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Houseboy: Domestic Service and the Making of Colonial Dar es Salaam, 1919-1961

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Houseboy: Domestic Service and the Making of Colonial Dar es Salaam, 1919-1961

By

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M.A., Emory University, 2011
B.A., University of Florida, 2007

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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2013

Abstract

Houseboy: Domestic Service and the Making of Colonial Dar es Salaam, 1919-1961

By Robyn Pariser

This dissertation constructs a history of the largest occupational group in colonial Dar es Salaam—domestic servants. Servants, the overwhelming majority of whom were African men, composed nearly half of Dar es Salaam's wage labor force and formed Tanganyika's first African labor union. Despite their significance, servants play only a marginal role in scholarly accounts of the city's history. I examine how domestic service changed from a well-paid, respected occupation into cheap, degrading labor and analyze the struggle between servants and the state over labor standards and servants' status as workers. Correspondence between servants and state officials, union documents and petitions, labor legislation, personal memoires, and official discussions about domestic service in Dar es Salaam, shed new light on the shifting visions and meanings of work in the colonial era. My research reveals that the state possessed multiple and conflicting images of African labor and African laborers. Moreover, African notions of honor and masculinity became increasingly tied not only to work, but to permanent, regulated wage labor. By integrating domestic servants into the dominant narrative of Dar es Salaam's labor history, this dissertation complicates accepted paradigms of African labor, colonial rule, and the British imperial project.

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Contents

Introduction

Rethinking Urban Labor and Urban Laborers in Colonial Africa

On 6 December 1956 thousands of domestic servants went on strike in Dar es Salaam, the capital of British colonial Tanganyika Territory.[1] The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union announced the strike in October after the Konondoni Hostel sacked nearly fifty African employees.[2] Initially, the union called for all domestic and hotel workers in the capital to demonstrate their solidarity by refusing to work until the management gave the fired workers back their jobs. While both hotel and domestic workers participated in the strike, domestic servants who worked in private households dominated the movement and the strike quickly turned to the issue of servants' wages, servants' rights, and their status as workers.[3] The union demanded an increase in servants' wages to keep up with the rapidly rising cost of living in the capital and it wanted the state and employers to grant servants the same rights and legal protections as other permanent wage laborers in Dar es Salaam. While the strike concerned wages and labor rights, it was mostly about servants asserting their identity as workers and members of the African working class.

The weeks leading up to the strike were tense and dramatic. Employers and colonial officials intimidated potential strikers with threats of unemployment and destitution. Not only did they threaten their servants' livelihoods, they threatened their servants' honor and masculinity. The overwhelming majority of servants in colonial Dar

[1] Tanganyika Territory was renamed Tanzania, as it is known today, in 1964. Throughout this dissertation I will use Tanganyika to refer to colonial Tanzania.
[2] "Domestic Workers to Strike," *Tanganyika Standard*, 1 November 1956; 1956 Labour Department Annual Repot, CO 736/49.
[3] N.T.C. Msumba, "The Tanganyika Hotel and Domestic Workers' Union: Habari za Ugomaji," ACC460 724/25/f.27; "Servants to Strike on December 6," *Tanganyika Standard*, 29 November 1956.

es Salaam were African men. In an editorial to the *Sunday News*, one employer cautioned servants that if they went on strike their employers would not rehire them. "Within a day," the author warned, servants who participated in the strike would "become homeless and without money with which to support themselves and their families."[4] As the newspapers readily reminded them, there were already over a thousand unemployed servants roaming around the capital. Nothing was as dishonorable to an African man as being unemployed and unable to provide for his wife (or wives) and children. These men had a lot to lose if they chose to strike—their salaries, their homes, as well as their standing within the community and their own families.

In spite of the intimidation, union representatives implored the thousands of servants in the city to come together, stand strong, and demand better wages and treatment. N.T.C. Msumba, Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union (TDHWU) General Secretary, urged: "Let us pull together. Do you wish to become weak? If you are dismissed without cause? If you are treated with scorn at your work? If you are called a dog? Come quickly and become a union member." [5] On the day of the strike, approximately 2,400 domestic servants failed to report to work, representing about thirty percent of the servants working in the capital.[6]

The "houseboy strike" was a material failure. Servants never achieved their desired citywide wage increase and it is unclear what became of the forty workers who were originally fired. However, the strike shook up colonial society. Unlike other labor disputes, the houseboy strike entered the homes of the colonial administration and upper

[4] "You and your Servants," *Sunday News*, 4 November 1956.
[5] N.T.C. Msumba, "The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union: Union of House Workers," ACC460 724/25/f.1.
[6] "Many Reports of Threats of Violence: Last Minute Changes Caused Confusion," *Tanganyika Standard*, 8 December 1956; K.L. Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1956.

classes. Domestic servants were a central feature of colonial society and the colonial economy. They were crucial to the making of colonial homes, cities, and the state. All British administrators in Tanganyika employed domestic servants. They worked in almost every European, Asian, and Arab home in the Territory. Employers trusted and relied on their servants to protect their homes and their families. They often liked to think of their servants as extensions of their household. Although they maintained their social distance, many employers thought of their servants as companions or friends.[7] The 1956 strike shattered every notion that servants were their employers' trusted companions. Servants demanded to be recognized and treated as workers who performed labor in exchange for a wage.

The strike culminated a decade-long struggle between servants and the state. During the first two decades of British rule, domestic service was an elite, skilled, profitable occupation highly sought after by African men. During World War II, however, it sank to the bottom of the urban labor hierarchy. Servants earned minimal wages in exchange for working excessively long days in what were often adverse working conditions. In the hopes of creating a more stable, efficient workforce, in the 1940s and 1950s the state designed labor standards and legal protections for workers in other sectors of the urban economy. Yet, it failed to extend these protections to domestic servants, who comprised roughly forty-seven percent of the capital's wage labor force.[8] As permanent employment in other occupations became more profitable and more secure,

[7] Karen Hansen, *Distant Companions: Servants and Employers in Zambia, 1900-1985* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

[8] In 1942, the Labor Office estimated that 6,000 men and 1,000 children worked as domestic servants, representing 47 percent (7,000 or 14,770) of the city's wage-laborers. M.J.B. Molohan. 1942 Labour Office Report, Dar es Salaam Township, TNA 61/100/A/II/f.95. Cited in James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 76. During my research at the TNA I requested this file several times and never received it. This file appears to be lost.

and notions of honor and masculinity became increasingly tied to permanent wage labor, domestic service became a less attractive and less respectable employment option for African men.

In response to the social and financial decline of domestic service during World War II, in 1945 domestic servants formed Tanganyika's first African labor union, The African Cooks, Washermen, and House Servants Association (ACWHSA).[9] Led by Saleh bin Fundi, whom John Iliffe describes as "Tanganyika's first African labour leader," the ACWHSA implored the state to recognize domestic servants as workers and to create and enforce labor standards that would offer servants the same rights and protections as other permanent wage laborers in the capital.[10] Servants not only wanted better wages, fixed work hours, and overtime pay, they wanted the status and respect that came with being a permanent wage earner in Dar es Salaam during the post-World War II era. After a long struggle with the state following the union's cancellation in 1949, the much larger, better organized, and more militant TDHWU emerged in 1955 during a massive, highly politicized trade union movement to continue the servants' struggle for recognition and rights in Dar es Salaam.[11]

Domestic service was a central feature of urban life and urban economies throughout colonial Africa, and it continues to be essential in African cities today.[12]

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[9] Certificate of Registration, 28 August 1945, ACC460 99/1/A/f.8.
[10] John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 398.
[11] The union registered on 23 December 1955 as The Domestic and Hotel Workers Union under the 1932 Trade Unions Ordinance. When the state required them to re-register under the new 1956 Trade Unions Ordinance, they slightly changed their name. On 20 June 1957 the union re-registered as the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, but they had their registration back-dated to reflect their 1955 registration date. K.C. Ashfold, "Registration of Trade Union, Trade Unions Ordinance, 1956," *Tanganyika Gazette*, No. 38, 5 July 1957, ACC460 98/40/f.49.
[12] For an overview of domestic service in contemporary Tanzania see Annamarie Kashaija Kiaga, "Blaming the Other Woman: Rural Housegirls and Urban Employers" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2007). For more on the state of domestic service worldwide and the importance of domestic

Despite being the single largest occupational group in Tanganyika's colonial capital and forming the Territory's first African labor union, domestic servants play only a marginal role in historical accounts of Tanganyika Territory.[13] In fact, scholars have largely overlooked the work and lives of domestic servants throughout colonial Africa.[14] Most literature on labor in African cities and towns focuses on dockworkers, railway workers, and miners.[15] Although these laborers dominate the literature, in reality they formed the minority of the working class. In 1939, the Dar es Salaam port employed fewer than seven hundred dockworkers.[16] The Labour Office reported seven thousand domestic

service to local and global economies see International Labour Organization, "Decent Work for Domestic Workers," International Labour Conference, 99th Session, Report VI (1) (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2010).

[13] The only manuscript dedicated to the study of domestic servants in colonial and post-colonial Tanzania focuses on Tanga: Janet Bujra, *Serving Class: Masculinity and the Feminisation of Domestic Service in Tanzania* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, 2000). Issa Shivji offers a brief history of the servants' labor unions. Issa Shivji, *Law, State and the Working Class in Tanzania* (London: James Curry, 1986). John lliffe dedicates roughly one and a half pages to the ACWHSA and one sentence to the TDHWU in his 576 page *Modern History*, 397-398 and 539; While most of his book focuses on agricultural production, Coulson entirely neglects domestic servants in his discussion of the urban economy: Andrew Coulson, "Tanzania: A Political Economy," (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). Domestic servants receive brief but notable mentions in Brennan, *Taifa* and Andrew Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanization, Crime, and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam, 1919-1961* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005).

[14] Rare exceptions focus on Southern Africa. See Hansen, *Distant Companions*; Jacklyn Cock, *Maids and Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1980); Charles Van Onselen, "The Witches of Suburbia: Domestic Service on the Witwatersrand, 1890-1914," in *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914,* by Charles van Onselen (New York: Longman, 1982). Beverly Grier examines the involvement of children in domestic service in colonial Zimbabwe: Beverly Grier, *Invisible Hands: Child Labor and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2005).

[15] The notable exception to this is the literature examining to role of African women in the urban economy, which largely focuses on their involvement in illicit and informal activities such as prostitution, beer brewing, and trade. See for example Lisa Lindsay, "Domesticity and Difference: Male Breadwinners, Working Women, and Colonial Citizenship in the 1945 Nigerian General Strike," *The American Historical Review*, 104 (1999): 783-812; Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[16] "In 1939 the port employed 307 permanent employees, including 24 headmen who led labor gangs; 360 registered casual labourers, divided into 8 gangs summoned to work in turn by their headman touring the African township with a bellringer; and unregistered casuals to fill any vacancies." Iliffe, *Modern History*, 400. There were a large number of men who worked as unregistered casual workers, possibly a couple thousand. However, because they were unregistered, it is difficult to determine their numbers.

servants working in the capital in 1942.[17] While the number of dockworkers increased in the 1940s and 50s, dockworkers never outnumbered domestic servants in colonial Dar es Salaam.[18]

The history of domestic servants is important not only because they composed a significant segment of the wage labor force in colonies cities, but also because they significantly shaped colonial homes, cities, and states. Integrating domestic servants into the dominant narrative of urban labor history provides a more complete picture of colonial rule and colonial life and, as this dissertation illustrates, the history of domestic service in colonial Dar es Salaam significantly complicates accepted paradigms of African labor, colonial rule, and the imperial project.

This dissertation constructs a history of domestic service in colonial Dar es Salaam from its acquisition by the British in 1919 until independence in 1961. It explores the rise and fall of the occupation and highlights the critical role domestic servants played in the making of the colonial economy and colonial society in Tanganyika Territory. I examine the state's views and policies towards domestic work and domestic workers, as well as explore they ways in which administrators' roles as domestic employers affected the decisions they made in their capacity as state officials. I also analyze the ways in which domestic servants worked with and around the state to fight the degradation of their work. Through examining the multiple factors behind the transformation of

[17] M.J.B. Molohan. 1942 Labour Office Report, Dar es Salaam Township, TNA 61/100/A/II/f.95. Cited in Brennan, *Taifa*, 76.

[18] The casual dockworker pool reached its maximum of 3,164 workers in December 1953, which was reduced to 2,200 in December 1954 and reduced further in November 1958 to 1,306 as workers were replaced by mechanized labor and permanent workers. In addition to casual workers the docks employed a smaller number of permanent dockworkers. Even by generously adding fifty percent to account for the number of permanent workers, and even doubling the number of workers in the later part of the decade when permanent labor became more common, dockworkers still do not outnumber servants. John Iliffe, "History of Dockworkers in Dar es Salaam," *Tanzania Notes and Records* (1970): 140-141.

domestic service, as well as critically analyzing the unions' complaints and demands, I explore how the state's multiple views and policies towards African labor and African laborers intersected with domestic servants' own changing imagination of work and workers during the colonial era.

Arguments, Interventions, and Contributions

Connecting studies of labor to those on gender, generation, and domesticity, scholars have shown that changes in the colonial economy dramatically impacted African culture.[19] Cash became central to economic and social life during the interwar period. Like in other parts of Africa, the successful creation and maintenance of an independent household was the foundation of adult, male identity in Tanganyika. The achievement of adulthood was critical to men's power and authority within their family as well as the larger community.[20] As the economy changed, men increasingly needed cash to establish their own households, especially in urban areas—they required cash to pay the bridewealth that enabled them to obtain a wife and start a family as well as to provide food, clothes, and housing for their wives and children. They also needed cash to display and maintain their status through sponsoring and participating in community events as

[19] See for example Lisa A. Lindsay, *Working with Gender: Wage Labor and Social Change in Southwestern Nigeria* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003); Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Sara Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility, and Class Formation in an Extended Yorùbá Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); William Beinart, *The Political Economy of Pondoland, 1860-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[20] For a discussion of marriage and male adulthood in Tanzania see Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Margot Lovett, "She Thinks Like a Man': Marriage and (De) Constructing Gender Identity in Colonial Buha, Western Tanzania, 1943-1960," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 30:1 (1996): 52-68; Margot Lovett, "On Power and Powerlessness: Marriage and Political Metaphor in Colonial Western Tanzania," *The International Journal of African Studies* 27:2 (1994): 273-301; Ophelia Mascarenhas and Marjorie Mbilinyi, *Women in Tanzania: An Analytical Bibliography* (Uppsala: Stockholm/Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1983); R.H. Sabot, *Economic Development and Urban Migration: Tanzania, 1900-1971* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

well as buying goods and clothing that conveyed a sense of honor and respectability.[21] Men in urban areas were under additional pressure to accumulate enough wealth in the city to redistribute it to their kinfolk in rural areas.

The need for cash forced men to enter wage labor. Women did compose a small percentage of the wage labor force, but the overwhelming majority of wage laborers were indeed male. Within the highly gendered colonial labor system, women belonged working in their own homes or participating in the informal economy.[22] Formal wage labor was men's work. While multiple notions of masculinity and honor coexisted and interacted with one another during the 1930s and 1940s, wage labor became central to adult male identity and status within the urban African community.[23] As in other occupations, African men dominated domestic service. In 1949, the Labour Department reported that of the approximately 40,000 domestic workers in Tanganyika, only 1,246, or roughly three percent, were female.[24] Servants, like other workers, were mostly male breadwinners who sought to earn cash in exchange for their labor so that they could establish a home, support a family, and gain influence in the community.

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[21] Elisabeth McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa: From Honor to Respectability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001).

[22] Although the colonial state as well as most African men ascribed to this view of African women and labor, African women played a large role in the urban economy. Women made significant contributions to their urban households through their involvement in informal, illicit, and to a lesser extent wage labor. See Lisa Lindsay, "Domesticity and Difference: Male Breadwinners, Working Women, and Colonial Citizenship in the 1945 Nigerian General Strike," *The American Historical Review*, 104 (1999): 783-812; White, *Comforts of Home*.

[23] On gendered notions of labor in colonial Africa see especially Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan Miescher, eds., *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003); Lindsay, "Domesticity and Difference"; Cooper, *Decolonization*; Nancy Rose Hunt, "Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa: Usumbura's Foyer Social, 1946-1960," *Signs* 15:3 (1990): 447-474. For more on coexisting and competing masculinities see Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, "Dislocating Masculinity: Gender, Power and Anthropology," in *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies,* eds. Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne (New York: Routledge, 1994), 11-47.

[24] Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1949, CO736/29.

Most literature portrays domestic servants as exploited, disempowered, and forced to resort to the daily humiliations of domestic work out of desperation.[25] This timeless characterization of servants flattens their lives, oversimplifies the complex relationships formed between master and servant, and ignores how the occupation changed over time. Until World War II, both employers and employees largely viewed domestic service as skilled, honorable work. Many considered servants to be models of respectability in the 1920s and 30s. In fact, as this dissertation illustrates, prior to World War II many African men preferred domestic service to employment in other sectors of the economy. As Dar es Salaam grew and the demand for trained servants increased during the early colonial period, so did the social and financial incentives for servants. Domestic service paid more than many other occupations, which enabled servants to acquire significant social status, and often provided servants access to housing, food, and European luxury items that other Africans could not afford or obtain. These material benefits, coupled with their affiliation with the households of the upper strata of colonial society, afforded servants honor and respect. Many servants were proud of their work. The job came with its downsides, particularly when men had to take orders from their *memsahibs* (female employers), but so did all occupations. Despite the humiliations they suffered at work, domestic servants reconciled the slights to their honor and masculinity with their steady paychecks and affiliation with a modern, respectable way of life. During the 1940s, however, the social and financial value of domestic service declined. By the end of the

[25] In particular see Cock, *Maids and Madams*. In her study of "the politics of exploitation," Cock argues that domestic servants in South Africa have been subject to "ultra exploitation." Iliffe argues that the relationship between male servants and honor in Africa was highly complex, but that domestic service significantly undermined male honor. Iliffe, *Honour*, chapter 16. Also see Buchi Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2008); Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1990).

decade, the occupation had gone from highly sought after to undesirable work. In 1956, domestic servants composed the majority of workers at the very bottom of the capital's wage hierarchy.[26]

In her work on domestic service in colonial and post-colonial Lusaka, Karen Hansen notes that a similar phenomenon occurred in Northern Rhodesia. During the post-WWII years, experienced servants in the colony "saw their honorable occupation becoming less reputable." This decline, Hansen argues, "was the result of three simultaneously ongoing processes:"

> the continued urban influx of migrants fresh from the countryside, barely if at all educated with no prior work experience; the coming, especially to the copperbelt, of large numbers of unskilled white workers and their families who had little prior experience with servants; and the gradual occupational differentiation within African society at large, through which better paid and more skilled jobs gradually came into the purview of more African men.[27]

Like Lusaka, Dar es Salaam simultaneously experienced economic collapse and a population boom during World War II. The possibility of finding domestic work in the capital lured thousands of African men and youths to the city, over saturating the labor pool and exacerbating food and housing shortages. Rapid urbanization and inflation fostered an atmosphere that encouraged employers to hire cheap, unskilled workers as well as children rather than expensive, experienced servants. Whereas in 1930 established residents encouraged newcomers to spend the money to hire experienced domestic staff, in the later half of the 1940s they suggested, "if a housewife is capable of training a cook, a young boy would be worth teaching, and could be employed for a considerably lower

[26] Fourteen percent of wage workers earned less than Shs.60/- per month, the majority of whom were domestic servants. J.A.K. Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam* (New York: Oxford University Press: 1963), 127.
[27] Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 173.

wage than one with experience."[28] This practice artificially deflated wages and negatively affected the reputation of servants throughout the city. The subpar performance of inexperienced staffs propelled their increasingly poor reputation as stupid, lazy, and unskilled. While servants were highly valued in the earlier decades of colonial rule, many employers now saw them as expendable and easy to replace. Meanwhile, increasing industrialization created new job opportunities that offered workers better material incentives (i.e. higher wages and food rations), making domestic service a progressively less desirable option for work.

While significant, these factors alone did not cause the demise of domestic service. I argue that the state's refusal to regulate domestic service, coupled with its simultaneous efforts to improve and standardize other sectors of the labor market, was critical to the transformation of the occupation in the 1940s. The state's policies toward African labor and African workers in the post-war era were not as coherent and universalist as previous scholars, most notably Frederick Cooper, have argued.[29] Administrators, who were also domestic employers, did not imagine servants as they did other workers and therefore did not treat them like other workers. As they enacted labor policies that made certain sectors of the African labor force more formal and protected,

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[28] Gerald Sayers, *The Handbook of Tanganyika* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1930), 470; Women's Service League of Tanganyika, *Notes on African Domestic Labour in Dar es Salaam* (Dar es Salaam: Government Press, 1948), 5. Cited in Janet Bujra, "Men at Work in the Tanzanian Home: How Did They Ever Learn?" in *African Encounters with Domesticity,* ed. Karen Hansen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 250.

[29] "The inability of colonial regimes to maintain 'dominance' amidst the uneven effects of capitalism led them to deploy the 'universalist' conceptions of social engineering developed in Europe, only to find that their own hopes for such technologies to work required giving up beliefs about the uniqueness of Africa on which a sense of dominance depended." Cooper, *Decolonization*, 10. This tension between the state's desire to maintain "a grammar of difference" between colonizer and colonized and their need to "develop" colonizers was "a most basic tension of empire." Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire*, eds. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

their neglect of servants made domestic service comparatively more informal and exploited.

During the late 1930s and the 1940s, social and political unrest swept African cities. The chaos forced administrators to rethink their ideological projects and policies towards African labor and African laborers. Realizing that labor was at the center of this disorder, they became preoccupied with the "labor question."[30] Dominant historical narratives suggest that it was not until this continent-wide urban crisis struck during World War II that the state sought to create a permanent, regular work force in Africa's cities. Prior to this, administrators advocated a cheap, migratory labor system in which small pockets of urban wage labor were supported by surrounding rural communities. The reciprocal relationship between temporary, migrant, urban workers and rural agricultural producers allowed employers to justify paying their workers less than a subsistence wage. They reasoned that Africans living in rural areas, namely women, subsidized workers' cost of living by providing them food and the domestic services necessary to reproduce the urban labor force.[31]

As the wartime economy collapsed, however, impoverished urban workers initiated a wave of turbulent labor strikes throughout the continent that threatened Britain's hold on its colonies. The unrest forced administrators to rethink their policies concerning African labor as well as their image of African workers. They identified migrant, casual laborers, who lacked the discipline of permanent workers and drifted

[30] See primarily Cooper, *Decolonization*. Also see Lindsay, *Working with Gender*; Timothy Oberst, "Transport Workers, Strikes and the 'Imperial Response': Africa and the Post World War II Conjuncture," *African Studies Review* 31:1 (1988): 117–133. James Brennan argues that the state was primarily concerned with the "urban question," of which labor was only one part. *Taifa*, Chapter 3.
[31] In particular see Claude Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For an overview of the literature see Frederick Cooper, "Africa and the World Economy," *African Studies Review* 24 (1981): 1-86.

back and forth between urban and rural areas, as the problem. Not only were they unreliable at work, since failure to show up for work only cost them a day's pay as opposed to a monthly paycheck, administrators believed these migratory labor patterns "foster[ed] social disorder and political dissonance."[32] In the eyes of the state, casual labor created "the wrong kind of work force."[33] This work force, in turn, created the wrong kind of city. To stabilize African cities, including Dar es Salaam, administrators needed to remake African culture.[34]

Cooper argues that colonial states sought the answer to their problems by applying universalist notions of workers and labor to African cities. Administrators aimed to create a permanent African working class that resembled that of Europe, one that was "was fully dependent on wage employment and time discipline and the sanction of the sack."[35] To create a working class, however, Africans needed "to be socialized and tamed by techniques that were familiar in Europe."[36] Africans had the potential to be good workers like those in Europe, but they needed to be treated and to live as such. In little over a decade, Cooper explains, both the British and the French imperial regimes moved from

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[32] Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony," 26.
[33] Cooper, *Decolonization*, 240 and 235-236.
[34] Frederick Cooper had argued this narrative in the following works: Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Frederick Cooper, "Industrial Man Goes to Africa," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa Lindsey and Stephen Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 128-137; Cooper, *Decolonization*; Frederick Cooper, "Colonizing Time: Work Rhythms and Labor Conflict in Colonial Mombasa." in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas Dirks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 209-240. Frederick Cooper, "From Free Labor to Family Allowances: Labor and African Society in Colonial Discourse," *American Ethnologist* 16:4 (1989): 745-765; Frederick Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Frederick Cooper, *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983). Also see Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
[35] Cooper, "Colonizing Time," 222.
[36] Cooper, *Decolonization*, 274.

