of mind which colonialism brought into Africa.”⁹ For example, the concept that land is a marketable commodity. The colonial capitalist introduced into Tanganyika this concept and practice of land being a marketable commodity. Those who understood and believed in the principles of Ujamaa believed that land is to be worked agriculturally or developed for some other useful purpose; land is not to be hoarded like a commodity and sold or

⁸ Nyerere, “Ujamaa—The Basis of African Socialism,” 11.

⁹ Julius K. Nyerere, “AFRICAN SOCIALISM: Ujamaa In Practice,” *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 2, No. 6, (February 1971): 4, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41163479>

rented to the highest bidder. Ujamaa rejects the individual ownership of land by land 'lords' who rent out their land to people who want to actually *use* the land. Nyerere called such people parasites, and said "We must not allow the growth of parasites here in Tanganyika"¹⁰. Nyerere believed that because of poverty and the economic weakness of Tanzania and other former European colonies, "socialism is the only rational choice"¹¹ for Tanzania and other former European colonists. To believe in the principles of Ujamaa requires the citizen to make a very radical shift in their thinking: Believe that meeting the needs of fellow citizens is more important than making a profit: "The vital point is that the basis of socialist organisation is meeting of people's needs, not the making of profit."¹² This is the Ujamaa mind-set, the nationhood mind-set, that Nyerere was trying plant in each Tanzanian citizen. Nyerere's plan also required developing an education system that "...fostered the social goals of living together and working together for the common good."¹³ Mwalimu believed that hands-on farm work should be an integral component in the education of Tanganyika's citizens, and that molding a socialist mind-set must be a central part of the curriculum.¹⁴ President Nyerere's plan also entails making schools "...economic communities as well as social and educational communities...Each school should have, as an integral part of it, a farm or workshop which provides the food eaten by the community, and makes some contributions to the total national income."¹⁵

The Arusha Declaration, delivered by President Nyerere in January 1967, codified Ujamaa, Kujitegemea (self-reliance), Pan-Africanism, support for anti-colonial fighters and other key TANU ideologies and policies. One of the goals of TANU was to prevent any non-socialist

¹⁰ Nyerere, "Ujamaa—The Basis of African Socialism," 8.

¹¹ Julius Nyerere, "Capitalism or Socialism: The Rational Choice", *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 55, No. 653 (October 1974):441, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43246224>

¹² Nyerere, "Capitalism or Socialism," 447.

¹³ Julius Nyerere, "Education for Self-reliance," *CrossCurrents*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (FALL 1968):420 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24457417>

¹⁴ Nyerere, "Education for Self-Reliance," 429-430.

¹⁵ Nyerere, "Education for Self-Reliance," 428.

life styles among TANU leadership. The Arusha Declaration spells this out: “Every T.A.N.U. and government leader must be either a peasant or a worker, and should in no way be associated with the practices of Capitalism or Feudalism.”¹⁶ This means that every TANU and government leader can’t rent out a house to tenants, can’t have an additional job, have shares in private enterprise or be a director of a private company; this is spelled-out in the Arusha Declaration. Nyerere also wanted to reassure Tanzanian citizens that Tanzanian socialism (Ujamaa) would not devolve into a dictatorship, void of democracy; this is also explicitly called-out in the Arusha Declaration: “True socialism cannot exist without democracy also existing in the society.”¹⁷ It is clear from Nyerere’s speeches, writings and official policy as codified in the Arusha Declaration, that TANU is focused on agriculture to lift the nation out of poverty. Agriculture was seen as the foundation of self-reliance. In Part Three of the Arusha Declaration, Nyerere rejects massive aid from foreign governments and foreign companies; it’s counter to the TANU policy of self-reliance: “Independence means self-reliance. Independence cannot be real if a nation depends upon gifts and loans from another for its development.”¹⁸ In the Arusha Declaration, the section titled HARD WORK IS THE ROOT OF DEVELOPMENT (page 13 of Madyibi’s translation), Nyerere emphasizes the meaning of self-reliance: “...industries will come and money will come but their foundation is the people and their hard work, especially in AGRICULTURE.” The foundation of Tanzanian self-reliance is agriculture. Nyerere provides an example, in the Arusha Declaration, of why the farmer (the peasant) is so critical to TANU’s policy of self-reliance: Loans are used to build hospitals, schools and other facilities for the urban dweller. The loans need to be paid off in foreign currency. This currency is generated by the Tanzanian farmer—the farmers’ produce is exported and sold overseas. The Tanzanian government receives foreign currency [from the sale of] the farmers’ produce; it is this currency that the Tanzanian

¹⁶ Ayanda Madyibi (translated from Kiswahili), “The Arusha Declaration,” *The Elephant*, (October 27, 2020):15, <https://www.theelephant.info/documents/julius-nyerere-the-arusha-declaration-1967/>

¹⁷ Madyibi, “The Arusha Declaration,” 3.

