

Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika

Have I said enough about the geopolitical situation in east Africa during these years of colonial formation? European powers had gathered in Berlin in 1884 to start bringing order to their unseemly scramble for African territory that wasn't theirs to begin with. On the ground, white government agents were signing "treaties" with tribal chiefs. (Sound familiar, Americans?)

Before World War I, Germany was a major imperial player, with vast claims in east Africa (Deutsch Ost Afrika) and the southwest (Sud West Afrika). Germany jostled and parlayed with Portugal, England, Belgium and others until the war turned. In defeat, the Germans forfeited their African claims. German West Africa was ceded to South Africa with a mandate from the League of Nations, and became Southwest Africa. To the east, the territory south of British East Africa (German East Africa) was mandated to Great Britain, which issued occupation stamps awkwardly overprinted "G.E.A." (right) Eventually it become Tanganyika.

The year 1922 saw big changes in postal authorities for the region. The name British East Africa had been changed to Kenya in 1920, and now came the first definitive set with simple names linking the two protectorates: Kenya and Uganda. (see top)

In 1922, the first Tanganyika stamps appeared. They must have raised an eyebrow or two. A giraffe? In place of King George?

I have not yet uncovered the wise guy in Whitehall who came up with this philatelic charade. It's like a window in the old TV comedy "Laugh-In," where one minute you get George V, and the next face that pops up is a giraffe, the loopest of African fauna — like Goldie Hawn, the loopest of American fauna.



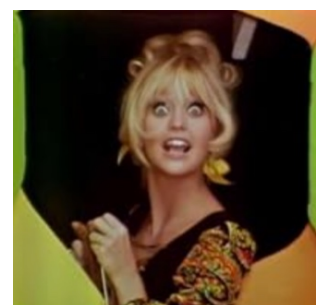
1922



1917



1922



Well, it's quaint. Exotic, Beautifully engraved. Definitely humorous. Not overtly disrespectful. And that giraffe face is adorable! Plus, keep in mind that this was the new League of Nations mandate, not a Crown Colony, so there might be a reason for George V to keep a low profile on Tanganyika stamps — for a while. The giraffe stamps apparently were quite popular. They were used for years. By 1927, I guess the Foreign Office considered it safe enough to declare Britain's imperial dominion over its mandated territory. A new bi-color set was issued, with George's cameo profile in black surrounded by frames of many colors. The inscription reads: Mandated Territory of Tanganyika. Gee, I kind of miss the giraffe. Which one do you like best? (see below)



1927-31



In 1946, the brand-new United Nations declared Tanganyika a “trust territory.” (There seem to be a lot of words describing imperial lands: colony, protectorate, mandate, trust territory ...) By this time, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika had joined a loose federation that was so successful it lasted 40 years, from 1935 until 1975, long after (the nations became independent. Among the efficiencies of the coalition: a joint postal authority. Here are a few attractive stamps from that era.



1941



1935



1954



1966

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