> a conception of the African worker as very African – as a temporary wage earner at risk of becoming 'detribalized' if allowed to stay away too long from his village – to a vision of the African turned industrial man, now living with a wife and a family in a setting conducive of acculturating new generations into modern society.[37]

The success of this social project required the creation of improved, standardized working conditions. In conversation with African labor movements, labor officials determined that governments needed to raise workers' wages in order to elevate their standard of living and to enable African men, the breadwinners of the household, to fulfill their family obligations. They advocated paying workers a family wage, as opposed to a bachelor's wage, so they could support a respectable urban family in an orderly urban setting. In theory, this would permanently separate African laborers in the city from the backward influences of African rural society and would enable the making of new generations of industrial men. Separating urban workers from rural areas would also make them entirely dependent on their wages. By making men more dependent on wages, employers and state officials could better control African workers and force them to become subject to "the work rhythms of industrial capitalism: to the idea that work should be steady and regular and carefully controlled."[38] Initially, Cooper argues, workers resisted the state's attempts to decasualize labor. However, they eventually learned to utilize the state's ideology to their advantage and "turned assertions of control into demands for entitlements: if colonial officials wanted Africans to work like their idealized European workers, they should pay them on a similar scale and bargain with them in good faith."[39]

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[37] Ibid, 2.
[38] Cooper, "Colonizing Time," 209.
[39] Cooper, *Decolonization*, 3.

This narrative of urban labor in colonial Africa has gone largely unchallenged.[40] My dissertation complicates the accepted narrative of African urban labor history by demonstrating that the state did not include all urban workers in its vision of industrial man. In fact, in Dar es Salaam, the state excluded nearly half of the wage labor force from this vision. The Labour Department limited work hours, instituted minimum wages and ages for work, granted rations, and ensured sick leave to government workers and specific sectors of the work force, but largely left the working conditions of domestic servants to be negotiated between employers and employees. While the state excluded servants from numerous reforms, during the 1940s officials engaged in particularly dynamic discussion about employing children in domestic service and establishing a minimum wage for servants in Dar es Salaam. These conversations reveal that the state did not see domestic service as it did other work or domestic servants as it saw other workers. While the state may have had a "coherent" image of certain sectors of the urban economy, my research illustrates that it lacked a coherent policy towards African labor as a whole.

Administrators allowed children to work in domestic service even though they phased them out of every other occupation. They refused to set minimum wages for servants because they believed servants' wages, which averaged less than half the cost of living in the city, were sufficient. In addition to wages, the Labour Commissioner argued,

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[40] For a notable exception see James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); James Ferguson, "Workers, Modernist Narratives: A Critique of the Historiography of Transition on the Zambian Copperbelt [Part One]," *Journal of Southern African Studie*s, 16 (1990): 385-412. Ferguson critiques what he calls this "modernist narrative" of labor and urbanization in the Copperbelt by demonstrating that many African workers living in the city were in fact permanent residents, not temporary migrants. He argues that the "over-arching, progressive narrative, in which a 'classic migrant labour system' featuring short-term migration by lone, male, rurally-based migrants gradually gave way to a 'permanently urbanized', 'fully prolentarianised', settled urban working class" needs to be "fundamentally rethought." Ferguson, "Modernist Narratives," 386-387.

servants enjoyed many "hidden emoluments" such as food, clothing, and housing that provided them sufficient remuneration.[41] This was neither true nor legal. The fact that the state was rationalizing taking cash out of the hands of servants, whereas it was advocating putting more cash in the hands of other workers, demonstrates an inconsistency in its view of African labor and African laborers. Administrators wanted most industrial workers to be dependent on wages, but they wanted servants to continue to depend on their employers.

Administrators imagined servants differently than other types of workers for various reasons. They recognized that servants composed a significant portion of the labor force, but viewed domestic service as an "unproductive sphere of employment."[42] Unlike dockworkers, railway workers, and miners, administrators did not see domestic labor as directly connected to the production of capital. Although servants provided the domestic labor that enable workers in these productive spheres to go to work everyday, as well as performed the domestic labor that allowed colonial administrators to run Tanganyika Territory, the state completely failed to recognize the importance of domestic service to the reproduction of the labor force. Since they did not view domestic service as a vital component of the colonial economy, labor officials directed their attention and resources to what the Labour Commissioner considered "their other more important duties."[43]

Administrators also did not see domestic servants as a viable threat to state power. While other workers, notably dockworkers, organized large strikes, domestic servants in

[41] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 20 October 1944, TNA 32744, minute 3.
[42] M.J.B. Molohan, *Detribalization: A Study of the Areas of Tanganyika where Detribalized Persons are Living, With Recommendations as to the Administrative and Other Measures Required to Meet the Problems Arising Therein* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printers, 1957), 42.
[43] Labour Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, Mwanza, 22 April 1946, TNA 32744/f.44.

Tanganyika did not organize a strike of their own until 1956. They participated in numerous general strikes throughout East Africa during the 1940s and 50s, but the participation of workers in "more important" sectors overshadowed servants' involvement.[44] Labor officials did not believe domestic workers were capable of organizing an effective labor union, much less a strike. Even after servants formed the ACWHSA, and hundreds of workers were attending its meetings, officials continually insisted that the union was not well supported, denounced it as unproductive and disorganized, and were adamant that it would quickly fade away.[45]

Because of the highly personal nature of domestic service and the fact that it took place in private homes, officials often considered domestic service to be beyond the purview of the state. Both employers and administrators, who in many cases were one and the same, largely considered their relationships with their servants to be private affairs, and they wanted to keep them that way. Officials wanted to increase the standard of living of Africans in the city, but they did not want their own household labor bills to go up. Moreover, the highly variable nature of domestic work and the difficulty of enforcing labor laws in private homes deterred the Labour Department from creating labor legislation that it would be unable or unwilling to enforce. Even through the mid

[44] On the participation of servants in East African labor strikes see Bujra, *Serving Class*, Chapter 9; Brennan, *Taifa*, 113-114. Cooper, *Decolonization*, 234.
[45] S. Hamilton, Labour Officer, DSM, to Labour Officer, Lindi, 8 February 1949, ACC460 99/1/I/f.143; "Petition for the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, Observations by the Government of the United Kingdom," TNA 37681/5/25/f.5; Confidential letter from Superintendent of Police, Special Branch, to Sir John Lamb, Political Liason Officer, The Secretariate, 21 October 1953, TNA 37681/5/25/f.12; Confidential letter from Governor Twinnings to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 November 1953, TNA 37681/5/25/f.13.

1950s, the state refused to create legal protections for servants, suggesting "the contract of employment was essentially a *personal* one between employers and employees."[46]

The primary impetus behind the state's labor reforms was the creation of a permanent work force, but domestic service was already permanent labor. Administrators likely did not include servants in their efforts to decasualize and stabilize Africa labor because domestic service was already decasualized. Domestic service was, by nature, a permanent occupation. Trust and reliability were the foundation of domestic service. Servants were not nameless, faceless, interchangeable labor units; employers required and relied on their servants, whom they knew and trusted, to show up for work everyday and take care of their homes and families. Servants usually worked at least six days a week. Most worked half-days on Sundays, but some had the whole day off and others were required to work all day. Including domestic service in colonial urban labor history shows that the linear narrative of the urban African working class, in which casual workers dominated cities and later transformed into a permanent working class after World War II, is incorrect. From the start of urbanization in Dar es Salaam at the turn of the century, the capital had in fact been a place where casual and permanent labor coincided and overlapped.

As the state standardized and formalized other sectors of the labor market in an effort to make those who were casual workers more permanent, the explicit lack of legal protections extended to servants left them vulnerable and subject to exploitation. Rapid urbanization and increasing unemployment placed most servants in poor negotiating positions vis-à-vis their employers. Since the state refused to set minimum wages and

[46] "Federation of Labour Replied to Government," *Tanganyika Standard*, 8 December 1956. Emphasis added.

ages for domestic work, employers could hire inexperienced workers or children to perform domestic work at a fraction of the cost of adult African men. Hiring and training youngsters allowed employers to significantly decrease their household budgets. Whereas servants in European homes earned an average of Shs.40/- per month and approximately Shs.20/- per month in Asian homes, some children worked for as little as Shs.2/- per month.[47] Meanwhile, the government estimated the minimum cost of living to be Shs.53/47 per month in Dar es Salaam.[48] The low wages paid to children and untrained staff artificially deflated servants' wages throughout the capital since most employers based wages on the smallest amount a worker would accept.

As wages went down, workloads went up. In addition to hiring less experienced workers, employers hired fewer servants to maintain their homes. Before World War II, employers usually hired numerous, skilled servants who each performed a specific task. Most European employers hired a cook, a *dhobi* who washed clothes and linens, one or two houseboys to clean and tidy the house, a gardener, an *ayah* who looked after the children, and a kitchen *toto* who was usually a boy under the age of fourteen that assisted the cook and ran errands. Feeling the financial crunch themselves, during the 1940s employers started to replace these numerous, specialized workers with fewer servants who would perform multiple tasks. Employers often asked servants to work long days, with no overtime pay. Servants who lived-in were almost always on call. While servants had always been vulnerable to this type of exploitation, these experiences became increasingly unacceptable and in fact illegal in the post-war era. Yet, many men were

[47] M.J.B. Molohan. 1942 Labour Office Report, Dar es Salaam Township, TNA 61/100/A/II/f.95; Extract from Officials Report on Domestic Servants' Wages. 20 July 1944. TNA 30136; Minute from Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 11 March 1943, TNA 30136.
[48] Minute from Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 20 October 1944, TNA 32744.

forced to choose between working longer hours for less money or facing unemployment. While the declining reputation and financial incentives of the occupation threatened many servants' honor and masculinity, few things were "so great as the humiliation of long remaining unemployed."[49] Hence, men reluctantly continued to seek domestic employment even though they gradually felt more disempowered, increasingly less like workers, and increasingly less like men. In an attempt to assert control over their work and their lives, they unionized.

Domestic workers began organizing the African Cooks, Washermen, and House Servants Association in Dar es Salaam as early as 1941, but they did not officially register as a union until 1945.[50] Within three years of becoming Tanganyika's first African labor union, the ACWHSA claimed fifty-two branches throughout the Territory.[51] Union officials were very outspoken, bringing them into frequent, tumultuous contact with the state. Administrators dismissed their appeals for established minimum wages, set work hours, overtime pay, and sick leave as the demands of a small group of unorganized labor agitators who simply wanted to earn more money in exchange for less work. In their limited attention to the ACWHSA, Tanzanian labor historians similarly reduce the goals of the union to the achievement of better working conditions and material benefits.[52] However, a deeper analysis of the actions and demands of the union suggests that servants were fighting not only for material advantages, but also for the recognition of domestic service as formal, well-respected work regulated and protected

[49] Iliffe, *Honour*, 293.
[50] Certificate of Registration, 28 August 1945, ACC460 99/1/A/f.5; Iliffe, *Modern History*, 397.
[51] Lowrenzi [sic] Mikongoti, "Brief History of the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, Dar es Salaam," 11 September 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.112.
[52] Shivji, *Working Class*, 164.

by the state. They wanted higher pay and shorter work hours, but they mostly wanted to protect their status within their homes and the larger community.

In an effort to demonstrate domestic that servants were workers and to distinguish paid domestic service from domestic chores that are performed by members of a household without payment, many scholars define domestic service as wage labor. Janet Bujra, for example, argues "the key feature of domestic service is that it is *wage*-labour."[53] Hansen similarly suggests "domestic servants are workers like other workers. They all sell their labor power in return for wages."[54] Such definitions reflect a desire more than a reality, especially in reference to the colonial era. They also ignore the highly complex history of the occupation and obscure a key tension between domestic servants, employers, and the colonial state that erupted during the 1940s and 50s. Domestic servants were indeed paid, but throughout the colonial era employers usually calculated their payment by combining monetary wages with other types of compensation such as food, water, clothing, medicine, and housing. In fact, one of the defining features of domestic service in colonial Tanganyika, and what initially made it an attractive employment option and later a less desirable one, was that it was *not* merely wage labor—it was something much more complicated.

In Tanganyika, paying workers in anything other than the currency of the Territory was a violation of the Master and Native Servants Ordinance. Employers, for instance, could not pay their workers in goods instead of money.[55] Despite it being

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[53] Burjra, *Serving Class*, 3. Emphasis in original.
[54] Hansen continues to explain that "the domestic servant is more 'special' than, say, the miner or factory worker." However, she argues that they are different because of the "interpersonal labor process," "the privatized nature of the job, its special locus in the employer's household," the "special nature of the work, which produces use value rather than exchange value, and the odd living arrangement." Hansen, *Distant Companions,* 15-16.
[55] Shivji, *Working Class*, 49.

illegal, colonial administrators in Tanganyika endorsed a system in which employers compensated their servants with a combination of goods and currency because it enabled them to pay domestic servants wages well below the minimum cost of living in Dar es Salaam. Administrators and employers in Tanganyika Territory often did not view domestic service as simply wage labor; nor did they want it to be solely wage labor. Including non-monetary remunerations, however minimal, allowed employers to keep wages down. It also enabled employers to increase their servants' dependency, thereby increasing their control over their domestic staff. While administrators wanted other workers to be dependent on wages, they wanted servants to be dependent on their employers. Servants were a large part of the wage labor force, but most were only partial wage earners.

At the beginning of the British colonial period, servants desired many of the non-monetary remunerations they received as payment. Many of the goods enjoyed in European homes were inaccessible to Africans in the 1920s and 1930s, except for those who worked as domestic servants. The clothing, food, alcohol, and medicine servants acquired through their work were some of the principal reasons African men sought work in domestic service. As the colonial economy became more cash oriented and cash became more important to the lives of Africans, domestic servants wanted compensation in cash rather than goods. They wanted higher wages and, perhaps more importantly, to have control over their wages. The union demanded that the state set minimum wages for domestic servants that were in line with the living costs of the city. They wanted other remunerations, such as food, uniforms, and housing (or housing stipends), on top of their salaries, not in lieu of them. Dignity came with the ability to provide one's wife with

cash, which she could spend on the goods of her choosing, rather than relying on what the boss decided to give you each month. Men wanted more control over how they distributed and spent their hard-earned wages.

In addition to their money, servants wanted control over their own time. Scholarship examining the wage labor economy in the colonial era emphasizes the importance of wages to African masculinity, but it largely neglects the importance of ideas of time.[56] This dissertation demonstrates that the connection between wage labor, masculinity, and honor involved more than just wages. As time became commodified and workers subject to the "work rhythms of industrial capitalism," servants demanded that they be paid for all of the time they spent at work. Domestic employers often required their servants to work all day, starting before breakfast and ending after dinner, without paying them overtime. As mentioned, those who lived-in were often on call twenty-four hours a day. Servants were not slaves, they were workers. Unlike slaves, workers owned their own time and sold it to their employers at will. They were entitled to leisure time, which was important to their sense of self and to maintaining their standing in the community.[57] Men needed time to drink and to socialize, to participate in music and sports clubs, to tend to their families, and to recuperate from a long day of work. If employers wanted to cut into this time, they needed to pay for it. Servants wanted higher wages, but they also wanted the state to enforce fixed work hours for domestic servants

[56] Elisabeth McMahon argues that leisure time was "a critical element" to demonstrating honor and respect on the Swahili coast. See McMahon, 122-129. For more on African conceptions of time and labor see Keletso E. Atkins, *The Moon is Dead! Give us our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843-1900* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993); Keletso E. Atkins, "Concepts and Labour Discipline in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Natal," *Journal of African History* 29 (1988): 229-244; Cooper, "Colonizing Time."

[57] See McMahon, 122-129.

and to require employers to pay servants overtime for the labor they performed beyond their scheduled hours, just as the state required for other types of workers.

Union officials recognized that they needed the support of the state to bolster their authority in the eyes of state officials as well as the African community. Being recognized as a union gave servants an air of officialdom and a sense of power they otherwise lacked. They believed that the union would give them a voice to negotiate with the state and with employers. They also needed the state's support and cooperation to create and enforce the legislation they requested. However, the union had little faith that administrators would act on servants' behalf. Union offiials also appear to have believed unionization entitled them to more power and authority than they actually had, which brought them into constant conflict with state officials. The ACWHSA wanted the state to entrust the union to enforce labor standards. It insisted that administrators allow the ACWHSA to set up and autonomously run their own employment registry for domestic servants, at which employers would pay Shs.5/- per servant the union supplied, and to make it illegal for employers to obtain servants in any other way.[58] By controlling hiring, the union could attempt to control the working conditions of servants throughout the city. Although administrators and employers acknowledged that such an employment registry was desperately needed in the capital, they refused to allow the union to open one itself. The union attempted to control the hiring of domestic servants despite the state's warning to stop, which eventually resulted in the revocation of its registration in June 1949.

When the state cancelled the ACWHSA's registration, union officers continued to plead with local administrators, officials in the metropole, the United Nations, and even

[58] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti to District Commissioner, 10 September 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.21A.

the Queen of England to reinstate their union and act in the interest of Tanganyika's domestic servants. They gradually became more politicized during the early 1950s as they became more frustrated with the state's neglect of the domestic servants and the union, as well as the injustices of colonialism in Tanganyika. As part of the larger unionization movement in the Territory, the union reorganized and resurfaced as The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers' Union (TDHWU) in 1955. The new union continued the struggle to be recognized as part of the emerging African working class and to secure wages, protections, and respect on par with other wage workers in Tanganyika through independence.

My research challenges literature that portrays servants as isolated and disconnected by demonstrating that they were politically and publically engaged.[59] The ACWHSA was at the forefront of the Tanganyikan labor movement and its successor, the TDHWU, initiated one of the largest strikes colonial Dar es Salaam ever experienced. Domestic workers in Tanganyika were not unique—servants unionized, were connected, and were active in labor disputes in other areas of colonial Africa.[60] They imagined themselves to be part of the working class and felt they shared common experiences and interests with other wage laborers despite the state and employers' attempts to make them a separate and distinct category of worker. This fundamental discrepancy between how

[59] See for example Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi, *Women in Tanzania*; Cock, *Maids and Madams*; Deborah Gaitskell, Judy Kimble, Moira Maconachie and Elaine Unterhalter, "Class, Race and Gender: Domestic Workers in South Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 27:8 (1984): 86-108. For notable excetions see Bujra, *Serving Class*, Chapter 9; Van Onselen, "Witches."

[60] They participated in the Mombasa general strike of 1947. On 12 January 1947, 15,000 African workers, representing nearly three-quarters of the Mombasa's labor force, went on strike. In addition to crippling the docks, government operations, and commerce, strikers also "paralyzed" domestic service in the city. See Cooper, *Decolonization*, 234; Domestic servants participated in the 1935 and 1940 "miners strikes" in Northern Rhodesia and staged their own strike in Lusaka in May 1950. Although their efforts to form an official servants' union failed (seemingly because of opposition from the state, not because of lack of interest), they did form associations in the capital and other parts of Northern Rhodesia. See Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 158-160 and 168-169; They even organized themselves into "houseboy gangs" in South Africa. See Van Onselen, "Witches," 54-60.

domestic servants imagined themselves, or envisioned what they desired to be, and the way the state and their employers perceived them was the primary cause of the 1956 strike in Dar es Salaam. Servants in Tanganyika sought to be included in the state's vision of industrial man and the working class because of the material and social benefits afforded to this new breed of workers: higher wages, standard working conditions, legal protections, honor, and respect.

Research and Methodology

The conditions of domestic service were personal and changed dramatically from household to household. This diversity is what makes the institution of domestic service and the experience of domestic servants so interesting to examine as well as difficult to discuss. As van Onselen suggests, "these differences are important and they should not be minimised. They should not, however, be allowed to obscure such general patterns as do emerge in this area."[61] Throughout this dissertation, I will mostly be drawing conclusions and making arguments about general patterns and employment norms. However, I make a concerted effort to highlight large and manifold exceptions where they do exist.

The limited scholarship on domestic service in the colonies suggests that the lack of data produced by and about servants in colonial Africa has caused scholars to either overlook or oversimplify servants' lives.[62] Hansen asserts that because servants rarely produced their own written records, "scholars have had to tease information out of their employers' letters, diaries, and biographies, to read between the lines of travel descriptions, in addition to sifting through employment data and legal documents," which

[61] Van Onselen, "Witches," 23.
[62] Ibid, 2; Hansen, *Distant Companions*; Bujra, *Serving Class*.

produce "a flat, stereotyped description of servants which lacks a sense of life."[63] Hence, she and others have conducted extensive oral histories to capture servants' voices. Unfortunately, since over sixty years have now passed since Tanganyika received independence in 1961, I was only able to locate a handful of men and no women who worked as servants in Dar es Salaam during the colonial era. Most of those who worked during the colonial period have either passed away or returned to their rural homes to live out their older years. Yet, archives in Tanzania and England are full of documents written specifically about domestic service and by servants themselves.

This dissertation mostly draws on archival data collected in Tanzania and England in 2011. I spent a total of ten months gathering government documents and correspondence written by state officials, employers, and servants as well as newspaper articles and editorials from the Tanzania National Archives in Dar es Salaam, and to a lesser extent the special collections library at University of Dar es Salaam. I spent approximately two months collecting government documents at The National Archives (formerly the Public Records Office) in Kew and gathering travel guides and personal memoires from The British Library and the special collections of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London as well as the Rhodes House Library in Oxford, England. The majority of these sources were written by British colonial officers and European employers. Far from a lifeless, flat account of domestic service and domestic servants, thorough analysis of these documents provides a robust portrait of the daily anxieties and struggles that fashioned the colonial home, the ongoing efforts of the colonial state to control servants and situate domestic service in relation to other occupations, and servants' efforts to resist. Because the servants' unions were exceptionally vocal, the

[63] Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 24.

archive contains numerous documents written by servants themselves or their proxies. These sources do not supply personal, intimate information about employer-employee relations or much detail about the personal lives of servants, but they do provide significant insight into the tension between how servants saw themselves, how others viewed them, and how they wanted to be seen.

In addition to archival research, I conducted supplementary oral interviews in Dar es Salaam and Iringa, Tanzania. In Dar es Salaam, I conducted semi-structured interviews with European, Asian, and African employers who employed servants during both the colonial and post-colonial eras, men and women who were working as domestics in the city, and a few men who worked as servants towards the end of the colonial period. Interviews with employers revealed the multiple anxieties they felt about having servants in their homes and their unease about being dependent on their workers. They supplied information on how and why they made employment decisions as well as details about how employment norms and working conditions changes from household to household. They also provided insight on how the attitudes of employers towards servants and the relationship between employer and employee changed over time. The few men I was able to interview who worked as servants during the colonial period offered valuable data on how and why they entered domestic service, how their conditions of work changed over time, and how their work affected their personal notions of pride and masculinity. In addition to those I interviewed who were currently working as domestics in the city, I travelled to Iringa, a region in southwest Tanzania know for supplying the majority of Dar es Salaam's housegirls, to interview former housegirls as well as their parents or guardians. These interviews provided detailed accounts of the abuses domestic workers

experience in Dar es Salaam, the vulnerability and humiliation workers' experience, and the deep racial and class tensions in contemporary Tanzania that have been produced, in part, through domestic service. The categories and difference domestic service helped to create during the colonial era survived independence and continue to influence race and class relations in Dar es Salaam today.

Chapter Overview

This dissertation begins by examining the transition from domestic slave labor to domestic wage labor in Dar es Salaam at the turn of the twentieth century. Chapter 1 illustrates that colonialism did not invent male servants; men had been working as domestic servants, in various capacities, on the Swahili coast long before Europeans colonized it. Domestic service was honorable work, and it became an honorable occupation. Rather than merely resorting to domestic service out of desperation, this chapter demonstrates that African men chose to enter domestic service because it offered numerous material and social advantages over other types of work in the early colonial period. During the early colonial period, domestic service was permanent, semi-wage labor that bolstered men's masculinity and status.