¹⁸ Madyibi, “The Arusha Declaration,” 8.

government uses to pay down the loan that they received to build the hospitals and schools. Hence, the rural dweller (the farmer) does not even benefit from the urban school or the hospital; but the farmers labor provides the foreign [exchange] to pay down on the loan. “If we are not careful, we might get to the position where the real exploitation in Tanzania is that of the town dwellers exploiting the peasants.”¹⁹ Mwalimu’s heart-felt vision of the small, rural farmer as the foundation of self-reliance for the nation was the driver to implement villagization. He believed that the farmer is vital to any nation in Africa, because the farmer “...is the producer of the food for the majority of the people of any country in Africa at present...”²⁰ Nyerere emphasized the importance of the farmer to Africa by stating the peasant[farmer] should be treated “as a god!”²¹ He saw an absolute need to organize and collectivize that tremendous resource: Millions of small farmers, generating that critical foreign exchange currency—needed to expand development in urban areas and the rest of the nation.

TANU implemented, in a number of ways, its policies and ideologies delineated in the Arusha Declaration. For example, TANU put teeth into Part Two of the Arusha Declaration (Policy of Socialism—Ujamaa), within days of its publication, by “the nationalization of commercial banking, insurance, milling, and a substantial sector of the export/import trade.”²² TANU also continued to support the principal aims outlined in Part One section d) To co-operate with all political parties in Africa engaged in the liberation of all Africa. An example of how this cooperation was implemented is TANU’s hosting of the OAU’s African Liberation Committee in Dar Es Salaam. In addition, the compulsory National Service, enacted in 1964²³, facilitates the implementation of a number policies outlined explicitly in the Arusha Declaration and policies that were implicit: Some of the implicit policies of the Arusha Declaration include the de-

¹⁹ Madyibi,” The Arusha Declaration,”10.

²⁰ Kabinda Lemba, “Faces of Africa—Mwalimu Julius Nyerere”, <https://youtu.be/-6noZPkLwwU>, 14:01-14:14

²¹ Lemba, “Faces of Africa”,14:15-14:21.

²² Legum and Mmari, *Mwalimu*,13

²³ Legum and Mmari, *Mwalimu*, 28

tribalization of Tanzania, building a sense of nationhood and building a sense of responsibility within each citizen to defend the nation. The compulsory National Service camps “became centres where youngsters from all tribes and from different social backgrounds learnt to feel themselves to be Tanzanians...and created a sense of belonging, especially in matters of national security.”²⁴ Nyerere implemented his policy of self-reliance with a focus on agricultural production through villagization. “Because the economy of Tanzania depends and will continue to depend on agriculture and animal husbandry, Tanzanians can live well without depending on help from outside if they use their land properly.”²⁵

President Nyerere supported the armed liberation fighters, fighting to liberate the African soil from colonizers, by providing them with base camps in Tanzania, trainers, and weapons. Nyerere’s leadership ensured that TANU leaders, like Rashidi Kawawa, promoted the Pan-African goals of TANU, including the armed liberation of colonized Africans from colonizers who refuse a peaceful solution. Mr. Kawawa: “Our commitment was to the liberation of Africa.”²⁶ Kawawa also tells us that Mwalimu tried to inculcate a sense of responsibility, in the heart of each citizen, to help rid the continent of colonizers: “TANU educated all our citizens to make a small contribution to help [neighboring minority-ruled countries]...”²⁷ President Nyerere freely welcomed freedom fighters into Tanzania from many African countries that were under colonial rule.²⁸ Mazrui and Mhando tell us that ordinary Tanzanian citizens regularly contributed food from their farms, money and even blood donations to the liberation fighters in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, and South Africa—Mozambique Liberation Front(FRELIMO), Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), Namibia’s South West African

²⁴ Legum and Mmari, *Mwalimu*, 28-29

²⁵ Madyibi, “Arusha Declaration,” 14.

²⁶ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 183.

²⁷ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 183

²⁸ Lemba, “Faces of Africa”, 19:09-19:57.

People's Organizations (SWAPO), South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), and South Africa's Pan African Congress of Azania (PAC)^{29,30}

Nyerere believed that liberation from Africa's colonial governors was not enough; African unity goes hand-and-hand with expelling the colonizers. Nyerere: "Total African liberation and total African unity are basic objectives of our Party and our Government." Nyerere openly supported the concept of African liberation as early as 1958, with his Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa initiative, "funded mostly by TANU"³¹, his support for liberating colonized territories was well-known. Although initially PAFMECA did not explicitly agitate for armed struggle, it did organize and initiate a 30-year boycott of South Africa and "began to articulate the strategy [support for armed struggle] that was later taken up by the Organization of African Unity's Liberation Committee"³², established in 1963 and headquartered in Dar es Salaam³³.

