Since its inception as an independent nation, Tanzania, or Tanganyika, has had leaders interested in the place of education in a democratic nation. After assuming control of its own education system, not only did the Tanzanian people capitalize on the existing global rights discourse, but Tanzanian thinkers’ generativity added to that discourse, espousing a vision of education that accounted for the way in which economic instability changes the capacity of states to fulfill to provide education, while not reducing the necessity of education. The case of Tanzania also serves a reminder of the ways in which national education systems can serve as locations of transnational influence as local interests interact with international intrigue and politics. Tanzania does not represent a utopic education system for poor nations or a monolithic resonance across the global south, but it does serve as an effective reminder that the ideals of post-independence African states were not universally doomed. From the start of independence through the early 1970s, Tanzania prioritized education among its political commitments and the education system rapidly expanded both in length of coursework and number of students while breaking down pre-existing barriers. Tanzanian leaders justified these efforts both on the basis of economic development and human rights, a mix that would have later consequences.