Chapter 2 analyzes the complex relationships that formed between domestic servants and their masters as well as the power dynamics of European colonial homes. Far from being completely disempowered, servants participated in designing the daily routines and rituals that defined European domesticity and were foundational to the success of the imperial project. Although the relationship was hierarchical, employers' authority in the home was seldom absolute. Employers and employees were mutually

dependent—servants relied on their employers to earn livable wages as well as other goods and employers depended on their servants to provide the labor as well as the knowledge necessary to maintain clean, orderly, respectable homes. The relationships that formed between European masters and African servants often transcended that of employer and employee and colonizer and colonized. Through their daily interactions, servants and masters came to know and trust one another. While these personal relationships were often enjoyable and beneficial, both employers and employees could also use them to exploit each other.

Chapter 3 examines the various causes behind the transformation of domestic service during the 1940s. In addition to the declining urban economy and shifting urban demographic, this chapter illustrates that the distinction between how the state viewed and treated domestic servants vis-à-vis other wage workers in the city contributed to the social and financial decline of the occupation. While administrators excluded servants from many labor reforms, this chapter analyzes the extensive conversations among state officials concerning the employment of children in domestic service as well as the possibility of establishing a minimum wage for servants in the city. It explores the negative effects of the state's refusal to regulate domestic service as it standardized and improved the working conditions of other workers in the capital. This chapter also highlights the inconsistencies and contradictions of colonial labor policies as well as the tension between administrator's roles as state officials and as domestic employers.

Chapter 4 examines the formation and activities of the African Cooks, Washermen, and House Servants Association. The union sought to define the rights and responsibilities of domestic servants and to preserve domestic service as a respectable,

skilled occupation as it became socially and financially devalued. By analyzing the demands and complaints of the ACWHSA, this chapter explores the various ways in which servants' notions of masculinity and honor became tightly entangled with formal, skilled, wage labor in the post-war era. Domestic servants fought not only for higher wages and shorter work hours, they fought for their honor, respect, and the future status and well being of their families.

Chapter 5 explores the struggles and politicization of the servants' union as the ACWHSA transformed into the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union in the 1950s as well as the Dar es Salaam houseboy-turned-general strike of 1956. In addition to navigating its tense relationship with the state, the TDHWU struggled to find its place in Tanganyika's burgeoning trade union movement and to establish a productive working relationship with the Territory's dominant union, the Tanganyika Federation of Labour. Like the Territory's other unions, the TDHWU was explicitly anti-colonial and involved in nationalist politics. However, as this chapter argues, workers' political aims should not overshadow their genuine concerns about labor. Through examining the decline of the ACWHSA, the formation of the TDHWU, and the organization of the 1956 strike, this chapter analyzes domestic servants' struggle to be recognized as part of the emerging African working class in Tanganyika and their efforts to secure wages, benefits, and respect on par with that of other wage laborers in Dar es Salaam.

Chapter One

The Houseboy: Masculinity and the Emergence of Domestic Service in Tanganyika

Lorna Hall lived in Tanganyika for over twenty years as a Colonial Officer's wife. On the day she and her husband first arrived in the Territory in 1932, they went to the home of Rob, a fellow officer. Upon entering the home, "a slim young African in a red fez and a long white gown (a kanzu)" appeared to greet them. His name was Yoelli and he had worked as Rob's houseboy for nearly five years.[1] This was the first of many encounters Hall would have with domestic servants during her time in Africa. She was a bit uncomfortable around Yoelli, she did not know how to communicate with him and was unsure of how she was supposed to interact with African servants. However, she soon employed a houseboy and domestic staff of her own and would become quite accustomed to local conventions on domestic servants. Eight years later, she and her family were visiting a Greek friend in Mbeya, a region in southwest Tanzania, who had previously lived in South Africa:

> On a visit there and needing to change clothes to go on to a party, I am offered use of a bedroom and a private bath, and am taken aback to find an African woman in a maid's uniform standing in attendance with towels in hand for the bath. None of us in Tanganyika has ever heard of African maid servants before […]. Perhaps it is normal in South Africa where they are from.[2]

Hall's domestic staff, like the staffs of most Europeans in Tanganyika, was entirely male.

African men dominated domestic service in Tanganyika. African women did work as domestic servants in the city and in other parts of the Territory, mostly for other Africans as well as Asians, but throughout the colonial period male servants always grossly outnumbered women. With the exception of *ayah*, nanny or child care provider,

[1] Lorna Hall, "A Bushwife's Progress: In Eight Stages," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1834.
[2] Ibid, 45.

the vocabulary used to refer to domestic workers was always masculine. Employers hired houseboys, gardenboys, washermen, and kitchenboys. They always called domestic servants "boy" or "boi," no matter their age. Due to the state's assumption that domestic servants were all male, official statistics and estimates of domestic workers completely overlooked women until after World War II. In 1949 the Labour Department reported that only three percent of the domestics in all of Tanganyika were female.[3]

Despite the fact that women traditionally performed domestic labor in most African societies, with the notable exception of South Africa domestic service was primarily a male occupation during the colonial era throughout the continent.[4] Domestic service was not just an overwhelmingly male occupation—domestic service was "men's work." This apparent paradox has attracted the attention of a handful of scholars. In her survey of domestic service and relations between masters and servants in twentieth century Zambia, Karen Hansen argues that European assumptions about African sexuality and gender caused employers to favor male over female servants. She alleges that white employers hired men rather than women because African women posed possible sexual temptations to the European men who would be employing them. The potential for miscegenation, and particularly mixed-race children, undermined imperial authority in the colonies.[5]

While Hansen looks to employers to explain the prevalence of male servants in colonial homes, Janet Bujra explores the connections between masculinity, honor, and the colonial wage labor economy. In her study of the feminization of domestic service in

[3] Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1949, CO736/29.
[4] See Cock, *Maids and Madams*; Van Onselen, "Witches."
[5] Hansen, *Distant Companions*. On the politics of sex in the colonies also see Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2002).

post-colonial Tanga, Bujra argues that gender is "situationally defined" and that during the colonial period masculine identity "became strongly bound up with earning a wage."[6] She suggests that male domestic workers were able to reconcile their masculinity and "overcome an aversion to performing what [was] normally seen as 'women's work'" because they performed these tasks for wages.[7]

In addition to acknowledging the financial pressures that the gendered colonial economy placed on African men, Margart Stoblel also seeks to explain the prevalence of men in domestic service by looking at the reluctance of African women to work as servants themselves. In her research on Muslim women in Mombasa, Strobel's female interviewees informed her that most domestic servants were men because "men needed money more than women." She clarifies that African men needed cash more than African women "presumably because hut taxes, which had to be paid in cash, were charged to the male head of the household."[8] Strobel also argues that "women hastened the entry of males into household labor by opting out of it themselves." Women preferred to engage in independent small-scale enterprises rather than working under the supervision of a "disapproving" *memsahib*.[9] While male notions of honor centered on wage earning, the ability to stay home and care for one's own children and household were important aspects of women's own sense of honor and status within the community.[10]

Employers did favor male domestic servants and employer preferences certainly contributed to the abundance of men in domestic service. Not only did they worry about

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[6] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 176-177.
[7] Ibid, 77.
[8] Strobel, *Muslim Women*, 129.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Margaret Strobel, "Slavery and Reproductive Labor in Mombasa," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, eds. Claire Robertson and Martin Klein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press: 1983), 111-29; Iliffe, *Honour*, Chapter 15.

European men having sexual relationships with African women, female employers also believed it would be easier to train African men rather than try to force African women to un-learn their own, uncivilized domestic habits.[11] However, employers' preferences do not explain why African men chose to do domestic work and made themselves readily available for domestic service. Changes in the political economy did cause men to migrate to the city and forced them to enter the wage labor economy. Social pressures and their own preferences largely prevented African women from doing the same. But while this helps to explain why African men eagerly sought work in urban areas and why African women did not, it does not explain why men actively sought and in fact preferred *domestic* work to other wage labor.

This chapter explains how domestic service became "men's work" by examining the historical processes that created a demand for male domestic servants in colonial Dar es Salaam and exploring why African men actively sought employment as domestic servants in the city. Domestic service boomed during the colonial period, but it was not a colonial invention. Household slavery and paid domestic service were important parts of Swahili culture on the East African coast for centuries prior to colonization. While the majority of household slaves in Swahili homes were female, men commonly worked as domestic servants along the coast. By examining the transition from household slavery and domestic service to domestic wage labor at the turn of the twentieth century, this chapter illustrates that the prevalence of male domestic servants during the colonial era did not represent a dramatic rupture with African gender norms and divisions of labor. Male domestic servants commanded much authority and respect in pre-colonial Swahili

[11] Janet Bujra, "Men at Work in the Tanzanian Home: How Did They Ever Learn?" in *African Encounters with Domesticity,* ed. by Karen Hansen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992): 242-265.

societies and the notions of honor and masculinity associated with domestic service in the pre-colonial era transferred to the colonial period.

This chapter then explores how opportunities and incentives for employment in domestic service expanded as Dar es Salaam became a colonial capital city under German and later British rule. As Dar es Salaam grew and wage labor became central to the colonial economy, the demand and opportunity for male domestic servants increased to meet the needs of the growing number of urban households. Men came to Dar es Salaam from all areas of the coast and the interior in search of work. They did not merely resort to domestic service; to the dismay of colonial officials who were grappling with labor shortages in the region, African men eagerly pursued domestic service in the town rather than work in other sectors of the economy. The promise of high wages, free housing, access to employer's food and luxury items, as well as the higher social status afforded to domestic servants who worked for the colonial upper classes made domestic work an attractive employment option for the city's largely male, migrant population. The financial perks of the job, the ability to access employer's food, clothes, and medicine, and the attachment to the upper strata of colonial society earned servants status and respect. Women's reluctance to work in domestic service and efforts by African men and the state to keep women out of the sector also contributed to the predominance of male servants. In time, both employers and their African employees viewed domestic service as an almost exclusively male domain. Domestic service did not compromise men's masculinity. As this chapter show, it actually bolstered it.

Household Slavery and Domestic Service in Swahili Society

In the 1830s, Sultan Seyyid bin Said of Oman moved his administrative capital from Muscat to the island of Zanzibar to strengthen his influence over the growing East African economy.[12] The Mrima coast, which roughly corresponded to the northern half of the current mainland Tanzanian coastline, was deeply involved in the world economy and experiencing "unprecedented commercialization" during the nineteenth century.[13] Caravan routes transporting ivory and slaves made their way from the mainland interior to the Swahili towns situated on this stretch of coast before being shipped across the Indian Ocean. Most of the caravan routes along the Mrima coast led to Bagamoyo, a port town located roughly forty miles north of Mzizima, the small fishing town that would eventually become Dar es Salaam. Mzizima occasionally benefitted from the passing caravan trade but mostly "stood on the margins" of the Indian Ocean trade.[14] Although Mzizima did not participate heavily in the external slave trade, slavery within the town was widespread.

Mzizima was a Swahili town. Swahili identity is elusive and difficult to define, but during the pre-colonial era it was largely tied to residence in urban settlements, the adoption of the Swahili language, and the practice of Islam.[15] As in other Swahili

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[12] "Seyyid Said, Sultan of Zanzibar, removed his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1832 and the final overthrow of the Wazrui Arabs in 1837 left him in undisputed position of the East African coast." E.C. Baker, "Memorandum on the Social Conditions of Dar es Salaam," 4 June 1931, School of Oriental and African Studies, Special Collections, 2 (Hereafter referred to as "Baker Report"). For more information on the Sultanate see Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices, and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770-1873* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987).

[13] James Brennan and Andrew Burton, "The Emerging Metropolis: A History of Dar es Salaam, circa 1862-2000," in *Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging African Metropolis*, Brennan, James, Andrew Burton, and Yusuf Lawi, eds. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007), 15.

[14] Brennan and Burton, 14.

[15] The Swahili people have lived along the East African coast and been involved in the Indian Ocean trade for centuries. Over time, a distinctive Swahili language and culture evolved as a result of their prolonged contact with Arab traders. Evidence suggests that the first Swahilis formed coastal settlements in the early ninth century and that they developed a unique, urban identity that fused elements of African religion and

societies, Mzizima was largely Islamic, patriarchal, and hierarchical. Slavery permeated every aspect of political, economic, and social life. The use and value of slaves were extremely diverse, and their levels of personal autonomy varied considerably. As Jan-Georg Deutsch explains, "the defining feature of slavery in East Africa was the heterogeneity of the slaves' social, political and economic position."[16] In general, masters regarded their slaves as personal dependents rather than merely personal property or chattel.[17] However, like all other aspects of Swahili society, the slave culture was hierarchical and masters often differentiated between the slaves that they owned.

During the nineteenth century, most slaves in the territory worked outside the home, cultivating agricultural products either on plantations or their master's *shamba* (plot of land or farm) or working as porters, traders, artisans, guards, and fishermen. As opposed to the mainland interior, in coastal towns a higher proportion of slaves worked inside the home because household slaves served as important markers of status for patricians in Swahili societies.[18] More so than *shamba* slaves, household slaves "were frequently regarded as part of the household or as part of a personal following which endowed the master with power and prestige."[19] Hence, they usually occupied higher status positions within the household and the community than slaves who performed other duties. In her study of post-abolition Zanzibar, Laura Fair illustrates that the

culture with that of the Arabs. See James de Vere Allen, *Swahili Origins* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993); John Middleton, *The World of the Swahili* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[16] Jan-Georg Deutsch, "Absence of Evidence is no Proof: Slave Resistance under German colonial rule in East Africa," in *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* by Jon Abbink, Mirjam De Bruijn and Klaas Van Walraven (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 174.

[17] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*; Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995), Chapter 3.

[18] Jan-Georg Deutsch, *Emancipation without Abolition in German East Africa, c. 1884-1914* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006).

[19] Jonathan Glassman, "The Bondsman's New Clothes: The Contradictory Consciousness of Slaves Resistance on the Swahili Coast," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 32:2 (1991): 289.

different value masters placed on agricultural versus household slaves is reflected in their price. Even though a plantation slave produced larger amounts of wealth for their owners, domestic servants "were important tools that allowed a patrician to enhance his or her status, if not actual wealth. Being able to house, feed, and clothe slaves who produced no wealth was an important indicator of social status and economic ability." Therefore, agricultural slaves sold for £5-8 whereas domestic servants fetched £12-25 per head.[20] Household slaves were a means of "conspicuous consumption" and served as symbols of class prestige and social position for their employers.[21] They also performed the household tasks that kept the home running and often functioned as their employers' well-trusted confidants. Female household slaves even performed the intimate tasks of preparing the mistress for her wedding and educating her about menstruation and sex.[22]

The dominant majority of household slaves were women, but male slaves frequently worked in coastal homes.[23] Most, however, did not perform domestic labor in the households in which they lived. Most male domestic slaves were *vibarua*, slaves who the master hired out by the day in exchange for a portion of their wages. "When a household had too many servants to support," explains Carol Eastman, "it might send both men and women out to work for Asians as domestic wage-laborers."[24] *Vibarua* were often owned by relatively poor, landless people—even other slaves—and were an effective way to increase the master's income.[25] Indian families in East Africa usually hired *vibarua* to perform domestic and others tasks because the British Empire forbade its

[20] Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), 117.
[21] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 182.
[22] Strobel, *Muslim Women,* Chapter 1; Strobel, "Slavery and Reproductive Labor."
[23] See for example Carol Eastman, "Service, Slavery ('Utumwa') and Swahili Social Reality," *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere*, 37 (1994): 93; Strobel, "Slavery and Reproductive Labor."
[24] Eastman, "Service," 93.
[25] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 185.

Indian subjects from owning slaves.[26] This form of labor afforded slaves much personal autonomy and enabled them to accumulate modest, personal earnings.

Slaves who worked in the home were usually *wazalia*, slaves who were born on the coast, as opposed to those who had come from the interior. Patricians on the coast held *wazalia* in higher regard because they were more acculturated to Swahili culture and Islam. In addition to having a higher value, *wazalia* occupied a higher social position than many other types of slaves and usually received better treatment.[27] Because of their status, and "since the importance of household slaves lay largely in their presence, they probably led a less strenuous existence than agricultural laborers."[28] Household slaves also played a more substantial role in the ritual and social lives of freeborn men and women than other categories of slaves.[29] Some servants received Islamic education, elaborate wedding ceremonies, and new Muslim names.[30] These acts further incorporated them into Islam, which was a central component of honor, or *heshima*, on the coast.[31] Masters often gave household slaves more comfortable living quarters, better food than other slaves, as well as respectable clothing and adornments to wear. Since domestic staffs were constantly visible to visitors, masters needed to keep their household servants well groomed and presentable. Whereas a *shamba* and other unskilled slave "wears no cap, whether or not a chief dies, nor does he wear shoes nor a long robe to cover his legs," over time male domestic servants became known for their white *kanzu* and red

[26] See Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, Chapter 3; Strobel, *Muslim Women*, 127-131.
[27] The literal translation of the singular form, *mzalia*, is "one who was born here." Fair, *Pastimes*, 115; Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, 85-86; Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 219.
[28] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, 183.
[29] Ibid, 219.
[30] Ibid; Mark Horton and John Middleton, *The Swahili* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1988), 136.
[31] Iliffe, *Honour*, 33-34.

fez.[32] Traditionally associated with freeborn, respectable men, the white *kanzu* and red *fez* became the standard uniform for domestic servants in colonial homes. The special treatments afforded to household slaves enabled them to display and possess *heshima*, significantly elevating their status and position within the community.[33]

When the Germans arrived and colonized the territory, male domestic servants were already a well-established, well-respected tradition in homes along the coast. Like their female counterparts, the unique benefits household servitude afforded male domestic slaves and servants allowed them to enjoy a higher position on the coast's social hierarchy. During the pre-colonial era, most household slaves were indeed women. However, during the colonial period domestic service became the largest sector of the wage labor economy and an almost entirely male occupation.

The Transition to Domestic Wage Labor in German East Africa

The *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DOAG), or German East Africa Company, gained trading rights to Dar es Salaam in 1885 from Sultan Barghash of Zanzibar and officially acquired the port a year later. When the Germans arrived the town was still young and undeveloped. Sultan Seyyid Majid, Barghash's brother, had first imagined Dar es Salaam in 1862, but construction did not being on the town until a few years later. Steven Fabian argues that Majid decided to build Dar es Salaam because he had little control over the long-established trade networks and merchants in Bagamoyo. Building a new town and creating new trade networks, rather than competing with

[32] Lyndon Harries, *Swahili Prose Texts: A Selection from the Material Collected by Carl Veltenfrom, 1893-1896* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 208. Cited in Eastman, "Service," 91.
[33] Here I am using a definition of *heshima* close to that of Elisabeth McMahon. *Heshima* was not a right granted to slaves on birth, but rather sometime that was "vulnerable to the actions and interpretations of others." McMahon, 16.

established partnerships, would allow the Sultan to better extend his authority over the region's wealth.[34] Despite the Sultan's efforts, Bagamoyo continued to dominate trade on the East African coast and it maintained its reputation as prosperous, relaxing, and pleasant.[35] Dar es Salaam, on the other hand, developed a reputation among its visitors as a dilapidated town of decline and decay. "Situated on the shore of its harbour, like an Arab woman in rags in the ruined home of her former husband," a French missionary wrote in 1886, "Dari Salama appears to mourn its isolation and poverty."[36] Even though it had acquired a disappointing reputation, Dar es Salaam was growing in regional economic importance. By the 1880s, Dar es Salaam had become a well-established secondary economic center to Bagamoyo.[37]

Bagamoyo continued to dominate trade on the coast when the Germans took over, but they decided to make the large, sheltered port of Dar es Salaam the capital of German East Africa (GEA) in 1891.[38] Dar es Salaam slowly began to grow in size and importance as the Germans deliberately circumvented trade away from Bagamoyo and towards the capital of the new colony.[39] The German administration initiated several public works projects and made the city the center of its military and political functions. However, Dar es Salaam was slow to attract private investment from East Africa's wealthy Asian

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[34] See Steven Fabian, "Curing the Cancer of the Colony: Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam, and Socioeconomic Struggle in German East Africa," *The International Journal of African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2007): 441-469.
[35] Fabian, "Curing the Cancer," 451.
[36] Père LeRoy, 17 April 1886, 2K1.1b7, Archives Générales Spiritains, Chevilly-la-Rue, France. Cited in Brennan and Burton, 18.
[37] Brennan and Burton, 19.
[38] Steven Fabian argues "the German decision to build their colonial capital [in Dar es Salaam] was not just a move to a superior port, but also a move away from the trading community of Bagamoyo." African, Indian, and Arab merchants still largely controlled the caravan routes and trade in Bagamoyo. Therefore, the wealth in the region was in non-European hands. Like Sultan Majid, Fabian asserts, the Germans chose Dar es Salaam in an attempt to "cut out local merchant middlemen" and create a capital port city they could control "Curing the Cancer," 443, 444-445.
[39] For an overview of Germany's plan to divert trace from Bagamoyo to Dar es Salaam see Fabian, "Curing the Cancer," 462-468.

community; they already had investments tied up in other parts of the coast. It was not until about 1907, a few years after the Germans began construction on the railway from Dar es Salaam into the interior, that Dar es Salaam began to take over Bagamoyo as the colony's center of regional trade and finance. As trade, agriculture, and infrastructure expanded, the need for cheap labor increased and the city's population swelled. Figures suggest that the population may have increased from 3,000 to 4,000 in 1887, to around 10,000 in 1894, and to approximately 13,000 in 1898. By 1900 there were as many as 20,000 inhabitants and by 1913 anywhere between 22,500 and 34,000 people lived in Dar es Salaam.[40] In contrast, the permanent population of Bagamoyo increased from around 3,000 in the early 1860s to roughly 18,000 by the end of the century. However, the town's steady influx of porters from the interior could temporarily swell Bagamoyo's population to as high as 50,000.[41]

Dar es Salaam's new inhabitants needed domestic servants. The "non-native" population—composed of Europeans, Asians, and Arabs—depended on African workers to clean and maintain their households as well as elevate their status within the growing community.[42] During the German era, they met this growing need with domestic slaves, wage laborers, and the categories of workers in between. Household slavery on the coast remained quite popular throughout German rule. The Germans gradually abolished the

[40] Brennan and Burton, 26.
[41] Fabian, "Curing the Cancer," 453.
[42] The Germans divided the population of GEA into "native" and "non-native" legal categories. Defining these categories is difficult and problematic because, as James Brennan illustrates, they were "neither sharply defined nor sharply applied by colonial officials." During the German colonial period, Asians belonged to the native category. The British adopted the native and non-native categories when they took over Tanganyika Territory in 1919, but slightly transformed them in 1920. "Native" generally referred to the African population and "non-native" referred to both Europeans and Asians, whom the British legally reclassified. Arabs were inconsistently defined as "natives" in some laws and "non-natives" in others. Asians, or Asiatics as the government often called them, usually refers to people from he Indian subcontinent (contemporary India and Pakistan). Brennan, *Taifa*, 12. For a complete analysis on the making of these categories see Brennan, *Taifa*, Chapter 1.

external slave trade in GEA, but they never abolished slavery in the colony. Until 1922, when the British took over the territory under the guidance of the League of Nations, natives could legally buy, sell, and inherit slaves.[43] The German administration strictly forbade non-natives, especially German officials, from owning slaves, and the British continued to prohibit Indians and other British subjects from owning slaves in GEA. However, manumission documents indicate that at least some Indians did own slaves and that they commonly hired *vibarua*.[44] Although it is difficult to determine the extent of slave ownership in East Africa, at the beginning of the twentieth century German officials estimated that more than 400,000 slaves resided in the colony, composing roughly ten to fifteen percent of the total population. For political reasons, their estimates were probably low. In coastal towns they estimated that slaves, many of whom were household slaves, constituted as much as seventy percent of the urban population.[45]

Although the German administration had not abolished slavery, towards the end of the nineteenth century slavery throughout the territory was in the midst of transformation and decline. Plantation agriculture had become more profitable towards the end of the century, and masters began to value their slaves more as commodity producers than as personal clients. Slavery largely transformed from an absorptive, clientalist system to a more severe "closed" plantation system.[46] Glassman notes that this transformation was not simply a matter of one system replacing the other, but rather "it was the product of increasingly bitter conflicts, often violent, between masters bent on

[43] For an extensive history of slavery and abolition in German East Africa see Jan-Georg Deutsch, *Emancipation*.
[44] Deutsch, "Freeing of Slaves," 120.
[45] Deutsch, "Absence," 173.
[46] Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, I977).

crushing their slaves' social autonomy, and slaves who aspired not only to defend but to expand it."[47] Furthermore, the Germans enacted legislation aimed at regulating the relationships between slaves and their masters. In 1891, Governor von Soden issued an ordinance that specified the conditions under which a slave could obtain a *Freibrief*, or Letter of Freedom. Between 1890 and 1914 the German administration issued about 60,000 *Freibriefe* in GEA. Less than ten percent of slaves freed in GEA, however, were household slaves.