Nyerere was so dedicated to the removal of the colonizer, that Armed fighting groups "from across southern Africa were invited to open offices in Dar es Salaam and begin training in secret camps."³⁴ Nyerere met with Eduardo Mondlane and convinced him to set up base camps in southern Tanzania (bordering Mozambique) to train FRELIMO fighters in sabotage and guerrilla warfare—under the "tutelage of Tunisian instructors."³⁵ Eventually, FRELIMO fighters "operated out of several settlements in Southern Tanzania and waged the Liberation War from Tanzania, with Tanzanian government blessings."³⁶ The Tanzanian Peoples Defense Forces fought with FRELIMO forces against the Portuguese ...along the border with Mozambique."³⁷

²⁹ Mazrui and Mhando Julius K. *Nyerere, Africa's Titan on a Global Stage*, 267

³⁰ Legum and Mmari. *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, 164

³¹ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 185

³² Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 185

³³ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 192

³⁴ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 186

³⁵ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 188

³⁶ Mazrui and Mhando, *Julius K. Nyerere, Africa's Titan on a Global Stage*, 265

³⁷ Mazrui and Mhando, *Julius K. Nyerere*, 268

Nyerere's Tanzania also chaired the group of African states (Front Line States) that supported the armed liberation of southern African colonies³⁸. Nyerere also had allies in Northern Africa, such as in Algeria, who supported the liberation struggle in Southern African, funneling weapons and trainers for the fighters through Tanzania. In February 1962, PAFMECA was strategically replaced by the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA)—whose members consisted of sovereign African-led governments who had the freedom and control of (meager) finances to support armed fighters. Tanzania, under Nyerere, was a critical component of this expanded militant version of PAFMCA, providing additional base camps and training on Tanzanian soil in support of the fighters. In August of 1962, “the South African ANC... [met] in Dar es Salaam” and established Tanganyika as a “base of operations...for young militants.”³⁹ A month later, weapons flowed to Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) with the coordination of Tanganyika's minister of local government, Job Lucinde.⁴⁰

Mwalimu Nyerere had an ambitious plan, an original plan, to reach back to African tradition, extend and shape this tradition to meet the needs of the citizens of Tanzania, and build an independent, self-reliant socialist nation of 150 ethnicities with a nationhood consciousness—as Tanzanians first. The results of implementing this plan can be viewed through the traditional quantitative metrics of “Gross National Product, industrial indices, trade balance...balance of reserves”⁴¹ and other metrics. President Nyerere's achievements can also be viewed and judged “by the more telling Quality of Life Index (QLI).”⁴² The QLI prime indicators include “infant mortality rate, life expectancy, the level of literacy, and the supply of fresh water.”⁴³ Professors Legum and Mmari note that “The rate of infant mortality among Tanzanian women, since

³⁸ Mazrui and Mhando, *Julius K. Nyerere*, 30

³⁹ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 186

⁴⁰ Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation*, 189

⁴¹ Legum and Mmari, *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, 194

⁴² Legum and Mmari, *Mwalimu*, 194

⁴³ Legum and Mmari, *Mwalimu*, 194

independence, was down by almost 40 per cent, and life expectancy up by about 50 percent.”

These improvements are the result of “enormous investments in improving health and education services.” Educational improvements have been remarkable as well: One year before President Nyerere retired, 95% of all children from age 7 through 14 were in primary school—far exceeding the percentage in 1961. Under Nyerere’s leadership, TANU was able to create 7,650 Ujamaa villages, and all have fresh water from pipes.⁴⁴ Legum and Mmari also note however that after 1976, as a result of economic setbacks problems, some of the positive growth in QLI standards was not sustained.

Julius Nyerere was a creative original thinker who selected an authentic African cultural foundation (Ujamaa) and language (Kiswahili) on which to build a new nation from a formerly-colonized people. This essay described the initial political and social landscape at independence, his plan to create policy based on an agricultural foundational of Ujamaa and self-reliance, codify this policy in the Arusha Declaration, and implement this plan by creating institutions—including: the National Service in an effort to socialize, de-tribalize and create in the hearts of the citizens a sense of Tanzanian nationhood and responsibility to the nation; constrain capitalist vestiges of colonialism by establishing government ownership of major industries that were formerly privately owned and establishing base camps in Tanzania for liberation fighters. After studying Nyerere’s creative vision, his plan and the implementation of his plan, one thing is clear: He had faith in the ability of his citizens to implement the plan, faith in his own ability to guide his nation-family, and he had an unshakable faith in God to order his steps along the way.

⁴⁴ Legum and Mmari, *Mwalimu*: 194

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Mazrui and Mhando Julius K. *Nyerere, Africa’s Titan on a Global Stage*

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