Deutsch argues the low incidence of freed domestic slaves does not reflect the ratio of domestic to other types of slaves, but is likely a reflection of the attachment of domestic slaves to their master's household.[48] Several scholars have argued that domestic slavery endured longer than other forms because domestic slaves were widely considered to be part of their master's household and were thus less likely to rebel or be "freed."[49] "A household was not just a residence," Cooper explains, "but a social and political unit, and belonging to it carried meaningful rewards."[50] Emancipation, McMahon suggests, did not necessarily empower slaves. It was an act that "could expose them to the economic vulnerabilities of life as a patronless person."[51] Some slaves, especially female slaves, preferred to remain attached to their master's household than gain their freedom and be on their own. Even after slaves were emancipated, some stayed and continued to work for their master's family, receiving token gifts and sometimes small wages.[52] The social and material benefits of continuing to be dependent on their masters could

[47] Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, 84.
[48] See Duetsch, "Freeing Slaves," 121. From 1893 to 1912 GEA issued 2,811 in Dar es Salaam. For a breakdown of *Freibriefe* issued by District see Ibid, 118.
[49] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*; Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*; Eastman, "Service"; and Duetsch "Freeing Slaves."
[50] Cooper*, Plantation Slavery*, 184.
[51] McMahon, 6.
[52] Strobel, *Muslim Women*, 128.

outweigh the costs of freedom.

At the brink of World War I, Dar es Salaam was transforming from a small Swahili town to a heterogeneous colonial capital. Household slaves remained an important and popular feature of Swahili society, and the use of male and female slaves in Swahili households continued during the German era. However, the number of male domestic wage laborers grew as the non-native population increased.[53] Opportunities for investment and wage labor in the growing capital attracted people from all over the colony and beyond. The more the population increased, the more opportunities for employment in domestic service expanded. In addition to a large influx of Africans from the interior to the capital, the non-native population of Dar es Salaam swelled. Of the city's 22,500 residents in 1913, an estimated 2,600 were Indian.[54] There was also a smaller, but increasing number of German colonial officials and other Europeans residing in the capital.[55] Aside from the few exceptions, the vast majority of this non-native population would not have owned slaves; they hired *vibarua* and employed full-time domestic servants to meet their household needs.

As in other colonial societies, it was customary for Europeans to employ domestic servants in GEA. All German officials and most other European residents would have employed one or, in most cases, several servants in their home. It was also customary for Indians to have servants, although their domestic staffs were usually much smaller than those of Europeans. African men looking for well-paid, respectable work quickly and

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[53] Eastman, "Service," 94.
[54] The Indian population rapidly expanded in Dar es Salaam, growing from 100 in 1891, to 900 in 1900, to 2,600 in 1913. Brennan and Burton, 28.
[55] In 1913, only 4,998 Europeans lived in the entire colony, the overwhelming majority of whom were German colonial officers and soldiers. Even though the European population was quite small during the German colonial period, many of the colony's European residents lived in Dar es Salaam. Iliffe, *Modern History*, 141.

eagerly filled this growing labor market. As Carol Eastman explains, during the early colonial period:

> The use of Swahili household males […] as wage laborers spread. In many coastal and interior areas, they gained a reputation as excellent cooks and valets (houseboys) — with distinctive dress […]. The status of servant, mtumishi, eventually became associated with this particular form of dress [the white *kanzu* and the red *fez*], some education, and a certain amount of prestige.

Not only did adult men seek this work for themselves, "people from various coastal ethnic groups would aspire to have their sons become domestic servants and seek to apprentice them in Swahili households where they would learn the skill and style necessary for them to be sought after to work in colonial homes."[56] Domestic service was one of many routes to male honor and prestige within the community. When the British took over GEA domestic service was already a popular occupation for African men, from the perspectives of both employers and employees.

The Growth and Masculinization of Domestic Service in Interwar Dar es Salaam

By late 1916, much of German East Africa was firmly under British control. Even though World War I was still underway, General Jan Smuts agreed to turn the territory over to civilian control effective January 1, 1917. The Colonial Office appointed Sir Horace Archer Byatt as administrator of the territory and he arrived in Dar es Salaam in late 1916 with Alfred Claud Hollis, Secretary to the administration. Although Britain did not yet have internationally approved administrative control over the territory, Byatt began to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed by the war, recruit a new administrative staff, create a police force, and improve medical services in the territory. At the end of the War, the League of Nations "internationalized" Germany's former possessions under

[56] Eastman, "Service," 93-94.

the newly created mandate system.[57] The mandate system divided the former German possessions between the victors of the War, but required the powers administering the territories to govern them under the supervision of the League. At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, the members of the League decided that Britain would administer former German East Africa. The British renamed the mandate "The Tanganyika Territory" on February 1, 1920. Six month later, Lord Milner, British Colonial Secretary, informed Byatt that he was officially the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Tanganyika.

The British had already outlawed slavery throughout the British Empire, but when they took over Tanganyika from the Germans they inherited a territory that still utilized slave labor, especially in Swahili homes along the coast. In his 1921 Annual Report on Tanganyika Territory, Gerald Sayers reported:

> While slavery can be said to be non-existent among the pagan tribes of interior, domestic servitude is still prevalent in the coastal belt possibly owing to long association with Zanzibar and to Islamic tradition, but deaths and the opportunities afforded to natives by the war to sever their connection with unpopular masters have materially reduced the figures presented to the German government in 1913.[58]

Despite the popularity and longstanding tradition of domestic slavery on the coast, under the supervision of the League of Nations the British colonial government set out to implement their free labor ideology in Tanganyika by eradicating slavery.[59] The British passed legislation abolishing slavery in 1922, but it did not cease automatically. Even though the British outlawed slavery in their colonies, some masters refused to relinquish control over their slaves and abolition did little to erode the hierarchical social relations

[57] For a discussion of the transition to British administration and the League of Nations mandate system see Michael Callahan, *Mandates and Empire: The League of Nations and Africa, 1914-1931* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1999).
[58] Annual Report on Tanganyika Territory, 1921, TNA.
[59] Cooper, *Decolonization*; Cooper, "Family Allowances."

of coastal communities. As during the German period, household slavery persisted in Tanganyika longer than other forms of slavery because of the slaves' closer and sometimes intimate relationships with their masters, especially in the case of female domestic slaves. This was further complicated by the fact that some women, usually concubines, married or had children with their masters and were thus tied to the household. After abolition, there was no "sharp break" with slavery in East Africa. The hierarchical and patriarchal attitudes that governed Swahili societies endured. Although household slavery and wage labor overlapped for quite some time, eventually the colonial economy gradually transformed into a highly gendered system of wage labor.

Domestic service is deeply rooted in the pre-colonial era, but it boomed and transformed during the British colonial period. As the non-native population continued to grow, so did the demand for skilled domestic servants. By 1933, the European community of Dar es Salaam had reached over 1,700 and Asians, the fastest growing community in interwar Dar es Salaam, about 9,500 residents.[60] The overwhelming majority of paid servants in Tanganyika worked for these non-native employers. Some better-off Africans employed full-time, paid servants during the colonial era, but most relied on kin to perform domestic tasks.[61]

[60] 1933 Blue Book, TNA ACC61/69. The 1933 Blue Book reported that 1,132 European men and 581 European women lived in Dar es Salaam District along with 5,836 Asiatic males and 3,655 Asiatic females.
[61] The Labour Department documented multiple cases of Africans employing and paying children during its investigation into child labor in 1946. TNA 30316. Other than noting their negligible wages, the Labour Officer did not provide details about the conditions or terms of employment of Africans working for other Africans. African domestic employers only appear in colonial records to make the wages paid by European employers to their servants appear more substantial and "fair." Most Africans in urban areas relied on family members to perform domestic tasks, but migrant bachelors who lived in cities would also pay for domestic services on a task basis as needed. For more on domestic labor in African homes in colonial cities see Hansen, *African*; White, *Comforts of Home*. In contrast to the colonial period, Africans are now employ the majority of paid domestic servants in Tanzania. See Kiaga, "Blaming the Other Woman."

It was convention for Europeans to employ large domestic staffs to run their single-family homes. In the first edition of *The Handbook of Tanganyika*, compiled by the Office of the Secretary of Tanganyika, Sayers informed newcomers that Europeans in the colonies mostly adhered to the "Indian system" of household service. "It is a custom for each servant to perform the duties of his office and none other," he explained. "This system is now generally accepted throughout most of East Africa with the result that the domestic staff of a normal household consists of a cook, a kitchen-boy, headboy and assistant, and a 'dhobi' or washerman."[62] As the job titles indicate, employers assumed and expected that these workers would be men. In addition to their normal household staff, Europeans with children almost always hired at least one *ayah*. The *ayah* was most often an African woman, but African men commonly worked as *ayahs* in the earlier decades of colonial rule.

Wealthier Asians also adhered to the "Indian system," but most did not have the finances to support such a large expense. Rather than hiring multiple servants to each perform a specific task, multi-family Asian households usually employed only a few, more generalized servants to run their homes. These workers would share the cleaning tasks and would sometimes cook as well. The older children and women of the house usually tended to the young children. Although they had smaller domestic staffs, Asians were largest employers of domestic servants in Dar es Salaam because they overwhelmingly outnumbered Europeans throughout the colonial era.

While the large increase in the non-native population created a high demand for male domestic servants, numerous political, economic, and cultural reasons combined to cause African men to actively seek out domestic employment. As other scholars have

[62] Gerald Sayers, *The Handbook of Tanganyika* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1930), 470.

argued, men needed money more than women during the colonial era and thus eagerly sought wage employment. The colonial state imaged African wage laborers to be men and therefore charged taxes to the male heads of African households. Newly imposed taxes, which needed to be paid in cash, as well as the need to obtain cash to pay for school fees, imported goods, cattle for bridewealth, and investments stimulated male migration to the capital.[63] Men travelled to Dar es Salaam in search of wage work because wages in the city were higher than the rural areas, and because the town provided men with more opportunities for work than the rural areas.

There were many jobs available for men in and around Dar es Salaam. In fact, throughout the 1920s there was a constant labor shortage on the plantations surrounding the township. Employers constantly needed to recruit men from the interior to meet their labor demands. The problem was not that there were not enough African men in the area to do the work; the problem was that employers found local Africans expensive, unfit, and reluctant to perform outdoor, manual labor.[64] African labor often fell short of employers' standards and plantation owners needed to compete with more attractive employment options and the lure of life in the town. Life in the Dar es Salaam was hard, and the sanitary conditions in the town were deplorable. The Labour Commissioner described "houses are built in a densely populated native quarter where sanitation is a difficult matter, and the food which the average native obtains in town has not sufficient

[63] Iliffe, *Modern History,* 306.

[64] In 1922, the year the British abolished slavery in the colony, the Senior Labour Commissioner reported, "the quality of the coast labour is a constant cause of complaint by all classes of employers. The local native is indolent and unreliable, and the cost of his labour is considered to be excessive in proportion to the quality and amount of work done." The following year he described, "there was a large influx of labor this year, as usual, some men coming form as far as Songea. The local coast native cannot be considered a satisfactory worker, being lazy and of poor physique: desertion is also very common, and large employers therefore prefer to recruit further afield." 1922 Dar es Salaam District Annual Report, TNA; 1923 DSM District Annual Report, TNA.

nourishment to fit him for prolonged hard labour."[65] Yet, African men preferred to live in the township and to do the less physically demanding jobs it had to offer. Dar es Salaam and other emerging towns not only "represented a chance for material advance," for many men "towns were opportunities to seek honour hitherto denied them."[66] Junior men could escape the patriarchy of their home areas and travel to the towns where social and financial mobility were not limited by the authority of their fathers and other elders. As Andrew Burton explains, "the spectacle and excitements offered by the town also proved a powerful magnet to curious young Africans. The leisure activities available to urban residents were without parallel in the territory."[67] Dar es Salaam was a place of opportunity, possibility, and excitement.

To the frustration of colonial officials, in many cases African men in and around Dar es Salaam preferred to do domestic work rather than engage in more labor intensive, outdoor employment. The 1922 District Report described:

> Employers of unskilled Labour in the town as a rule have no difficulty in obtaining the number they require, but there are not sufficient volunteers to meet the demands of plantations and other works outside of the town. There is as usual a number of natives who live in the town without having eminent employment either on account of their dislike to any form of labour, or because they consider that a little training has fitted them for clerical work or domestic service.[68]

A few years later workers were still coming from the interior to work on plantations, but "the local inhabitants do little on the estates preferring either to grow scanty food crops, or to obtain better paid casual labour in Dar es Salaam; dock work, rickshaw pulling, or domestic employment, all furnish much better wages than plantations can pay."[69]

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[65] 1922 Dar es Salaam District Annual Report.
[66] Burton, *African Underclass*, 75; Iliffe, *Honour*, 282.
[67] Burton, *African Underclass*, 75.
[68] 1922 DSM District Annual Report.
[69] 1924 DSM District Annual Report, TNA.

Domestic servants did earn more money than many other workers, especially servants who worked in the capital. Europeans often complained that good help was difficult, but important, to find. It was also expensive, but Europeans were willing to pay a high price for skilled, reliable staff. "The cost of house servants formed a heavy item in the domestic budget," explained Gilchrist Alexander, a judge of the High Court.[70] In the 1930 *Handbook*, Sayers advised:

> Good servants, as a rule, command a high wage wherever they may be employed in the Territory, and they are not easy to find. The wage bill, therefore, figures largely in the budget of an average establishment […]. A fair plain cook is unobtainable for less than Shs.40 to Shs.50 a month, while for a good cook a wage of Shs.60 to Shs.80 must be paid […]. For an experienced house-boy a monthly wage of Shs.50 to Shs.70 must be paid in the towns. Kitchen-boys receive from Shs.8 to Shs.20 a month. In up-country districts house-boys wages are generally a good deal lower, particularly if local natives are employed, as they would be in most cases, instead of servants imported from the coast.[71]

In comparison, the *Handbook* suggested that unskilled laborers earned between Shs.20/- to Shs.30/- per month in Dar es Salaam District and artisans and skilled labor could earn anywhere from Shs.30/- or Shs.40/- to Shs.150/- or even Shs.200/- a month for "really competent carpenters and motor drivers."[72] These high salaries were few and far between, and only very few Africans were qualified to perform such highly skilled labor. The government, which employed the majority of African men in 1931, paid unskilled workers Shs.-/77 per working day and private employers paid between Shs.-/80 to Shs.-/85 per day. The next year the government rate of pay sank to Shs.-/60 per day and it reduced to Shs.7/- to Shs.10/- per month in private enterprises.[73]

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[70] Gilchrist Alexander, *Tanganyika Memories: A Judge in the Red Kanzu* (London: Blackie and Son, 1936), 153.
[71] Sayers, *Handbook*, 470.
[72] Ibid, 473.
[73] Baker Report, 86-88.

Servants' wages varied considerably from house to house, making the average monthly earnings of domestic servants difficult to calculate. Most Europeans likely paid wages towards the bottom of the suggested wage spectrum, but social pressures would have prevented them from paying under the suggested salaries. How one treated, and specifically how much one paid, their servants was one of the markers of European status and respectability. Moreover, many skilled servants would have left their jobs if their employers were not paying them enough. Skilled servants were rare and valuable commodities. Towards the end of the 1940s, members of the Dar es Salaam Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture requested that the government better inform their arriving staff of the standard wages paid to domestic servants because naïve newcomers were offering more than the going rate, which at the time had sunk considerably compared to the interwar years. The Chamber complained that "the effect on old residents of new comers paying whatever wages are demanded is resulting in widespread loss of domestic staff through their ability to obtain very much higher wages for very much less effort."[74] Experienced servants knew their worth and demanded to be paid accordingly.

Asian employers paid their servants considerably less than Europeans and notoriously employed young children for exceptionally low wages. However, work in Asian homes was one of the few employment opportunities available to youths in the city and they eagerly sought these positions.[75] In 1944, when servants' wages had dropped and Europeans on average paid between Shs.35/- to Shs.45/- per month, Asians paid their adult male servants around Shs.20/- and usually only paid children a few shillings per

[74] Cooper Brothers, Leslie, Seex & Co. to Members for Finance, Trade and Economics. 3 March 1948. TNA 32744/f.32.

[75] Europeans also employed youths—in fact, the position of "kitchen *toto*" was, by definition, reserved for young boys—and Asian employers employed adult servants in addition to children. However, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, child labor became a problem associated with Asian households.

month.[76] Although Asians paid lower wages, they usually provided their servants full board and often provided housing. The amount of food employers supplied ranged from the scraps leftover from their table to weekly rations for three meals a day. While the housing Asians granted servants was often quite meager, sometimes only consisting of a space to sleep on the veranda or the kitchen floor, it provided servants significant financial relief from the city's expensive housing market.[77]

Not only did servants usually receive higher pay than many other workers, they received regular pay. Domestic servants were permanent workers who worked on monthly contracts. Unlike casual workers, who were paid by the day and could choose not to show up for work if something else came up or they simply did not want to, servants' reliability was foundational to their employment. Failure to report to work, on time, would jeopardize their job. While casual workers enjoyed the freedom that came along with their flexible occupations and fervently guarded it, domestic servants enjoyed the stability of a regular income.[78] Their livable, reliable wages made them attractive husbands, capable of financially supporting a family, and reputable members of the community who could participate in and/or sponsor elaborate social events.[79]

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[76] Extract from Officials Report on Domestic Servants' Wages, 20 July 1944, TNA 30136; In 1939, the District Commissioner observed that "they generally start work with Indian employers at about eight years of age for Shs.2/- per month with their food, and the wages increase to about Shs.4/- with food when they are fourteen." 'Report on Native Affairs in Dar es Salaam Township', DO Pike, 5 June 1939, TNA/18950/II; Two years later Provincial Commissioner E.C. Baker reported: "Children wander into Dar es Salaam, often without their parents knowledge and obtain employment as houseboys or nurses at a starving wage. Twenty out of thirty children who had left or were irregularly attending a Government school at Vikindu sixteen miles from Dar es Salaam were found to be in the employment of non-natives in Dar es Salaam at wages of Shs.3/- to 7/- a month." 1941 Eastern Province Annual Report, TNA.

[77] Baker reported that "the amount paid is in rent in the case of practically all natives and many Asiatics entirely out of proportion to the lodgers' wages." Baker Report, 17. For more on rents in Dar es Salaam see Brennan, *Taifa*; James R. Brennan, "Nation, Race and Urbanization in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1916-1976" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, Northwestern University, 2002).

[78] Cooper, *Dockworkers in Mombasa*.

[79] Lindsay, *Working with Gender*.

While servants' pay was quite good and reliable, especially compared to other job options, one of the major advantages of domestic service during the interwar period was that it was more than just wage labor. In addition to their monthly wages, domestic servants received other material perks—food, alcohol, soap, medicine, clothes, and housing. Domestic workers in European homes and better-off Asian households had access to a range of luxury items Africans would have difficulty acquiring elsewhere. Some servants learned to play tennis and cards with their employers; others enjoyed listening to Western music and radio programs. Houseboys' familiarity with Western goods and ways of life earned them a reputation as womanizers among Africans in town.[80] Some servants also enjoyed access to Western medical supplies.[81] "If there was one thing the boys liked," Alexander wrote, "it was the white man's medicine. Castor oil was an especial favourite. If a *bwana* [boss] was going on leave and was putting away half-used bottles of medicine, there would be intense competition among the natives for the coveted bottles."[82]

Servants also enjoyed access more mundane household items. Europeans usually did not provide full board to their servants, but servants in European homes were usually able to acquire foodstuffs while at work. Unless their employers locked their pantries, they often took small amounts of tea, sugar, salt, soap, and alcohol without asking, and often without being asked. In his 1921 travelogue, Ferdinand Joelson wrote that, in general, domestic servants would rarely betray the trust of their masters or steal from

[80] Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 164-165.
[81] Cicely Harris, "This is my Life: From Rural England to Tanganyika," Rhodes House Library. MSS.Afr.s.1762. See also Hansen, *Distant Companions*, Chapters 1 and 3.
[82] Alexander, *Red Kanzu*, 151. On medicine and western medical practices in colonial Africa see Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1991); John Iliffe, *East African Doctors: A History of the Modern Profession*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in East and Central Africa* (Berkely: University of California Press, 2000).

them. "It is the little things that are liable to be taken by boys who are otherwise trustworthy, for to appropriate a piece of soap, a measure of salt, a little sugar or tea, or—in the case of those who have been contaminated by long residence in a white township—a few tots of whisky does not strike the negro as theft."[83] Alexander observed that sometimes these items would go "missing" with no explanation, but in his memoir he mentioned that his servants did on occasion specifically ask his wife for these items and others.[84]

Alexander, like most European employers, would simply ignore this practice unless it got out of hand, regarding it as an "occupational hazard" and the reality of class differences. However, some Europeans did lock their cupboards and kept an inventory of their supplies. In her memoire, Maureen Miller recalled:

> I suppose, since Memsahibs have been in Africa (or for that matter, in India, too) there have been two schools of thought about organising the household store. Some insist that you must yourself keep the key of the stores, and dole out everything required daily, or weekly:—so many spoonfuls of tea, sugar, so many lbs. of flour, so much butter, milk, so many eggs—etc. etc.[85]

Bradley advised women to ration out daily kitchen supplies and foodstuffs to their servants, but it seems that this was very uncommon in European homes.[86] As a working woman with little time, Miller, like most European *memsahibs*, chose the alternative. She explained: "I gave the cook the keys of the store cupboard, and he told me what he had used and what needed replacing. An occasional expression of disbelief in the quantity used seemed to keep affairs in check adequately, and if anything was really missing, he

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[83] Ferdinand Joelson, *The Tanganyika Territory (Formerly German East Africa)* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1920), 132.
[84] Alexander, *Red Kanzu*, 81.
[85] Maureen Miller, "One W.A.A. in Tanganyika (1946-1950)," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (25).
[86] Emily Bradley, *A Household Book for the Tropical Colonies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 16-18.

knew he was responsible."[87] The small amounts of sugar and tea they could take from their employer's home would significantly relieve a servants' household budget, but would not dramatically impact that of their employer. Giving servants the keys to the cupboard demonstrated that their employers trusted them, which is how most employers wanted their servants to feel.

Servants particularly appreciated access to their employers' European-style clothing, and many also took pride in their uniforms. Europeans usually gave their employees cast-off clothing that they no longer wanted and, since a servant's appearance was important in European homes, they would always make sure that their workers were well dressed and clean. They usually provided their servants with a uniform, most often a white kanzu and red fez. There were various reports of servants either borrowing or stealing their master's clothes. Joelson's a friend once returned early from a short trip and found an unexpected surprise:

> There on the verandah, seated round a table bearing a dainty afternoon tea, for which the cook had prepared an especially nice case, were the headboy and cook and two of their lady friends attired with all the fastidiousness of the black belle. The cook had donned his finest and most transparent *kanzu*, but the boy had made himself resplendent in a neat tussore silk suit that should be been reposing in a steel trunk in the master's bedroom.[88]

Clothing, like food and medicine, were not just important to ensure Africans' livelihoods; these items were important markers of identity and status and thus a great source of honor and pride.[89] Some of these items would have been rare, difficult, and expensive to come by for Africans. Others, for instance a silk suit, would have been nearly impossible for them to obtain anywhere but in a European's home. The clothes

[87] Miller, "One W.A.A. in Tanganyika."
[88] Joelson, *Tanganyika,* 153.
[89] For more about the connection between clothing and status on the East African coast see Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, Chapter 2.

servants wore, whether they were hand-me-downs, "borrowed" from their masters, or even merely their everyday uniforms, distinguished servants from other Africans in the towns as well as in the rural areas. They marked them as respectable, professional men. On a safari, Joelson noticed how personal servants would purposefully distinguish themselves from other workers in a caravan so that they would not be mistaken for porters:

> Those in a state of evolution from porterhood not infrequently distinguish themselves in their off-duty hours by parading about in queer, incongruous costume, such as a battered sun helmet, a white or khaki jacket immaculately laundered, a long flowing white shirt, and a pair of tennis shoes far too large and not remarkable for their whiteness; but the boy who has realized the dignity of his position – and it does not take him long to do so – is really well-groomed and even takes pride in his personal cleanliness.[90]

Their clean, well-manicured appearances helped to both bolster and reflect the servants' social position. Their clothing and uniforms identified these men as domestic servants, and during the 1920s and 1930s being a "boy to a white man" gave a man a strong claim to belonging to "the *élite* of native society."[91]

Domestic servants, like the household slaves of the Swahili coast, gained prestige and often took pride in being associated with the households and the lifestyles of the upper social strata. Just as the status of the patrician in Swahili societies affected the status of their slaves, the status of the domestic employer transferred to their servants. The higher the employer's position within colonial society, the better. In a conversation Gilchrist Alexander overheard between his *dhobi*, Ali, and the houseboy of the Governor of Tanganyika, Ali was "as usual…magnifying his office and his *bwana's* office":

> The Governor's boy demurred.
> His *bwana* was the Governor and the biggest *bwana* in the land.

[90] Joelson, *Tanganyika*,151.
[91] Ibid, 150. Emphasis in original.

> The local natives looked at Ali.
> Ali gazed scornfully at the Governor's boy.
> "When a *shenzi* native kills another with his spear at a *pombe* drinking, who hears the *shauri*?" he asked.
> "The judge in the red *kanzu*," replied the other.
> "And who sentenced him to death?" asked Ali.
> "The *bwana* judge."
> "My *bwana* hears the *shauri* and my *bwana* sentences him to death. When my *bwana* says that a man is to die, that man dies. My *bwana* is *the* big *bwana*."

Ali looked triumphantly round and a murmur of assent rose from the local Africans.[92] Ali amplified the position of his *bwana* because he understood that his status amongst the servants and the larger community was connected to that of his employer.

Kathleen Crawford-Benson, a Women's Service Officer (WSO) serving in Lusaka, recorded a similar instance in her memoire about her service in Northern Rhodesia. She lived in the same block of flats as her friend, Topsy Wilkie, the most senior of the WSOs. Crawford-Benson recalled that Wilkie's servant "was a super boy, and because of the status of his 'Dona', was the chief boy amongst the servants of the inhabitants of the flats, and kept an eye on their activities. He reported any untoward incidents to his 'Dona', who rapidly put matters right."[93] As her story indicates, servants also gained respect from the community out of fear of their relationship with their employers. Some Africans worried that servants who worked for administrators had special access to the state, and that they could, and would, get others in trouble.

In reality, some officials did on rare occasion use their servants to inquire about the local population and gather information about people and events in the African community. David Brokenshaw formed a particularly close relationship with one of his servants, Timo. On most occasions he did not solicit Timo's opinions on official matters,

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[92] Alexander, *Red Kaznu*, 152.
[93] Kathleen Mary Crawford-Benson, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (7).

but when he would host meetings with local traders or elites in his home he "would see Timo's puzzled, or shocked or sceptical look. Nothing would be said, but that look would make me re-examine my attitude, wondering if I had been too gullible." On one occasion, after hosting a reception at his home for Julius Nyerere, Brokensaw "compared notes in a fairly frank way" with Timo. He had allowed Timo to sit in on the meeting with Nyerere between his service duties.[94] At the time, no one knew that Nyerere would eventually become Tanganyika's first president. Regardless, Nyerere was extremely popular in the African community and being able to attend a meeting at which he was present would have been a coveted experience. Such occurrences were surely rare, but they were one of the benefits of working in the homes of state officials.

Just as there was a labor hierarchy in the pre-colonial era, Africans created a new labor hierarchy in colonial Dar es Salaam.[95] Domestic work itself afforded men more honor than many of the other types of work available, especially plantation work. The Labour Department reported "a large number of natives with a smattering of education, or a little knowledge of domestic work, who on this account consider themselves above manual labour."[96] African men on the coast probably viewed domestic service to be above manual labor because they continued to associate plantation and building work with the low status of *shamba* slaves. While it might appear that performing domestic work would have emasculated African men, the fact that they were performing it outside of their own homes made domestic service fundamentally different than the domestic work performed by their wives and children inside the household. Work outside the

[94] Brokenshaw, personal correspondence via email, 12 September 2012; David Brokenshaw, "Administrator in Africa," in *Brokie's Way: An Anthropologist's Story*. http://www.brokiesway.co.za/africa.htm
[95] See Iliffe, *Honour*, Chapter 16.
[96] 1923 DSM District Annual Report.

home, even domestic work, was the male domain. Domestic service was respectable work that earned men a decent, stable income.

While various factors caused men to migrate to the city and work as domestic servants, multiple factors simultaneously prevented African women from doing the same. Christian missionaries and colonial states advocated that African women should be reproducers rather than producers—women ought to be at home maintaining their own households, and caring for their own children, rather than joining the wage labor force.[97] While they wanted to domesticate African women, employers and state officials also relied on the reproductive labor of African women to subsidize the cost of male labor. Employers could justify paying African men lower than subsistence wages because African women, in theory, provided their husbands and kin food and other domestic services free of charge. African men also sought to control African women by urging them to stay at home and in rural areas. However, the same opportunities and freedoms the towns offered to men lured African women away from their villages. Many African women made their way to the capital and played an important role in the urban economy, but Dar es Salaam, like other African cities, remained highly masculine during the colonial era. The township was nearly seventy percent male in 1931.[98] While African women comprised only a small minority of the wage labor force, women in the city often

[97] Iliffe, *Honour*, Chapter 15; Nancy Rose Hunt, "Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa: Usumbura's Foyer Social, 1946-1960." *Signs* 15 (1990): 447-474; Margaret Strobel, "African Women," *Signs* 8 (1982): 109-131.

[98] The 1931 Census recorded 13,311 male adults, 6,200 female adults, 1,988 male children, and 1,217 female children in Dar es Salaam Township. It recorded 40,542 males adults, 40,262 female adults, 24,976 male children, and 24,277 female children in Dar es Salaam District. Annual Report, 1931, TNA. The sex ratio in colonial Nairobi, Kenya was much higher. Janet Bujra has suggested possibly a sex ratio of six men to every woman in Nairobi. Bujra, "Women 'Entrepreneurs' in Early Nairobi," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 9 (1975): 217; Luise White estimates that the ration of men to women in colonial Nairobi was probably four or five to one, "except in times of exceptionally high male employment, 1926-1929 and 1940-1945, when there were times when a sex ration of six to one was plausible." White, *Comforts of Home*, 58.

supplemented their household's income by selling produce and other small goods at market, brewing beer, and selling sexual and other domestic services to African men.[99]

African men especially wanted to keep African women out of domestic service in European and Asian homes. Just as European women feared possible sexual liaisons between female African servants and their male European employers, so too did African men. Husbands and fathers did not want their wives and daughters working in close proximity to European and Asian men. The power dynamic between European and Asian employers and their female servants was heavily skewed and the master's home was a sexually threatening place for African women.[100] Sexual encounters between African women and their employers, both consensual and not, were quite common. Upon a move to Pare in northwestern Tanzania, District Officer Darrell Bates and his wife "decided, as an experiment, to see if we couldn't turn girls into boys."[101] By "boys," of course, he meant house servants. Bates hired a thirteen-year-old African girl to work in his home alongside his old Muslim cook, Asumani. At a party, one of his European guests pinched the girl on the bottom. Asumani was not assumed. "The place for women," Asumani declared, "was *not* in the house."[102] It was too dangerous.

While social pressures prevented many women from entering domestic service, they also had their own reasons for choosing not to enter domestic employment. Whereas wealthier African families on the coast could afford to employ servants after abolition, less well-off families could not afford to replace their slaves with paid servants. As Strobel's work on women in Mombasa illustrates, some freed female slaves continued to

[99] See White, *Comforts of Homes*.
[100] For more on the unequal power dynamic between master and servant see Hansen, *Distant Companions*.
[101] Darrell Bates, *The Mango and the Palm*, (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962), 79-79.
[102] Bates, *The Mango and the Palm*, 82. Emphasis in original.

work as domestic servants after abolition, but most preferred to either work in their own homes or engage in other enterprises. Strobel's informants explained that "some female ex-slaves chose not to continue domestic service because they got 'big heads'."[103] As Muslim women, many of them may have been trying to emulate the respectability of upper class women by staying at home and not going out in public.[104] By starting up their own small-scale businesses, such as selling hand crafts or cooked foods, they could avoid working under the supervision of others, a practice that conveyed low status.[105] Women opting out of domestic service created an even larger job market for men eager to seek employment in Dar es Salaam. Most of the women who continued to work as servants did so as *ayahs*. During the early colonial period, however, men occupied many of those positions as well.

Conclusion

Work in Tanganyika was a complicated endeavor; it ensured the fiscal wellbeing of workers and their families, yet it also carried meaning that deeply affected workers' identity, sense of self, and status in the community. Work, and the type of work men engaged in, could open routes to honor and respectability that had been previously denied or was unobtainable to them. Most wage labor provided men financial independence from their elders, but some jobs were more honorable and considered more masculine than others. While scholars have found it "surprising that domestic service – a major sector of employment often considered quintessentially feminine – should have been

[103] Strobel, *Muslim Women*, 129.
[104] On *purdah* in East Africa see Strobel, *Muslim Women*, 73-76; Fair, *Pastimes and Politics*, 85-96.
[105] Strobel, *Muslim Women*, 129.

monopolised by men almost everywhere in tropical Africa," a close examination of the social complexities and benefits of the occupation make it less so.[106]

The domestic labor performed within a man's own home was a female domain, but during the colonial period paid wage labor, completed outside the home, was men's work. While men engaged in domestic service on the coast for centuries prior to colonization, changes in the colonial economy heightened the status of servants and transformed domestic service into an almost exclusively male sphere. Domestic work often earned servants higher wags than other workers, which in and of itself brought significant social status, and it provided numerous other unique benefits that were not available to men in other occupations. Hence, men sought out domestic service and protected this occupation as their own. Work carried multiple meanings, and for some servants domestic work was merely a job that provided them a means to get by and provide for their families in the city. For others, it was an occupation they could flaunt and be proud of. Yet, as the urban economy continued to change during the colonial era, the status and meaning domestic service would shift again.

In 1931, twenty-six percent of African men working in Dar es Salaam were employed as domestic servants in European and Asian households.[107] By World War II, nearly half of the adult male population in the capital worked as cooks, houseboys, *dhobis*, and even *ayahs*.[108] Domestic service was a critical sector of the urban economy, and it only became more important as the capital continued to grow. It provided thousands of men paid employment and these men provided the household labor that

[106] Iliffe, *Honour*, 287.
[107] Baker Report, 86. The government was the largest employer of African labor, with all departments combined employing 5,500 men. An estimated 3,500 men worked as domestic servants.
[108] 1942 Labour Office Report, Dar es Salam Township, TNA 61/100/A/II/f.95.

enabled thousands of other workers—European, Asian, and African—to go to work everyday.[109] Not only was it vital to the colonial economy, but as the following chapter illustrates, domestic service was critical to the success of the imperial project.

[109] As mentioned, most full-time servants worked for non-natives. However, while the gross majority of Africans relied on unpaid kin to perform domestic tasks, some wealthy Africans did employ full-time domestic servants.

Chapter Two

The Servant Problem: African Servants and the Making of European Domesticity in Tanganyika

Maureen Miller was serving as an Administrative Assistant in Tanganyika when she returned to her home and found her houseboy "crouched on the ground in the state of agony, with the African equivalent of a white face, and moaning with pain."[1] Unable to understand what was wrong with the boy, she rushed him to the hospital and hoped that the doctors would be able to save him:

> I worried during the night about him – was he having his appendix removed, how long would he have to be there, and, of course, the consequential wonder, would I have to replace him? – for the smooth running of the household, however small, depended on the servants; the cook could not be expected to do his work, and everything would soon grind to a halt. I wonder if other people lived with the worry that haunted me, of not being able to find where the boy kept the Kerosene, the matches, the washing soap, or to use the charcoal iron he used, or to heat the water for baths or washing clothes, all of which were daily chores accomplished without fail till a crisis occurred.

Miller worried about her houseboy's welfare when he fell ill, but it appears that she was more concerned with how his absence would affect her household. Like other women living in the colonies, she was dependent on her domestic servants and feared that she would not manage to get along without them. She did not know how to accomplish several of the daily tasks her servants performed to keep her home in shipshape everyday. She did not even know where her servants stored most of the household tools they used to run her home. Miller's concern that her household would come to a standstill without her head houseboy was a realistic one, and it was a concern shared by many European employers. Her servants completely ran her home. Losing a servant would not merely be an inconvenience—to Maureen Miller it would be a disaster. She and the rest of her

[1] Miller, "One W.A.A. in Tanganyika," 40-41.

domestic staff would have difficultly getting along without him, and the process of replacing him would be an onerous chore. Luckily for her and her houseboy, he had only experienced a bout of constipation and was soon back at work.

African domestic servants were indispensible to the making of European homes and the larger colonial project. They provided the domestic labor that enabled Miller and other colonial administrators to go to work everyday—bathed, fed, well-groomed, and well-rested—to carry out the daily business of running Tanganyika Territory. Homemaking in the colonies was both time consuming and completely foreign to most incoming European officials and settlers. Unfamiliar with local social conventions and how to run a home in Tanganyika, they depended on African servants to provide the labor and knowledge necessary to maintain clean, comfortable, smoothly run homes for themselves and their families. African servants not only performed the domestic tasks that reproduced European households in Tanganyika, and thus the local colonial administration, they helped to design the routines and rituals of the everyday that defined European domesticity in the colonies and supported the empire.

What people did in their private lives and how they managed their domestic spaces were both personal and political matters. What clothes a person wore, what food they ate, what language they spoke, how they bathed, and how they raised their children were part of "the choreography of the everyday" that helped to delineate their social status, class position, and racial membership.[2] The making of the home was deeply entangled with the making of empire, and thus housekeeping was both a personal and political project. The orderly, clean home that well-trained, disciplined African servants

[2] Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, 17.

created and maintained for their European employers did not just enable the imperial project—it was part of it.[3]

Despite the importance of the domestic sphere, control over the home in the colonies seldom resided solely in the hands of European masters. Literature on gender and domesticity in the colonies emphasizes how European women engaged in "the generational and daily reproduction of the empire" through their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers.[4] Yet, as this chapter shows, the well-kept homes and model of domesticity Europeans strove to create were not just the product of European *memsahibs*; African servants critically shaped the European domestic domain. Through their work, their presence, and their resistance, African servants help to design the stylized, everyday rituals that defined European domesticity in the colonies and helped to create the categories of colonizer and colonize on which the empire depended.

The power dynamics and relationships between employer and employee in the colonies were highly complex, fragile, and ripe with contradictions. The few studies dedicated to domestic work in colonial Africa portray the power structure of the home as hierarchical and cast servants as dependent on and controlled by their employers.[5] Servants did depend on their masters to earn livable, cash wages and their employers did have the power to hire and fire their employees. The distribution of power between employers and employees was inherently asymmetrical, with the master of the house

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[3] See Philippa Levine, *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*; Cooper and Stoler, *Tension of Empire*; Napur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture, and Empire* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1987).
[4] Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 17. Phillipa Levine, *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Hansen, *African Encounters with Domesticity*; Beverley Gartrell, "Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims?" in *The Incorporated Wife*, edited by Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener (London: Croom Helm: 1984).
[5] Bujra, *Serving Class*; Hansen, *Distant Companions*; Cock, *Maids and Madams*; Van Onselen, "Witches."

retaining the upper hand. Yet, employers' power over their homes and their employees was not absolute. Power flowed to and from employers and servants in uneven, messy, and often unpredictable ways. The making of the colonial home and the relationships that formed within it were the consequence of everyday struggles and negotiations between European employers and African domestic staff. Servants played a role in shaping the terms of their employment as well as the homes in which they were employed. European employers, especially newcomers, needed their servants not just to perform domestic tasks, they also relied on their expertise with how to run a home in colonial Africa as well as their general knowledge of the mores of colonial life. Due to employers' naïveté, as well as their busy schedules, many African servants were quite autonomous and ran the house with little interference or instruction from the master of the house.

Some employers enjoyed the freedom of not having to worry about their home. Others, like Maureen Miller, felt very uneasy about their servants being more in control of their homes than they were themselves. At times, employers found themselves having to adjust to their servants, rather than forcing their servants to adjust to them. They were also anxious about constantly having to uphold the image of superiority in front of their servants and maintaining the upper hand with their staff. Part of "the servant problem" was that "for good or ill, there they are. You cannot get away from them."[6] Servants were always around and always watching. Likewise, employers were always on display and under pressure to project confidence, dignity, and authority.

While domestic service was indeed a job, the relationships formed between masters and servants often transcended that of employer and employee. They were

[6] Emily Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla: Letters to the Wife of a Colonial Civil Servant* (London: M. Parrish, 1950), 45.

hierarchical and usually quite formal. Rules and social conventions structured relations in the home, and they created and maintained social distance between European masters and their African servants. For fear of being disciplined or fired, servants rarely outright crossed these lines. At times, however, the lines between servants and the families they served did become blurry and difficult to maintain, particularly between servants, women, and children. African servants worked in their European employers' homes almost everyday, often for years. Due to the intimate nature of the work and the work place, master and servant formed mutual bonds of trust and affection that crossed social barriers and, in moments, lessened the distance between employer and employee as well as colonizer and colonized. Both master and servant tested the boundaries between employer and employee and, on occasion, defied them. The informality that developed from some of these relationships enabled employer and employee to come to know and appreciate one another, but it also opened avenues for exploitation.

This chapter demonstrates that male African servants shaped European homes and it explores the complex relationships that formed within them. Servants often took advantage of their employers' naïveté of local customs and found multiple avenues to negotiate and obtain power. They often had considerable autonomy and took great pride in the households they helped to create. Employers developed strategies to reclaim and exert control over the household, but this was often after a period of adjustment. Power in the home was contested, and it crept into and out of everyday relations between domestic employers and employees.

On Hiring: Good Help is Hard to Find

With the exception of the settler colonies, until the 1930s European women were largely absent from colonial Africa. Outnumbered by European men by three-to-one, only five hundred twenty-one European women resided in the whole of Tanganyika Territory in 1921.[7] The number of women in the Territory increased slightly by 1930, with three hundred forty-one European women living in Dar es Salaam, but men still outnumbered women by nearly the same ratio.[8] Lacking their wives and families, most bachelors relied entirely on male African servants to manage their domestic lives until official attitudes towards European women in the colonies changed. The state eventually encouraged women to accompany their husbands when they realized that European women would have a good influence on the European men living in the colonies. Women had multiple roles in colonial Tanganyika. After World War II they even worked as Administrative Assistants, Assistant District Officers, and Education Officers.[9] During the interwar period, however, their primary roles in the Territory were homemakers and mothers. In addition to providing companionship and creating a home environment that would make husbands happier and more effective workers, women and the homes they created preserved the dignity and moral order of European communities. Their clean, well-organized homes represented the apex of civilization and modernity. But they did not do it alone. Colonial wives, as well as European bachelors and spinsters, largely relied on their African servants to create these homes.

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[7] Annual Report on Tanganyika Territory 1921, TNA, AB424 (3041). In 1921 there were 2,447 Europeans in Tanganyika Territory: 1,483 adult males, 521 adult female, 229 male children, and 214 female children.
[8] Dar es Salaam District Annual Report 1930, TNA. The Annual Report indicates that there were 796 European men and 341 European women in the district. Of the district's British residents, 557 were male and 232 female.
[9] After World War II the Colonial Office recruited women to make up for the severe shortage of male officers. University of Oxford Records Development Project, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799.

Adjusting to life in colonial Africa was difficult for European newcomers. Setting up and running a home in the colonies was a daunting task. Accommodations in Dar es Salaam, and especially in smaller towns and rural stations, were unfamiliar and lacked the technical amenities and labor saving devices of Europe. In her widely circulated guidebook, *Dearest Priscilla: Letters to the Wife of a Colonial Civil Servant*, Emily Bradley, the wife of a colonial officer in Northern Rhodesia, warned incoming wives of the difficulties of housekeeping in the African colonies:

> There is nowhere to send laundry. In some places you cannot buy anything ready-made, not even a loaf of bread. A small brick kitchen with a corrugated-iron roof in which you must wear a hat, and which contains at best an open wood stove, is not a place for a white woman for any length of time. There is wood to fetch and chop for the stove in drums. The heavy cleaning, which probably includes polishing cement floors, would be quite beyond your strength.[10]

Housekeeping in Tanganyika, as elsewhere on the continent, was time consuming and arduous. Paradoxically, as Bradley describes, it was both above the capacity of European women as well as beneath them to perform such labor-intensive tasks.

Both male and female settlers and officials wrote memoires and letters full of reminiscences about the difficulties of housekeeping in the colonies. They also wrote an array of handbooks informing potential newcomers of what to expect upon arrival and offering guidance that would ease their transition to colonial life, including advice on how to properly keep house. As the guidebooks suggest, European settlers and officials knew that well-trained, disciplined domestic servants were essential to a smoothly run household. The harsh and unfamiliar conditions of life on the outskirts of the empire created a real need for domestic help, particularly for bachelors and working women. Whereas in England a person could usually manage their home themself and did not

[10] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla,* 45.

require full-time servants, in the colonies, Bradley advised, "you cannot do without them in the same way, even temporarily."[11] Fortunately, she explained, European women and men were spared most of the "drudgeries of cooking and housekeeping."[12] "Servants are relatively cheap and plentiful, and as much a part of the tropical landscape as palm trees and the heat. So you must come to terms with them," Bradley continued, "and learn the art (all but forgotten in England) of calmly giving orders to people which are obeyed without more ado."[13]

Every European household in Tanganyika employed domestic servants.[14] They were not just a domestic necessity; servants were the "sine qua non of social and economic position" in the colonies.[15] After World War I, domestic service was a dying institution in Britain. Most of those who left Europe for Tanganyika during the interwar period grew up in homes without servants, especially multiple servants, and few had experience as domestic employers themselves. As a result, many newcomers had mixed feelings about the constant presence of African servants in their homes. Some, particularly bachelors and spinsters, noted that they did not feel it necessary to employ servants at all, especially not more than one. Ye,t Europeans employed servants, usually several servants, regardless of whether they found them necessary or desirable. Victoria Brennan, who grew up in colonial Tanganyika, explained "there would not have been a debate about the necessity, one had servants."[16] In rare cases, a bachelor or spinster in the city may have employed a single worker to run their entire home. While this became

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid, 51.
[13] Ibid, 45.
[14] There may have been a rare exception, but I have never come across one.
[15] Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 2.
[16] Victoria Brennan, personal correspondence via email, 15 September 2011.

more common towards the end of the interwar era, before WWII single-servant homes would have been relatively rare because of social pressures. Beryl Steele, an administrative officer, recalled that upon arrival in 1956 she was reluctant to employ multiple workers, but it would have been "indecent" for her not to employ at least two servants.[17] Similarly, Isabel Popplewell, a spinster living alone, "bowed to conventional pressures (from colleagues and staff)" and employed multiple servants even though she felt they were excessive.[18]

A house of well-trained, disciplined African servants was a sign of social and economic status as well as a testament to the civility and respectability of the master of the house. The home and the people inside it were always on display. Trained servants and the fruits of their labor were a domestic, social, and political need. It was critical not just to have servants, but to have good servants. A wayward domestic staff and poorly managed home could jeopardize an employer's social position and threaten to erode the boundary between colonizer and colonized. Unfortunately for employers, finding experienced, well-trained or trainable servants could be a rather difficult task.

In the 1930 *Handbook of Tanganyika*, Sayers warned newcomers that good servants were hard to find.[19] There were often a large number of African men looking for work in domestic service, but there was a constant shortage of trained domestic staff in Tanganyika. Some European women, "who had the patience," would hire untrained men on the cheap and find great pleasure "turn[ing] such raw material into first class

[17] Beryl Steele, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (32).
[18] Isabel Popplewell, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (29).
[19] Sayers, *Handbook*, 470.

servants."[20] Most employers, however, had neither the patience nor the knowledge to train servants themselves. Therefore, they sought men who were already well adept at their craft. Due to the shortage of and competition for experienced servants, newcomers relied on their personal and professional connections to find reliable workers. They also needed to pay a hefty sum to engage such men.

Newcomers usually obtained household advice and recommendations for servants from the wives of senior and junior officials. In fact, one of the responsibilities of officials' wives was "the welcoming and socialization of newly-arrived wives, and transmission of the unwritten norms of behavior," including "the conventional wisdom and attitudes to servants."[21] In 1927 a group of European women formed the Women's Service League of Tanganyika (WSLT) "to promote the interests and well-being of the women and children of Tanganyika."[22] Among other projects, the WSLT created employment registries for domestic servant in Dar es Salaam as well as other upcountry stations to help Europeans find suitable servants. After only a few years, the WSLT was forced to shut down its registry in the capital, reportedly because too many employers complained about the quality of the servants it supplied.[23] Despite the closure of its registry, the WSLT continued to be heavily involved with all issues involving domestic servants throughout the colonial period. For instance, it published a household manual, *Notes for Newcomers to Tanganyika Territory*, offering advice and informing incoming Europeans of the traditions and customs they were expected to uphold in their homes.

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[20] Jean Collings, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (5).
[21] Gartrell, "Colonial Wives," 171. European men also passed domestic advice to one another. Donald Fraser, an incoming police officer, relied on recommendations from his colleague, Wallace McGavin, to find servants and educated him on Tanganyika's social customs. Donald Fraser, "Memoirs of his service in Tanganyika Police, 1952-1961," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.2483.
[22] Sayers, *Handbook*, 489.
[23] 1954 Annual report of the Labour Officer, DSM, ACC460 126/2/II.

When a newcomer needed a servant, or when an established resident needed to replace one, Europeans usually recommend servants who had previously worked for outgoing families. They sometimes suggested *totos* from their own homes. If they did not personally know of anyone to recommend, they commonly asked their own servants to suggest relatives or friends who they thought were honest, hard working, and either had experience in domestic service or could be trained to be good domestic workers. However, potential employers much preferred the recommendations of other European employers over those of African employees. Sometimes newcomers did not have to look for servants at all. News quickly spread through the African community when a new European arrived, and Africans expected Europeans to employ servants as much as Europeans expected one another to employ servants, so it was fairly commonplace for multiple men to arrive at their door looking for work. If they had previous experience, they could often produce "chits," or letters of recommendations from previous employers. For instance, shortly after Darrell Bates arrived in Tanga, "a morose-looking old man with yellowed bloodshot eyes" turned up in his courtyard and announced that he heard Bates had been looking for a cook. The old man handed Bates and his wife all of his references. After conferring with his wife, Bates agreed to hire him.[24]

Just as employers were selective of their employees, servants were also selective of their potential employers. Europeans were not entirely in charge of the master-servant employment relationships in their own homes, and they knew it. They desperately sought seasoned cooks and experienced houseboys, but the demand for skilled servants was far greater than the supply. Bradley warned newcomers that experienced servants fetched a

[24] Bates, *The Mango and the Palm*, 15.

high price and that some households would not be able to afford them.[25] They were quite expensive, especially seasoned cooks, and often had their choice of employers. If one employer did not offer them the wages they wanted they knew that there would likely be another family that would eagerly employ them, especially in large urban areas like Dar es Salaam. Sometimes employers would even try to lure a working cook away from another family with the promise of better pay, shorter working hours, and/or more leave time.[26]

Bradley warned incoming wives that if they wanted experienced, professional servants to come to work for them that they would need to be on their best behavior. These servants would size up the employer and give them "marks for steadiness of temper, sweetness of disposition, and sense of humour." Just as employers evaluated the potential of their servants, Bradley cautioned newcomers that African servants would also wonder "if *you* are healthy, energetic and teachable." If an employer came across as bossy or unpleasant many servants would not consider working for them.[27] It was their decision, not the employer's, where they would work.

While experienced servants were in a uniquely powerful position, less skilled and unskilled servants also developed strategies to influence their terms of employment. To the naïve European newcomer, servants' salaries, working hours, leave time, and various other working conditions could be difficult to determine. Unless they had consulted a government handbook before arrival, which may have been completely outdated by the time they moved to Tanganyika, newcomers were unfamiliar with local wage and

[25] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 54.
[26] This was especially true in the case of cooks who worked for Indian families. Aatish Ladwa, personal communication, September 2011.
[27] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 54. Emphasis in original.

employment standards. The Secretary of the WSLT explained that the rapidly increasingly population of Dar es Salaam largely consisted of "people who have never been to East Africa before, and have no idea of the local customs. There is no doubt that the domestic servant element is exploiting this position…."[28] Servants took advantage of newcomers' inexperience by convincing them to pay wages higher than the going rate. The WSLT complained that "incompetent and unqualified servants [were] demanding wages far in excess of their capabilities." Sometimes they used one another's chits to so that an inexperienced worker could find domestic employment, or they simply forged the documents all together. Servants also played one employer against the other, creating bidding wars over their service, to drive up their wages.[29]

By the mid-1940s Dar es Salaam was in the midst of a domestic service crisis—residents complained that wages had doubled since before the war but the quality of service declined. Both residents and government officials partially blamed inexperienced newcomers for their predicament. "The effect on old residents of new comers paying whatever wages are demanded [by servants]," the Dar es Salaam Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture explained, "is resulting in widespread loss of domestic staff through their ability to obtain very much higher wages for much less effort." They complained that employers experienced financial strain due to the wartime economic collapse in Tanganyika and that established residents were "finding it impossible to compete with this situation." Residents eagerly offered employment advice to newcomers so that they could keep the domestic labor market intact, but it seems newcomers either didn't hear or ignored their messages. They requested that the government take action to "check the

[28] Secretary of the Women's Service League of Tanganyika to The Member for Education, Labour and Social Welfare, 26 August 1948, TNA 32744/f.54.
[29] Labour Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, 1 September 1948, TNA 32744/f.55.

rising cost of living" for the capital's European community.[30] Shortly thereafter, with the support of the state, the WSLT specifically produced their *Notes for Newcomers* to educate newcomers about local customs concerning domestic service.[31]

For many Europeans entering the colonies, the promise of "embarking on a mode of existence in which [they] will be spared the drudgeries of cooking and housekeeping that darken English life" was an exciting allure.[32] Shortly after arriving in Tanganyika for his first tour of service, Francis Dudley Dowsett wrote a letter to his parents explaining that he very much liked "the idea of being waited on hand and foot and having all one's clothing washed and ironed – including the suits – the moment one takes them off."[33] Maureen Miller also welcomed the luxury of servants. Like many other colonial officers, when she first arrived in Tanganyika Miller lived at Government House before finding her own personal quarters. "I had no servant problems at this stage," she recalled, "and the bliss included being waited upon by silent African houseboys in crisp white kanzus […] and having to take no thought for my own well-being."[34] As they soon learned, however, employing servants was a complicated and often stressful endeavor. Servants were not invisible waiters who magically appeared and silently obeyed their employers. Obtaining a reliable domestic staff was difficult, but controlling one was even more so.

[30] DSM Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture to Member for Finance, Trade and Economics, DSM, 3 March 1948, TNA 32744/f.32.
[31] The purpose of the pamphlet is mentioned in TNA 32744/f.54. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate the pamphlet.
[32] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 51.
[33] Francsis Dudley Dowsett, "Letter to Mums and Dad," 19 August 1931, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1276.
[34] Miller, 12.

Designing Domesticity

Servants often had considerable autonomy and control over the design of their employer's domestic domain, especially when working for bachelors. Working bachelors did not have the time or the knowledge to manage their home affairs in the colonies. They usually gave very little instruction to their servants. Before Emily Bradley joined her husband in Northern Rhodesia, Mr. Bradley employed a houseboy who he claimed he would not speak to for days at a time. The boy would "meticulously" and quietly carry out his work while Mr. Bradley "hardly knew he was there."[35] Because they often had little time to supervise their servants and had little knowledge of how to properly perform domestic tasks themselves, European men usually gave very little instruction to their domestic servants. Men were also notoriously less particular about the nuances of their home life. Unless they did something especially displeasing, servants who worked for bachelors carried out their work they ways in which they pleased with little interference from their employers.

Consequently, European women found that bachelor's servants had "their little peculiarities," notably their problem with discipline. Lorna Hall recalls one instance at a bachelor's dinner party when the host asked his houseboy why he had not put the potatoes on the dinner table with the rest of the meal. The boy explained that he could not serve the potatoes because the cook decided not to prepare them that evening. "Sorry, Bwana, no potatoes" he replied. "Cooks says he is tired of doing potatoes every day so he has not cooked any."[36] David Brokenshaw fondly remembers that his sixty-five year old cook, whom he called Mzee, also tended to do things as he saw fit. In one memorable

[35] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 48.
[36] Hall, "A Bushwife's Progress."

instance, he asked Mzee to slice him lemons for his Saturday sundowners and the cook delivered lemons cut into quarters instead. Brokenshaw reminded Mzee that he had asked for sliced, not quartered lemons. Mzee replied, "I know that some people do it that way, but I do it this way."[37] Rather than adapting to the preferences of their employers, Mzee and other cooks carried their habits and preferences with them from house to house. They took pride in having their own ways of doing things. Female employers tried to steer clear of such workers when hiring new staff and the wives who later joined their husbands in the colonies infamously had trouble with their husbands' houseboys.[38]

With rare exceptions, men made little mention of their domestic lives in letters and memoirs, making it difficult to critically assess the relationships they formed with their servants. In general, however, employers as well as servants considered men, both single and married, to be much less demanding than women.[39] Female employers were much more "hands-on" with their servants; they directed and corrected their servants much more than their male counterparts. The British *memsahib* had a horrible reputation "as the most noxious figure in the annals of British imperialism."[40] In addition to a reputation for intolerance, insensitivity, malicious gossip, extreme prejudice towards the colonized, and tendency to have extra-marital affairs, official's wives were known for being especially abusive towards servants.[41] Women were under considerable pressure to maintain a respectable, presentable home. Not only could the state of their home affect their standing within the community and the decisions superiors made about their

[37] David Brokenshaw, personal correspondence via email, 12 September 2011.
[38] Hall, *A Bushwife's Progress*. Also see Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*.
[39] Brokenshaw attributed his lack of conflict with his servants to that fact that "perhaps, I as a bachelor was less demanding than a 'memsahib'." Personal correspondence via email, 12 September 2011.
[40] Gartrell, "Colonial Wives," 165.
[41] Ibid.

husband's careers, it was also important to the prestige of the empire. Yet, Beverly Gartrell argues, there is little factual basis for the *memsahib's* reputation. Overbearing and cruel female masters were the exception, not the rule. Most of the European community looked down on these types of women because they were difficult for others to get along with and they set bad examples for their servants. Bradley encouraged European women to be gracious, patient, and humble in front of their servants because these were the qualities they wanted their African servants to adopt. By setting a good example, these women would help to elevate the African race to the civilized standards of European culture.[42]

While European women were usually more proficient at domestic tasks than men, they were also heavily dependent on their servants to run their household and to teach them the conventions of colonial life. Female employers often did not have the time, nor the desire, to observe every member of their staff throughout the day. Many, particularly housewives living in Dar es Salaam, had quite busy social lives. After WWII numerous women had careers of their own in Tanganyika. They would usually issue their servants morning orders and then leave it to their staff to run the home for the rest of the day. Mabel Tunstall's houseboy had almost total control over the home after she left for work in the morning:

> I always made a new houseboy understand that he was in charge of the house. I told him the way I liked the work done and the very few item of food I did not care for. I only employed well trained and experienced men and explained that I was busy in the office and did not want to come home to a lot of problems or to give detailed orders every day. It was his responsibility to tell me before we ran out of essential supplies. I gave him a "float" to buy fruit and vegetables and eggs from the men who came to the door, and also fish in Dar es Salaam. I liked English cooking, Indian cooking, Greek cooking, anything adapted to local

[42] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 52.

> supplies. I tried a lot, it depended on what the cook knew and we both enjoyed ourselves.[43]

The women who came to the colonies were not all proficient in the domestic arts, and were especially not skilled in how to run a home in Africa. While some gave their servants control over their home out of convenience, others did so out of necessity. In addition to senior wives and other residents, servants helped to acclimate European women to their new homes and provided information about the particulars of housekeeping and local life in general. Tunstall, like many other women in Tanganyika, relied on the experience and knowledge of her staff to make sure that her home was adequately stocked with the necessary supplies, manage the food budget, as well as clean her home, wash her clothes, and cook her meals. As she describes, what she ate largely depended on her cook's knowledge of global cuisine, not what she taught him. Dorothy Kingdon, the wife of a colonial officer, bragged in a letter to her parents that her cook arrived already trained and was able to cook "succulent meals without any suggestion from me."[44]

Women like Tunstall and Kingdon reveled in their servants' expertise and independence, but others had considerable anxiety over their dependency on their staff. Some, like Maureen Miller, felt out of control and worried that they would not be able to get along without their servants. Others even worried that their reliance on servants would make them slaves to their African staff. Emily Bradley warned incoming women that, even though their servants would be performing the domestic labor, it was critical for the woman of the house to have a certain degree of competence: "There is no slavery

[43] Mabel Tunstall, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (36A).
[44] Dorothy Kingdon to Parents, 9 February 1934, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.2255.

in the world so abject as the helplessness of a woman who is entirely ignorant or incompetent in the house, and at the mercy of the villains her very helplessness attracts."[45] She instructed women to come to the colonies with a base knowledge of homemaking and to present themselves confidently in front of the servants:

> You are more than prepared to teach a willing servant to do it for you, and to pay him for doing it well, but ideally your servants should feel that you could do everything they do in half the time, if you chose. If such an ideal were attainable, your servant troubles would be three parts solved, because you would have won the greatest of freedoms, freedom from dependence on them. There is, as I said before, no slavery so abject as dependence on ignorant, incompetent underlings, whom you can neither help nor direct nor avoid, but only complain of, and at.[46]

Bradley's suggestion that employers would feel like slaves in their own homes may appear absurd. Yet, domestic servants, even if by their mere presence, influenced the behavior of their employers and they had considerable control over the home. Servants were almost always present, and the home was a stage on which European women constantly needed to perform the role of the knowledgeable, patient, civilized colonial master in front of their staff. They were the bosses, they were the colonizers, and they should know more than their colonized African servants—or at the very least they needed to act that way. As women, especially European women, they should be better homemakers than African men. They were embarrassed and ashamed that their servants could produce better meals and a cleaner, more organized household than they could create themselves. They felt considerable pressure to present themselves as confident and able; their authority as both employers and colonizers rested on the mirage of their superior knowledge and abilities.

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[45] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 49.
[46] Ibid, 51.

Gilchrist Alexander's wife went to great lengths to save face in front of her cook after a rather embarrassing attempt to teach him how to prepare a steamed pudding. She told her cook that she would prepare a steamed pudding after he went home for the evening so that in the morning she could show it to him and teach him how to cook the dish. She was up all night, but her steamed pudding was a failure. Not wanting to face "the problem of justifying herself to *mpishi* [cook]," she hid the remains of her failed dish. When he arrived in the morning, the first thing the cook did was ask to see the steamed pudding. The wife evaded his questions all day and eventually discarded her kitchen experiment outside of the house so that neither the cook nor the other staff members would find it.[47] She desperately wanted to hide the evidence that she was not a paragon of domesticity.

The constant presence of servants in the home sometimes made the atmosphere quite tense and awkward, especially for inexperienced or naïve employers. Servants engaged various tactics, both subtle and overt, to test their master's patience, knowledge, and power. New employers experienced an initial period of adjustment during which they needed to "learn to cope" with their servants' presence, and sometimes their resistance. Servants often tried to take advantage of their employer's ignorance of local customs and difficulty with local languages. Joelson noted that they had two favorite ways of testing their employer's knowledge of "the local lore," challenging a European's prestige, and trying to make a fool of their employers. The first was to walk into the house wearing shoes. The second was to hand something to a white man with the left hand. Servants were supposed to be barefoot in their employer's home. Wearing shoes in the employer's

[47] Gilchrist Alexander, *Tanganyika Memories: A Judge in the Red Kanzu* (London: Blackie and Son, 1936), 146-149.

home was not only disrespectful, it blurred the social boundaries between master and servant, colonizer and colonized. As Joelson explained, in East Africa it was also exceptionally disrespectful to hand something to someone with the left hand:

> In that part of the world this latter action is most impolite, and if it is necessary for the left hand to be employed it should be supported by the right. The reason is that the native, like the Arab, draws a very distinct difference as to the use of the hands ; the right is spoken of as the one with which one eats ; the left is the one which comes into play when the offices of nature have to be performed.

He warned newcomers, "the settler who allows such affronts to pass unnoticed is storing up for himself a deal of trouble."[48]

Servants readily capitalized on the language barrier between employer and employee by "playing dumb" when their employer asked them to do something they did not want to do. The language barrier between most employers and employees was usually quite severe, but most trained servants could decipher their employer's poor Swahili to interpret their wants and needs. "Even a newly-arrived white man, who can barely speak scarcely ten words understood by the black," Joelson marveled, "finds to his astonishment that his wishes are forestalled or his halting, unintelligible commands correctly guessed."[49] Yet, "when the African does not want to understand a question," he warned, "he can be wonderfully dull."[50] Like most Europeans who lived in Tanganyika, Phyllis Tanner studied Swahili before travelling to the Territory, but she still had considerable difficulty communicating with her staff:

> My ear was not at all tuned. I couldn't understand a word the servants said to me although they did seem to understand what I said back to them. And this worried

[48] Joelson,157.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid, 158.

> me considerably and at the time I would tell them to go away, express it with my hands if necessary, so that I could recover my nerves and have a little think.[51]

Luckily for Tanner, her servants cooperated with her. Other employers, like Maureen Miller, were not so lucky.

Miller was excited when she finally moved in to her own flat, but she recollected that "the idea of coping for myself, shopping, dealing with a houseboy without, as yet, more than a few words of Swahili, and above all getting the flat cleaned, daunted me." She experienced quite a few difficulties in the early stages of adjustment, one of which was her houseboy's inclination and ability to disregard her orders. He would often ignore her instructions, either because he genuinely did not understand her or because he did not acknowledge her authority over him. He cooked what he wanted and Miller ate his food, even when she did not particularly like it, because she did not know what else to do.[52] Due to her ignorance of Swahili and inability to cook for herself, her domestic servants were more in control of her home than she was. She had fallen victim to the unfortunate conditions Bradley described in her guidebook.

Just as servants found avenues to resist their employers, employers developed strategies to regain control. Miller eventually recognized that "a mastery of Swahili was the main route to authority with Africans." By her second tour, she "gloried in the freedom obtained from fluency in Swahili." She could finally converse with her servants. Not only did she speak with them about the food to prepared and the errands to run, she chatted with them "about things African in general." Her cook counseled her on what to pack for her up-country visit and kept her updated on the progress of the new houseboy

[51] Tape and Transcript of Interview with J.J. Tawney on 8.2.1972, Interview by Phyllis Tanner, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1597.
[52] Miller, "Women Administrative Officers."

she hired. Like most cooks, her cook was at the top of the household hierarchy and dictated tasks to the other servant in the house. Not only did he cook, he functioned as the house director.[53]

Not everyone in Tanganyika achieved literacy, or even competence, in Swahili, but most employers figured out how to communicate with their servants. Like Tanner, some utilized hand gestures or physically showed their servants what they wanted them to do. Others resorted to Kitchen Swahili, a mixture of Swahili and English that masters spoke with servants.[54] Bradley suggested against using such "bastardized lingoes" with servants; it set a bad example for the servants and forced the employer to adjust to the employee rather than the other way around.[55] Unfortunately for many women, they had little choice. They needed to work with their servants and to be able to communicate with them to run an effective home. This usually meant incorporating local languages into the household and their everyday lives.

Blurred Lines

In Tanganyika, as in other colonies, the relationships between master and servant in the colonies were personal, professional, and political. Distance and difference were key aspects of the domestic employer-employee relationship; they simultaneously created and reinforced the asymmetrical power relations that bolstered the employer's authority over their employees in the home as well as the racial hierarchy in the territory that

[53] Ibid.
[54] Throughout British colonies in Africa, the blend of English and local languages was also referred to as pidgin or Kitchen Kaffir.
[55] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 65.

supported the imperial project.[56] A set of rules, explicit and implicit, created and maintained boundaries and differences between European masters and their African servants. As David Brokenshaw recalls, in Tanganyika employers and servants "knew the rules" and tended to abide by them.[57] Most importantly, servants were supposed to show their employers respect at all times. Employers should not tolerate disrespect. Servants wore a uniform while at work, they were forbidden to wear shoes in their employer's house, they were not allowed to physically touch their employers, and, in general, they were not permitted to speak unless spoken too. In some homes, employers required their employees to use a designated set of dishes and utensils for themselves and restricted them from using those reserved for the employers and guests.[58] Even though servants cooked their employers' meals, they were usually not allowed to eat the foods they served. These conventions created distance, emphasized difference, and reinforced the notion that, while servants worked in their employer's household, they were not part of it.[59] They reminded African servants they were inferior to their employers.

To maintain respect and authority, as well as to ensure their protection, European employers advised one another to abide by rules and social conventions in their homes. Employers should treat servants as servants, not friends. This would maintain the social barrier, preserving the employer's authority and superiority. *Memsahibs* needed to be firm and authoritative, but also needed to be respectful and gracious towards their staff. Such courtesy would set a good example for the African servants as well as foster trust, affection, and respect towards the employer. Bradley warned her female readership not to

[56] See Karen Hansen, *Distant Companions*.
[57] David Brokenshaw, personal correspondence via email, 12 September 2011.
[58] This practice was especially common in Asian homes.
[59] Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 65.

be "over-familiar" with their workers or to "wander about lightly clad" in front of their male African servants. Such behavior would lessen the social gap between employers and employees, threaten the prestige and respect of the race, and could potentially provoke sexual advances. "So don't wander about in next to nothing," she cautioned, "no matter how hot it is, thinking, 'It's only the boy'."[60]

While European women certainly needed to be cautious of potential sexual threats posed by the adult, African men who worked in their homes, Bradley encouraged her female readership not be afraid of them. Do not "get the idea that the minute your husband's back is turned 'they' are waiting for opportunities for robbery, assault, and rape." Fostering good relationships with their staff, both showing respect and earning it from their servants, would serve to protect employers and their families.[61] Growing up in pre-WWI Kenya, Elsbeth Huxley learned that social distance and respect in the colonies protected officials and settlers who sometimes lived alone and in isolation: "Respect preserved them like an invisible coat of mail, or a form of magic, and seldom failed; but it had to be carefully guarded."[62]

In general, women do not appear to have been afraid of their servants in Tanganyika. The actual relationships that developed between employers and servants were much more complicated than the relationships officials and settlers described in their guidebooks and memoires. Both employer and employee blurred social lines and broke the rules. In the process, masters and servants developed very real bonds of trust and affection. As opposed to the "black peril" that swept through South Africa, evidence suggests that most white employers in Tanganyika viewed their servants as protectors and

[60] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 56.
[61] Ibid, 56.
[62] Elspeth Huxley, *The Flame Trees of Thika* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1959), 14.

companions rather than threats. In both oral and archival research, I found very little evidence of white women or their husbands feeling sexually or physically threatened by their servants. They were aware that these things could happen, and had heard stories of violent attacks, but these were things that employers in Tanganyika felt happened elsewhere, and would especially not happen to them. In an interview with a British employer, she described that she and her friends never worried about rape in Tanganyika because they did not think their servants would be interested in them. "We are too different," she explained.[63]

Employers were certainly aware of the physical capabilities of their servants, even if they did view them as inferior, simple-minded, and childlike. In fact, having a man at home to watch over his wife and children gave male employers some piece of mind while they were away on safari or at work. Having a man around also made women feel safe. One employer actually fired his houseboy of seven years when he refused to continue to live-in because "the employer's wife was nervous about being left alone when her husband went on safari."[64] Men often went on safari for months at a time and left their families at home with their all male, African staff. It was expected that the servants would look after the women and children while the man of the house was away. One of the workers was expected to be at home at all times, would escort the *memsahib* and children to and from outings, and upon return "open the house, and see that all is in order" before allowing them inside.[65] When Darrell Bates was on safari, an African man, "naked except for a scrap of cloth that hung in tatters from his waist" and "his face was covered in sticky streaming blood," entered his home while his wife and young children

[63] Jill Stanley, personal conversation.
[64] Senior Labour Officer to Labour Commissioner, 10 November 1958, ACC460 98/40/IV/f.84.
[65] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 56.

were home alone with the servants. The wife called the cook, Asumani, to help and then she locked herself and her children in the bedroom. While the incident did not result in a violent confrontation, Asumani grabbed a knife and a stick to defend his employer's family while the other servants ran to the police for help.[66]

Most parents wholly trusted their servants with their children, although the approach parents took towards their children interacting with the African staff differed significantly from house to house. The colonial authorities and European parents worried about the "moral and physical contamination" of European children in Tanganyika, just as they did in other colonies. How children were raised and who raised them could jeopardize their health and safety as well as their ability to "learn" how to be European. Ann Stoler has illustrated that the state in colonial Java took measures to limit the servants' influence over the development of European children in order to ensure that Dutch children grew up culturally Dutch. Officials and parents were particularly concerned that their children learned to speak proper Dutch, rather than Malay, since language acquisition was tied to cognitive development and the making of proper Dutch subjects.[67] Parents at times expressed anxiety over their children's interactions with African servants in Tanganyika, but it was significantly less severe and systematic than Stoler describes in colonial Java.

The state and its European residents were skeptical of Africans' abilities to raise European children and were concerned that the potentially subpar physical and sexual health of their employees could contaminate their children. Throughout the colonial era, there was much suspicion that many of the African women who worked as *ayahs* in Dar

[66] Bates, *The Mango and the Palm*, 117-121.
[67] Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, Chapter 5. See especially 121-130

es Salaam were *ayahs* by day and prostitutes by night. To ensure the wellbeing of European families, officials discussed and considered whether or not the state should require domestic servants, particularly *ayahs*, to undergo medical examination for venereal and other infectious diseases.[68] They ultimately decided that they could not force servants to undergo medical examination, but the WSLT as well as other residents continued to push for voluntary examination. In addition to their health, employers also questioned *ayahs'* competence. The WSLT's initiative to educate and train African women to be nursemaids in the 1950s was met with some resistance in Dar, especially after news of a European child dying of cot death while in the care of the African *ayah*.[69]

Despite their reservations, most European parents did choose to employ African *ayahs* and trusted their children in the care of their African staff for large parts of the day. Victoria Brennan recalls that, like most other children growing up in Tanganyika, she and her siblings spent most of the day in the care of their *ayahs*. Despite the time spent with the servants, her parents did not explicitly encourage her or her siblings to learn Swahili. Regardless, all of the children managed to learn Swahili from communicating with the staff.[70] Since most servants spoke little English, the children would usually communicate with their *ayahs* and the other domestic servants in Swahili and local vernaculars. Hence, many children of colonial families learned Swahili quite quickly at young ages. Some children even spoke Swahili as their first language.[71] Rather than being horrified by this "contamination," their parents encouraged the servants to speak to the children in Swahili to facilitate their language acquisition. William Thomas and his brothers all spoke

[68] TNA 20887 Vol. II; TNA 10340; TNA 32744; "The Health of the Public," *The Settler*, 2 February 1929.
[69] Hall, "A Bushwife's Progress."
[70] Brennan, personal correspondence via email, 15 September 2011
[71] Interview with Michel Mantheakis, 14 May 2011, Dar es Salaam.

Swahili growing up in Tanganyika. He does not ever recall his parents telling him or any of the children not to speak Swahili. "It would have been stupid [to discourage it]," he added, "because very few Tanzanians spoke English."[72] They chose practicality over cultural caution.

Most European children living in Tanganyika had African playmates and commonly played with the children of the African servants who worked in their homes.[73] As a result, European children would sometimes learn "inappropriate" language. When Lorna Hall's son, John, was four years old she received some irate messages from the parents of other children. John, who often played with the children of the local policeman, was teaching the other white children "THE most shocking Swahili swear words."[74] Like most children, John spoke with his African playmates in Swahili. As the above anecdotes suggests, he and his European playmates spoke to one another in Swahili as well. Rather than being horrified and concerned about her son, Hall seems to have found these incidents fairly amusing.

Most expatriates in Dar es Salaam and throughout the territory were British, but there were white expatriates from all over Europe, particularly Germany and Greece, settling in Tanganyika Territory. White children from different European countries sometimes used Swahili as a sort of lingua franca to communicate with one another. Born to Greek parents in Dar es Salaam in 1933, Stella Mantheakis remembers speaking with other children at nursery school in Swahili. She also recalls, however, that she and her friends would be sure to switch to Greek when adults approached.[75] Even though Stella

[72] William Thomas, personal correspondence via email, 19 September 2011.
[73] David Brokenshaw, personal correspondence via email, 12 September 2011.
[74] Hall, "A Bushwife's Progress," 28. Emphasis in original.
[75] Interview with Stella Mantheakis, August 6, 2011, Dar es Salaam.

and the others commonly spoke Swahili in their own homes, the children felt that it was not something that they were supposed to do in public. It was a personal necessity, but a potential political liability. Parents seem to have looked the other way when their children spoke local languages in the home, but discouraged it in public.

When she eventually had children of her own in Tanganyika, Stella employed six *ayahs*—one to look after each of her six children. She encouraged all of her children to speak Swahili growing up, which they learned from their *ayahs* and the children of other members of the domestic staff. She fully trusted her children in their care. Michel, her son, recalls that he thought of his *ayah* as his "second mother" and spent most of the day with her. Stella did not mind when her children went to the servants' quarters to play with the staff's children or have some tea. Both Michel and his mother recall that his *ayah* cared deeply for the children and they developed affections towards her. In fact, she cared so much for Michel that one day she took him to a local *mganga*, or traditional healer, to ensure that he would grow up strong and healthy. The man made three, one and a half inch, horizontal cuts on Michel's upper arm, which he and his *ayah* attempted to hide from his mother. When Stella found out, she was furious and fired the woman. However, due to her long history with the family and the bonds that formed between them, Stella eventually hired her back and she continued to work in their home for many more years. When the children were old enough to no longer need *ayah*s, the family found a place for her as house servant in their home so that she would not become unemployed.[76]

The relationship the Mantheakises had with their servants were quite unusual. The family has been in the territory since 1890 and has passed some of its servants down through generations. For instance, one of Stella's cooks worked for her father-in-law

[76] Interview with Michel Mantheakis; Interview with Stella Mantheakis.

before cooking in her kitchen. The cook remained with the family for nearly fifty years and, during that period, he learned to speak Greek. During the colonial era, many of the British officers and settlers were not, nor did they intent to be, permanent residents in Tanganyika. They did not have the same amount of time to develop the relationships with their staffs as the Mantheakises. Moreover, as Greeks and therefore not representatives of the British Empire, the Mantheakises perhaps did not feel subject to the same set of social pressures as British residents. Yet, British officials and residents also crossed social lines, broke social conventions, and formed friendships with their servants that transcended the employer-employee relationship.

Male employers, such as David Brokenshaw, formed bonds with their servants, but these appear much more seldom than between servants and *memsahibs*.[77] Women were usually in closer and more frequent contact with domestic servants than male employers. It was customary for the *memsahib* to deal with the servants on almost all work related matters, even financial (after first discussing the details with their husband, if she had one), and they often spent a large part of their days interacting with their servants and their children while their husbands were at work. Domestic servants were sometimes the only companions wives had in the colonies, especially in remote bush stations. Scholars have argued that the social distance, difference, and asymmetrical power relations between master and servant prevented real friendships from forming. Gartrell suggests that colonial wives could not conceive of companionship with women outside of their own race and background, attributing this to language barriers as well as

[77] There is much less data available to assess the relationships between men and their servants because men tended to write more about their public rather than their private lives in their letters and memoires. Despite the lack of evidence, the amount of time women spent at home with the servants and the social conventions that dictated that female employers handle staff related matters suggests that more women probably had close, personal relationships with their domestic servants than men.

"the more fundamental inhibition" of the "We European / others dichotomy characteristic of British colonial attitudes."[78] Karen Hansen acknowledges that feelings of trust and affection did develop between master and servant, but argues:

> The distance between the white master and the black servant in the colonial situation remained too wide in class and cultural terms for genuine friendship with equal participation and shared authority to develop. Whether or not one liked a servant, he was a distant companion. He remained a servant and thus inferior.[79]

However, wives did form mutual bonds with both female and male servants. The distribution of power between master and servant was highly skewed, and employers did view their African servants as inferior, but this did not make their affections any less sincere.

Despite initial difficulties in communication, many European men, women, and children learned Swahili and other local languages well enough to have full conversations with their staffs. The desire and ability to learn the languages varied, but those who lived in Tanganyika for several years tended to be competent to quite fluent in Swahili and other local languages. Many employers took the initiative to go beyond learning simple household commands and improved their language skills by talking with their servants about things that had nothing to do with the home. Some servants, like Gilchrist Alexander's *dhobi*, even served as language tutors for their employers. To improve her language skills, Alexander's wife often asked their *dhobi*, Aly, for help learning how to properly use new vocabulary and practiced conversing with him.[80] Rebecca James' cook, Masanja, actively encouraged her to improve her Swahili. Once she was comfortable with

[78] Gartrell, "Colonial Wives," 175.
[79] Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 31.
[80] Alexander, *Red Kanzu*, 81.

the language she taught him how to read and write in Swahili. She then taught him about numbers so that he could understand recipe books.[81]

Willing and able to communicate with their African staff, many women valued the friendships they cultivated with the men and women who worked in their homes. In her memoir, Beryl Steele stated that she thought of her housegirl, Fatuma, as more of a companion than a servant.[82] Joan Dowsett, the wife of Francsis Dowsett, wrote a letter to her in-laws about how she was quite distraught when her houseboy died. She said that his death was "a great blow to us and we miss him sadly, I particularly when I am alone."[83] Mary Wrench, who accompanied her husband to Nigeria and worked as an administrative officer, reminisced:

> My strongest tie to the Nigerians was the relationship established with my husband's long-serving Hausa 'boys'. They and their families became inextricably bound up with us.[…] When he left Nigeria in 1960 I regretted leaving my boys more than I regretted parting with my European friends. I felt that I could re-establish contact with the latter or even replace them. For the 'boys' there has never been a substitute.[84]

Like Wrench and her servants, the lives of employers and their domestic staff in Tanganyika became intertwined. Mabel Tunstall described how she consoled her houseboy when his son died, and he consoled her when her mother died. He looked after her when she was ill and would often help her around the house during his off hours, seemingly of his own volition. They bonded over their love for good coffee and became great "connoisseurs" together.[85]

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[81] Rebecca James, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (16).
[82] Steele.
[83] Joan Dowsett, "Letter to Mum," 19 June1955, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1276.
[84] Sheelagh Mary Wrench, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, Mss.Afr.s.1799 (46)
[85] Tunstall, "Women Administrative Officers."

These accounts are provided by European employers, not their African employees, and are largely one-sided. While there is little documentation to indicate if the servants reciprocated their employers' sentiments, there is some evidence of servants' loyalty and affection. Like Asumani, Darrell Bates' cook, other servants kept watch and defended the homes of their employers while they were away and looked after the family when they were home. For example, Pamela Taylor's cook usually kept watching at night while she was out, but on a night when he had disappeared on "one of his sprees" (he had a great reputation for womanizing), Taylor came home to an unexpected surprise. Mama Tausi, the "tall, elderly, wraith-like woman" who tended her garden, was sitting on the doorstep. When Taylor asked Mama Tausi what she was doing there so late, she relied "You don't think that I would leave you house to be broken into by all the local thugs?" And with that, she went off.[86]

Conclusion

The relationships between domestic servants and their employers were quite slippery and difficult to define. At times, they appeared formal and professional; at others they seemed rather personal. Sometimes employers could be quite antagonistic and even verbally and physically abusive towards their servants. While rare in Tanganyika, servants could also be violent towards their employers.[87] As Shireen Ally asserts, the colonial home was a site in which violence and intimacy, as well as abuse and affection,

[86] Pamela Taylor, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (33).
[87] For violence committed by servants against masters, see the literature on domestic service in South Africa. See especially Van Onselen, "Witches"; Prinisha Badassy, "'… And my Blood Became Hot!' Crimes of Passion, Crimes of Reason: An Analysis of the Crimes of Murder and Physical Assault Against Masters and Mistresses by their Indian Domestic Servants, Natal 1880-1920" (Masters thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2005).

cohabitated.[88] These complex and seemingly contradictory feelings were further complicated by the politics of power and colonial governance. African servants were always servants and the power relations of colonizer and colonized were forever present, but the complex relationships between African servants and the families who employed them may not have always felt complicated to those who experienced them. In moments, for instance, a cook could come to the defense of the woman and children of the household for which he worked out of genuine compassion and concern for their wellbeing. Similarly, rather than being concerned that her child was magically "metamorphizing" into a native, a European mother could simply be amused by the inappropriate Swahili language a her young child learned from his African playmates.[89]

While it is difficult to define and describe the relationships that formed between masters and servants in Tanganyika, it is plainly evident that these relationships transcend those of employers and employees. Domestic service, Alison Light describes, "has always been emotional as well as economic territory."[90] Employers often did not see their servants solely as workers and thus did not treat them as such. The negative emotions an employer could harbor towards their servants—such as resentment, disgust, or distrust—had obvious disadvantages for the servants involved, and they often produced rather dysfunctional home/work environments. If a servant found such an environment too much to bear, he could quit. In the first few decades of British rule in Tanganyika,

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[88] Shireen Ally, "Domestics, 'Dirty Work' and the Affects of Domination," *South African Review of Sociology* 42:2 (2011): 2.
[89] Ann Stoler demonstrates that in colonial Java "a prominent doctor warned that those Europeans born and bred in the Indies…lived in surroundings that stripped them of their *zuivere* (pure) European sensibilities, which 'could easily lead them to metamorphize into Javanese.'" Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, 96.
[90] Alison Light, *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants: The Hidden Heart of Domestic Service* (London: Penguin, 2008).

experienced servants would have had various employment options available them. Feelings of affection and loyalty, however, could also breed exploitation.

Employers described multiple "favors" their servants allegedly performed for them of their own volition, such as staying after hours to protect their homes or caring for them when they were sick. Were servants performing these favors in their capacity as friends, or were they workers working unpaid overtime? The peculiar, multifaceted nature of the relationships between employers and employees made such a question difficult to answer. Yet, it was precisely this type of question that was at the center of the struggle that erupted between domestic servants and the state during the 1940s and 1950s. At the onset of World War II, the budding labor movement, and the state's attempts to classify and regulate African labor and laborers, further complicated Tanganyika's already complex domestic employment arrangements.

Chapter Three

Labor Transformation and Urban Crisis

Domestic service radically changed during the 1940s. Once "the *élite* of native society," domestic servants sank to the bottom of the urban labor hierarchy.[1] Dar es Salaam simultaneously experienced a rapid population boom and severe economic decline during World War II. In addition to new employment opportunities provided by the growing urban economy, the burgeoning population increased the demand and opportunities for domestic servants in the capital. By 1942, the Labour Department estimated that the number of domestic servants working in the city had doubled since ten years earlier. Seven thousand of the nearly fifteen thousand wage laborers in Dar es Salaam worked in domestic service.[2] The prospect of domestic work drew thousands of hopeful African men to Dar es Salaam and lured scores of African youths to the city. The labor supply quickly outpaced the demand. Feeling the effects of the economic crisis themselves, employers sought to minimize their household budgets by decreasing the number, quality, and ages of servants they employed. Rather than paying premium wages for numerous, highly specialized and experienced domestic workers, employers took advantage of the flooded labor market by hiring inexperienced servants or youths who would perform more work for less money rather than join the ranks of the unemployed. Amidst a wartime urban crisis, domestic service changed from a well-paid, well-respected, skilled occupation to cheap, unregulated, unskilled labor.

[1] Joelson, *Tanganyika*, 150. Emphasis in original.
[2] The Labor Office estimated Dar es Salaam to employ 7,000 domestic workers, 6,000 adults and 1,000 children, out of a total of 14,770 wage laborers. 1942 Labour Office Report, Dar es Salaam Township, TNA 61/100/A/II/f.95.

The wartime economic decline and shifting urban demographic significantly contributed to the downfall of the occupation. However, the state's refusal to regulate domestic service as it intervened in other sectors of the urban labor market exacerbated the demise of domestic work in the colonial capital. During the late 1930s and the 1940s, Frederick Cooper argues, the colonial powers became preoccupied with the "labor question" as administrators realized that labor was connected to the social and political unrest plaguing African cities.[3] British officials sought to stabilize urban populations by creating labor legislation designed to produce an orderly, productive, and predictable African working class. During WWII they transformed their vision of the African worker in the city from a that of temporary, cheap labor "at risk of becoming 'detribalized' if allowed to stay away too long from his village," to that of an "industrial man, now living with a wife and family in a setting conducive to acculturating new generations into modern society."[4] To better ensure that these industrial men and industrial families received the livable wages, sanitary housing, and proper nourishment they required, the state reformed labor legislation to better regulate and formalize labor in the cities. However, as this chapter illustrates, it did not do so equally among all occupational groups. In Tanganyika, as in other colonies, administrators almost entirely neglected or specifically omitted domestic service from many labor reforms.

By analyzing official discussions pertaining to child labor and minimum wages in domestic service, this chapter illustrates the multiple factors behind the decline of domestic service and explores the reasons why the administrators failed to include servants in labor reforms. During the 1940s, African cities did not have the infrastructure

[3] James Brennan has argued that the state was primarily concerned with the "urban question," of which labor was only one part. *Taifa*, Chapter 3.
[4] Cooper, *Decolonization*, 2.

to support their rapidly growing populations. As this chapter shows, opportunities for work in domestic service directly provoked migration to Dar es Salaam and facilitated the problems associated with overpopulation in the capital—unemployment, homelessness, and declining wages. The lure of domestic service contributed to the creation of these problems, but servants, like other urban workers, also suffered because of them. While administrators sought to regulate and improve the living and working conditions of African laborers in the city, they left domestic workers unprotected and subject to the demands of their employers and the declining urban economy. The Master and Native Servants Ordinance outlined working hours, leave time, compensation for injuries, and other working conditions, but these regulations either did not apply to domestic servants or were not enforced in private homes. Rather than troubling themselves with trying to enforce labor laws in thousands of personal residences, administrators largely left domestic employers to determine the employment conditions they instituted in their own homes.

Although the state excluded servants from numerous reforms, during the 1940s officials engaged in particularly dynamic discussions about the employment of children in domestic service and establishing a minimum wage for servants in the city. These discussions reveal that officials were keenly aware of how the state's refusal to regulate the employment of children in domestic service increased the unemployment of adult servants, decreased the wages of all servants in the capital, and further strained the limited resources of the city. While administrators knew that employers paid domestic servants on average less than half the minimum cost of living in Dar es Salaam, they insisted servants' wages were adequate. Officials argued that what employers skimped in

wages they made up in food, clothes, housing, and other good they gave to their servants. In reality, this was neither true nor legal.

In the eyes of the state, domestic service was not work that should be subject to state regulation like other occupations. Administrators did not view domestic service as formal, wage labor. They viewed domestic service as a private affair, to be negotiated between employer and employee, beyond the purview of the state. Since administrators were also domestic employers themselves, and most believed they were exemplary employers, they viewed the regulation of domestic service as superfluous and in direct conflict with their personal interests. Although servants composed nearly half the labor force, the time and effort Labour Officers would need to spend enforcing labor legislation in thousands of private homes seemed unnecessary and better spent on what the Labour Department considered more important sectors of the urban economy. By excluding domestic service from labor legislation and refusing to create or enforce labor standards for domestic employment, the state left domestic workers vulnerable to exploitation and made domestic service an increasingly informal, insecure, and undesirable occupation compared to other types of work.

Urban Decline

The population growth rate of Dar es Salaam jumped from an average of two percent per year during the interwar period to approximately eight percent per year starting in 1939.[5] The total population more than doubled between 1937 and 1948, increasing from 33,320 to 69,227. The African population increased from 23,550 in 1937,

[5] Brennan, *Taifa*, 112.

to 34,740 in 1940, and to 51,231 in 1948.[6] To make matters worse, the state was unaware of how quickly the population was growing. In 1943 the Economic Control Board discovered that there were nearly 45,000 Africans in the township, but the government had previously thought there were only 33,000 Africans living in Dar es Salaam.[7] The Asian population grew even faster than the African population, nearly doubling from 8,825 in 1940 to 16,270 in 1948.[8]

Most Africans migrated to the city to escape the poverty of rural areas and to search for work. The areas surrounding Dar es Salaam were dreadfully impoverished and malnourished. Out of the 1,700 army recruits considered from a rural district just outside of the city, the state found only two hundred sixty-seven physically fit enough for military service. Of the approved recruits, one hundred sixty-three required medical treatments before the military would accept them.[9] Although unemployment in the city was high, there were significantly more opportunities for earning cash in towns than in the underdeveloped rural areas. Urban residents could make a fair amount of money in Dar es Salaam's bustling informal sector if they were unable to find consistent wage employment.[10]

Dar es Salaam's resources and infrastructure could not keep up with its growth.[11] The large increase in the town's population created a sharp rise in the demand for food,

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[6] Burton, *African Underclass*, 282.
[7] 1943 Eastern Province Annual Report, TNA.
[8] Burton, *African Underclass*, 282.
[9] Brennan, "Race, Nation, and Urbanization," 236.
[10] Burton, *African Underclass*, 84. For more on urban migration see R.H. Sabot, *Economic Development an Urban Migration: Tanzania 1900-1971* (London, 1978); Anthony O'Connor, *The African City* (London, 1983).
[11] Reports include A.H. Pike, "Report on Native Affairs in Dar es Salaam Township," 5 June 1939, TNA 18950/II (Pike, "Report on Native Affairs"); Baker Amendments; M.J.B. Molohan, "Report on Unemployment and Wage Rates in Dar es Salaam," 27 September 1941, TNA 61/443/1 (Molohan, "Report on Unemployment"), as cited in Burton, *African Underclass*; "Report on enquiry into wages and cost of

clothes, and housing. Resource shortages and wartime inflation made these items out of reach for most urban dwellers. As James Brennan explains:

> Exporting up to twice what it imported, Tanganyika ran large trade surpluses between 1938 and 1946, which law credited as sterling balances in London. Across East Africa, currency in circulation more than doubled between 1940 and 1945, while availability of consumer goods like bicycles, hoes, and textiles dropped precipitously. Inflation became the era's signature phenomenon—average prices of identical goods doubled between 1938/39 and 1945, and trebled between 1939 and 1949.[12]

Food and housing were of particular concern. Between 1939 and 1943, the population increased by about thirty percent, but the number of African houses available actually decreased from 3,155 to 3,123 during that same period.[13] The lack of housing, coupled with soaring rents, resulted in a growing problem of homelessness throughout the township.[14] Periodic droughts, inflation, and over-population made food in Dar es Salaam scarce and expensive.[15]

The city simultaneously experienced mass unemployment and a rapid decline in real wages. Many of Tanganyika's rural areas were still experiencing labor shortages, particularly on agricultural and sisal estates. However, within the township the labor supply in the capital far exceeded the demand. In 1939, an estimated one out of every three African men in Dar es Salaam was unemployed.[16] In 1942, Labour Officer M.J.B. Molohan reported that, although no specific employment numbers could be determined,

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living of low grade African government employees in Dar es Salaam," September 1942, TNA 30598 ("Report on enquiry into wages").

[12] Brennan, *Taifa*, 118. Figures cited from Nicholas J. Westcott, "The Impact of the Second World War on Tanganyika, 1939-49" (PhD dissertation, Cambridge University, 1982), 165-167.

[13] Amendments to the 1931 Baker Report, 10 January 1940, TNA 18950 Vol.II; Memo from DC Pike to DO Molohan, 22 July 1943, TNA 24387. Cited in Burton, *African Underclass*, 90.

[14] Molohan reported that it was "a common sight for natives to be seen sleeping out at night in public places and building or on verandahs in private houses simply because they are unable to pay for a night's lodging." Molohan, "Report on Unemployment," as cited in Burton, *African Underclass*, 90.

[15] Due to a drought, Tanganyika experienced a territory-wide food shortage in 1943 that further intensified inflation. There was also a famine in 1946. Burton, *African Underclass*, 94; Brennan, *Taifa*, 92, 100-101.

[16] H.H. McCleery, "Report of an Enquiry into Landownership in Dar es Salaam," Rhodes House Library, Mss.Afr.s.870, 1939. Cited in Iliffe, *Modern History*, 386.

unemployment existed "to an alarming extent."[17] The majority of those who could find work barely made a living wage. Although wages slowly crept up in most sectors, they lagged far behind the rising cost of living and inflation. Between 1939 and 1948 the average wage European employers paid to their servants rose about sixty to seventy percent, but the cost of goods rose nearly three hundred percent within the same span of time.[18] In 1939, District Commissioner Alexander Pike calculated that the majority of workers in Dar es Salaam earned "sub-marginal" wages.[19] Two years later Molohan declared wages were "more sub-marginal than ever."[20] A 1942 inquiry found "some 87 per cent of Government employees in Dar es Salaam are in receipt of a wage in which they cannot possibly subsist without getting into debt and remaining in debt." Sixty percent of government employees were in debt by one month's salary or more.[21]

While state employees were not doing well, Africans in the private sector were faring even worse. During the interwar period, domestic servants on average earned more than government employees. However, during the 1940s private employees, the gross majority of whom were domestic servants, made half the monthly wages of unskilled government workers.[22] In 1944 the government reported that Europeans paid their servants an average of Shs.35/- to Shs.45/- per month whereas "Asiatics," the majority of domestic employers, paid their servants an average Shs.20/- per month.[23] That same year

[17] Molohan, "Report on Unemployment," as cited in Burton, *African Underclass*, 100.
[18] "Wages are Higher, And so are Living Costs," *Tanganyika Standard*, 2 March 1948, TNA 32744/f.58.
[19] Andrew Pike, "Report on Native Affairs in Dar es Salaam Township," 5 June 1939, TNA 18950/II.
[20] M.J.B. Molohan. "Report on Unemployment and Wage Rates in Dar es Salaam," 27 September 1941. TNA 61/443/1.
[21] "Report on enquiry into wages," Cited in Iliffe, *Modern History*, 534 and Burton, *African Underclass*, 92.
[22] Workers in the private sector earned about Shs.12/50-Shs.15/- whereas government employees earned Shs.29/50-Shs.33/50 per month. Ibid.
[23] Extract from Officials Report on Domestic Servants' Wages, 20 July 1944, TNA 30136.

a government fact-finding committee suggested that the average cost of living in the city was Shs.53/47.[24]

Child Labor and Domestic Service

The problem of growing unemployment and declining wages was directly linked to the employment of children and juveniles in domestic service. In addition to African men, African youths traveled from nearby rural areas to the city specifically in search of domestic work. Children likely sought work in the capital for a number of reasons, many of which were the same as adult migrant workers. Surely some ran away from their rural homes in hopes of living more exciting lives in the city. However, many sought to escape rural poverty and oppression. In addition to poverty motivating children to voluntarily leave rural areas, economic hardships caused some parents to forcibly remove children from their homes. Some of the children living and working in Dar es Salaam likely did not have parents at all. The Labour Commissioner's 1939 inquiry counted more than 1,800 children employed by European, Asians, and "better off Africans" in large towns throughout the Territory, approximately 1000 of whom were employed, "mainly by Indians," in Dar es Salaam.[25] African children commonly worked as kitchen *totos*, general houseboys, and errand runners. European and Asian employers also frequently employed young African boys to look after and play with their own children.[26] By 1942, approximately thirteen percent of all domestic workers in the capital were children.[27]

[24] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 20 October 1944, TNA 32744.
[25] Minute from Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 11 March 1943, TNA 30036; Memorandum for the Labour Board: The Employment of Children in Domestic Service, 20 November 1943, TNA 30136.
[26] Letter from Orde-Brown to Chief Secretary on 6 September 1930, TNA 11850/I.
[27] 1942 Labour Office Report, Dar es Salaam Township, TNA 61/100/A/II/f.95.

Although working conditions and remunerations for child servants were usually quite poor, children from surrounding rural areas fled to Dar es Salaam and other urban areas in hopes of finding work and eking out a life in the towns. As early as 1930, Labour Commissioner Orde-Browne informed Chief Secretary Douglas James Jardine that a large numbers of youths worked as domestics in Dar es Salaam and that they were sleeping at their employers' residences rather than returning to their parents' homes at night. He suggested "this form of employment would seem open to little objection since the parents presumably consent in every case."[28] Later investigation revealed that this was far from the case, particularly in Dar es Salaam. In E.C. Baker's 1941 annual report he noted that, hoping to avoid the banality and difficulty of rural life, "children wander into Dar es Salaam, often without their parents' knowledge and obtain employment as house boys or nurses at a starvation wage." An investigation into truant children either regularly missing class or no longer attending a nearby government school concluded that over two thirds of those being investigated worked for non-natives as servants in Dar es Salaam for between Shs.3/- and Shs.7/- per month. "Many however, are unemployed or only semi-employed and all, youths and children alike, gain a preference for town life and with its accompanying vices."[29] Pike similarly described that African children

> generally start work with Indian employers at about eight years of age for Shs.2/- per month with their food, and the wages increase to about Shs.4/- with food when they are fourteen. After this age, they seldom get permanent employment until they are eighteen and the four most impressionable years of these boys' lives are spent in the company of loafers, petty thieves and card sharpers.[30]

The state and employers embraced child labor until the 1940s; this work force was popular and profitable. The agricultural sector was particularly dependent on child

[28] Letter from Orde-Brown to Chief Secretary on 6 September 1930, TNA 11850/I.
[29] 1941 Eastern Province Annual Report, TNA.
[30] Pike, "Report on Native Affairs."

labor until after World War II. On plantations, where employers consistently had difficulties attracting workers, children were critical to the labor supply. Reports from one coffee plantation in Moshi indicate that during the 1929-1930 harvest season thirty-six percent of all laborers were children.[31] In 1943, the Labour Commissioner reported that during harvest season nearly seventy-five percent of the labor force on coffee plantations was "composed of children of all ages." Roughly half of those children were under the age of twelve.[32] Employers often preferred to hire children because they could pay them significantly smaller wages to perform the same tasks as adults. On sisal plantations around Dar es Salaam in 1933, children earned Shs.2/50 to Shs.3/50 per month plus rations whereas adults made Shs.8/- to Shs.10/- per month plus rations. In addition to the lower wages, employers also provided fewer rations to children.[33] In less regulated sectors, such as domestic service, children earned even less money.

The state's official stance was that most work was not harmful to the children and that child labor was beneficial to the Territory as well as the children, their families, and their communities. Despite evidence to the contrary, administrators insisted that there were no widespread abuses of child workers in Tanganyika and that child labor should be allowed to continue.[34] Children could earn money that would supplement the living expenses of their families and, due to the shortage of schooling in the Territory, employment would give children something productive to do during the day. Until the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, less than ten percent of children in

[31] TNA 11127/I. Cited in Shivji, "Law and Conditions of Child Labour," 222.
[32] Letter from LC to Chief Secretary, 2 July 1943, TNA 11850/III.
[33] 1933 Dar es Salaam District Annual Report; Shivji, "Law and Conditions of Child Labour," 223.
[34] "Labour Law to Avoid Misunderstanding," *The Tanganyika Standard*, 18 September 1943; "Whitewash and Blackboard," *The Tanganyika Standard*, 22 September 1943.

Tanganyika had access to schooling.[35] Since the majority of children were not in school, officials argued it was better for them to be employed because work would "protect those small boys and girls from idleness and mischief by allowing them to be usefully and gainfully employed on suitable light work."[36] Administrators worried that they would otherwise contribute to the growing criminal element.

Due to direct pressure from London, in 1940 Tanganyika became the last British territory to enact comprehensive regulations on child labor. In December 1939, Malcolm Macdonald, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote a letter to Sir Mark Young, Governor of Tanganyika Territory, informing him that Tanganyika was the only British territory not in compliance with two International Labor Conventions on child labor that had been adopted by the Empire eighteen years earlier—one fixing the minimum age for children working in "industrial employment" and another regulating the "night work" of the young persons employed in industry. Macdonald therefore directed Young to "arrange for a Bill giving effect to the provisions of the two Conventions mentioned above to be prepared and introduced into the Legislature as soon as possible." He further urged the Governor to consider fixing the minimum age of children permitted to work in occupations other than industrial employment.[37] Three months later, Tanganyika adopted the Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance, or Ordinance No.5 of 1940.

Ordinance No.5 provided the first legal definitions of children, juveniles, and young persons in Tanganyika and was designed to regulate labor according to age groups. The legislation legally defined a "young person" as "a person under the age of eighteen

[35] Andrew Coulson, *Tanzania: A Political Economy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 88.
[36] "Labour Law to Avoid Misunderstanding," *The Tanganyika Standard*, 18 September 1943.
[37] Secretary of State for the Colonies Malcolm Macdonald to Governor Mark Young, 21 December 1939, TNA 11850/II.

years," a "juvenile" as "a young person under the age of sixteen years," and a "child" as "a juvenile under age of fourteen years." Ordinance No.5 made several restrictions specific to the employment of young persons, juveniles, and children on ships and in industrial undertakings. Juveniles were prevented from being employed in certain "dangerous" industries, not allowed to be employed outside of their home districts, and not permitted to work more than eight hours a day. Aside from cases in which an administrative officer approved the exception, Ordinance No.5 required juveniles to return to the home of their parent(s) or guardian every night after work. It also prevented children from being employed on anything other than a daily wage and required them to return to the their familial homes each night, with no exceptions granted from administrators.

Despite the large number of children and juveniles working in domestic service throughout Tanganyika, Ordinance No.5 did almost nothing to protect child servants. In fact, officials explicitly excluded domestic servants from almost all regulations in the 1940 Ordinance. They did not specifically exclude young persons working in any other occupation.[38] Ordinance No.5 provided no restrictions on the number of hours employers could require child or juvenile servants to work per day, and it did not require them to return home each night. It did not even require child servants to work in their home districts. Hence, children could legally move to Dar es Salaam by themselves and work as servants in the city. The only restriction Ordinance No.5 placed on servants was the provision that employers were not allowed to employ juveniles if their parents expressed disapproval of their employment. Unlike other occupations, unless their parents explicitly

[38] Employment of Women and Young Persons, 1940.

disapproved, young persons of all ages could work as domestic servants with little regulation of their working conditions.

Several important administrators highly criticized the exclusion of domestic service from Ordinance No.5, notably Provincial Commissioner Baker, District Commissioner Pike, and Labour Commissioner Hickson-Mahoney. State officials debated the place of child servants in Tanganyika Territory, particularly Dar es Salaam, for the next five years. In September 1941, J.H.S. Tranter brought the issue to the attention of the Labour Board and suggested that domestic servants were in need of the same protections as children employed in other occupations. The Labour Board agreed to investigate the working conditions of children in domestic service throughout the Territory.[39] The inquiries highlighted the poor working conditions of most child and juvenile workers in urban areas, but of more concern to officials was the revelation that the employment of youths in domestic work profoundly impacted the living and working conditions of the entire urban population. The mass of unsupervised and often unemployed youngsters migrating to Dar es Salaam in search of domestic work ate up valuable food and other goods in short supply. State officials grew increasingly concerned about young persons' involvement in immoral and criminal activities, and they grew aware that the state's failure to prohibit the employment of juveniles and children in domestic service directly contributed to the mounting unemployment and inadequate wage problems of the capital.

During the WWII, the "Indian system" in which employers hired various domestic workers to each perform a specific task became increasingly unaffordable and less common. Higher labor costs, coupled with employers' own financial hardships

[39] Extract from minutes of the 1st meeting of the Labour Board, 11 September 1941, TNA 30136.

during this era, caused many employers to decrease the amount of staff they employed and to explore less expensive options. Rather than hire trained, experienced servants, employers increasingly chose to hire inexperienced youths who they could train themselves because youths would perform more work for less money. By undercutting the price of experienced, adult workers, youths pushed many seasoned, expensive servants out of work and artificially kept the cost of domestic labor down. As Hickson-Mahoney explained, the employment of "so large a number of children at a few shillings a month must also tend to depress wages and aggravate unemployment."[40] The following year the new Labour Commissioner, M. J. B. Molohan, observed that the employment of juveniles in domestic service was "largely responsible for depressing wages in D'Salaam."[41] Baker informed the Chief Secretary "drastic measured are urgently necessary in order to reduce the numbers of underfed natives, both adult and juvenile, who infest the township" and negatively affected the labor market.[42] He suggested:

> Juveniles employed as personal servants should be brought within the scope of the Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance (No.5 of 1940). Many of the better class Africans and the poorer Asiatics employ juveniles as personal servants for a few shillings per month plus food which, judging by the physique of many of these children, is inadequate. Juveniles who flock into the town, often without their father's permission, to take up such employment become accustomed to urban conditions and are unwilling to leave Daressalaam even if they are out of work. While searching for work they eke out an existence as best they can and consort with the riff raff of the town to the detriment of their physique and morals. The implementation of my proposal would not be popular for if it is brought into effect, the present employers of juveniles would be under the necessity of engaging adult servants or making their women-folk look after the children themselves as do the majority of mothers in Europe; but I am convinced that were the employment of juvenile servants prohibited the social condition of the urban Africans would be very much improved.[43]

[40] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 11 March 1943, TNA 30136, minute 2.
[41] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 20 October 1944, TNA 32744, minute 3.
[42] Letter from the Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, 29 September 1941, TNA 30134.
[43] P.C. Baker to Chief Secretary, 3 September 1941, TNA 30134. Emphasis added.

Hickson-Mahoney similarly suggested that if the state revised Ordinance No.5 to include domestic servants it "would eliminate a very large proportion of children now employed" in the city and the few remaining could therefore "demand better wages and more adults would be engaged."[44] Attributing this problem to Asian employers, he continued: "If these cheap household servants or nurse boys were not available to Indians they would have to employ older servants at better wages and look after their children and do their housework themselves."[45]

Though persons from all racial categories employed children in their homes, European officials and non-officials racialized the child servant problem. Despite their own employment of child servants, Europeans publically denounced child labor as a problem created and perpetuated by Dar es Salaam's largest non-native population, the Asians. "Frankenstein," for instance, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Tanganyika Standard* thanking "the Devil for the existence in these countries of Indians with old traditions of child-labour employment, unprevented in India. Without them this custom could not have been so thoroughly introduced into this country and carried on."[46] Similarly attributing the child servant problem to the Asian population, G.K. Whitlamsmith, an officer in the Chief Secretary's office, suggested "what inspired Mr. Tranter to make his suggestion, and the motive for the Board's recommendation [to launch an investigation], was the employment of very young 'totos' in domestic drudgery, chiefly for Indians, at microscopic wages."[47]

[44] Minute from Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 11 March 1943, TNA 30136.
[45] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 11 March 1943, TNA 30136, minute 2.
[46] Frankenstein to The Editor, Tanganyika Standard, 12 June 1943. Published in Tanganyika Standard 16 June 1943, TNA 11850/III.
[47] Minute from G.K.W. to D.A.S. 17 September 1943, TNA 30136.

Outnumbering the European population by over eight to one, Asians employed most of the servants, and thus child servants, in Dar es Salaam.[48] Asians' domestic customs and employment conditions were quite different than those of Europeans, and most Europeans viewed Asian employment practices as exploitative and unethical. They singled out Asian employers for their tendency to require African children to work long hours for "a starvation wage," not providing adequate food, clothing, or housing, and perpetuating the employment of children in the city. Even though Europeans commonly employed child servants, to the state and within European social circles child labor and its associated ills were a distinctly Asian phenomenon.

The Asians of East Africa were popularly cast as the region's exploitative, entrepreneurial class. They owned the majority of shops, or *maduka*, in urban centers and controled of most of the region's trade. While some Asians belonged to the wealthy upper class, the majority of Asian families were middle class traders and merchants.[49] A few families lived in large homes and employed an abundance of servants, but many Asian families lived together as joint households in a single structure and shared a handful of servants between them. Due to their lower economic status, Asians generally employed fewer servants than Europeans and paid their worker's less. Although the "one man, one job" domestic tradition that developed in European homes throughout East Africa was commonly referred to as the "Indian system," most Asian families in

[48] The total population of Dar es Salaam in 1940 was 44,618: 34,750 Africans, 8,825 Asians, and 1,043 Europeans. Andrew Burton, *African Underclass*, 282.

[49] For more on the socioeconomic position of the Asian population in East Africa see Brennan, *Taifa*; Brennan, "Nation, Race and Urbanization"; Richa Nagar, "Communal Places and the Politics of Multiple Identities: The Case of Tanzanian Asians," *Ecumene* 4:1 (1997): 3-26; Richa Nagar, "The South Asian Diaspora in Tanzania: A History Retold," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East: A Journal of Politics, Culture and Economy* no. 16 (1996): 62-80; Robert G. Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa: An Economic and Social History, 1980-1980* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1993); Robert G. Gregory, *India and East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); J.S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa, c. 1886-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Tanganyika could not afford the number of servants Europeans typically employed. Since fewer servants were taking care of a larger household, domestic servants in Asian homes often worked long hours compared to those who worked in European homes. They needed to wash the clothes, linens, and dishes of a large number of people. Although they did more work, they usually received less than half the pay servants earned in European homes.[50]

Child servants, however, received far less. The Labour Commissioner's 1939 inquiry revealed that employers paid children in large townships throughout the Territory as little as Shs.1/50 per month. Children were employed as domestic servants in Dar es Salaam, "mainly by Indians[…]at wages varying from 2/-p.m. [per month] upwards with such food as they could obtain from their employer's table." While employers usually supplied their servants food and often times clothing, many of the children were undernourished and received only very worn cast-off clothes.[51] Asian employers notoriously locked their food pantries to prevent servants from sneaking food throughout the day, which European employers usually allowed their servants to do, and only fed their workers whatever food they had leftover from a meal.[52] Due to colonial urban zoning policies, Asians mostly resided in Dar es Salaam's city center. Since there was often no space for designated servants' quarters in the city-center, apartment-style homes Asians occupied, it was commonplace for servants to sleep in the kitchen or on the veranda.[53] Otherwise servants needed to find a way to provide their own accommodations

[50] Extract from Officials Report on Domestic Servants' Wages, 20 July 1944, TNA 30136.
[51] Minute from Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 11 March 1943, TNA 30136; Memorandum for the Labour Board: The Employment of Children in Domestic Service. 20 November 1943, TNA 30136.
[52] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 112-133.
[53] Brennan, "Nation, Race, and Urbanization," 126.

with their meager earnings. Earning only a few shilling per month, children usually slept on the streets if no one else would take them in.

Asians' motive for employing children as servants was primarily economic. Children would work for a fraction of the wages as adults and they required smaller food rations. Since most Asians were generally not very well off, this cost-cutting mechanism was important to their household budgets. Child servants were also attractive because employers could control them more easily and they posed less of a sexual threat to Asian women and children than adult African men. Unlike European employers in Tanganyika, Asian employers expressed a fear of sexual liaisons between adult, male African servants and the women of the house. To a lesser extent, they also feared sexual relationships between adult male servants and the young boys of the household.[54] Hence, Asians favored hiring young boys to work in their homes, particularly during times of financial strain.

While Europeans criticized Asians for their employment practices, these customs were not specific to Asian households. Child servants were not a uniquely Asian phenomenon, nor were their small wages. On her husband's first tour in Tanganyika in 1932, Lorna Hall noted "a scullion, known as a 'kitchen toto' is necessary to most European houses." In Sayers' *Handbook*, published in 1930, he advised newcomers to pay these "kitchen-boys" as little as Shs.8/- per month, significantly less than the rest of the staff.[55] In 1950, Emily Bradley wrote at length about the *toto* system in her travel guide for European women in the colonies, *Dearest Priscilla*. *Totos* were usually under

[54] Personal communication with Annonymous, 2011, Dar es Salaam.
[55]He advised newcomers to pay cooks between Shs.40/- and Shs.80/- per month, depending on their experience, houseboys between Shs.50/- and Shs.70/- per month, and kitchen boys Shs./8- to Shs.20/- per month. Sayers, *Handbook*, 470.

age twelve, functioned as apprentices of the main staff, and they typically worked long hours performing odd jobs around the house or the jobs that none of the other staff wanted to do. *Totos* were a tradition in colonial homes and, while they often paid more than Asian employers, Europeans usually paid them very little. Sometimes they did not pay them at all. Some employers did not even know how many *totos* worked in their home or how much they paid them because they never dealt with their *totos* directly—the cook would hire them, give them their orders, and pay them their wages. In at least one documented case, a kitchen *toto* was actually paying the headboy of a European home a small fee per month to be trained as a servant in the hopes of eventually getting a job as a headboy himself.[56] These employers saw nothing wrong with their employment of these children, even though they paid them very little and sometimes did not even know how much their *totos* earned every month or where they slept each night.[57]

Europeans adamantly distinguished Asian employment practices from their own domestic customs and portrayed their own employment of African children as evidence of European moral superiority. They professed that they were doing these youngsters a great service by employing them. Mabel Tunstall described that during her service in Tanganyika "officers took on one young boy each for training so that if any officer served for say 15 years he had given five men a skill which could get them jobs for life."[58] *Totos* often did get promoted in the households in which they apprenticed or hired as a cook or main houseboy in a newcomer's home. For instance, Pamela Taylor's cook, Bernardi, previously worked as a kitchen *toto* in a former provincial commissioner's

[56] Bujra, "Men at Work," 256.
[57] Bradley, *Dearest Priscilla*, 56-57.
[58] Mabel Tunstall, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (36A).

home before working for her family and Francis Dowsett promoted his cook's *toto* to houseboy in his own home.[59]

The tradition of *totos* benefitted European employers and the colonial administration as much as it did their African employees. The *toto* system ensured the supply of trained and experienced domestic servants for future administrators in the Territory, and it provided employers with cheap labor in times of financial hardship. Since Europeans often ran short of what they considered adequately qualified servants, by employing *totos* an officer would simultaneously be training new domestic staff for incoming settlers and administrators. During the economic crisis, the Women's Service League of Tanganyika advised female newcomers to employ untrained youths rather than experienced servants to keep their household budgets down. "If a housewife is capable of training a cook," the WSLT suggested in *Notes on African Domestic Labour in Dar es Salaam*, "a young boy would be worth teaching, and could be employed for a considerably lower wage than one with experience."[60] Europeans praised themselves for giving these youngsters employable skills and introducing them to the ways of civilization. At the same time, they condemned Asians for exploiting this cheap, impressionable source of labor and facilitating urban overpopulation, poverty, and unemployment.

The Labour Board finally decided to amend Ordinance No.5 at the behest of the Chief Secretary in 1945. Following the 1944 Philadelphia Conference of the International Labour Organization, the Chief Secretary's Office urged the Labour Board to revise the

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[59] Pamela Taylor, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (33); Letter from Franscis Dowsett to Mums and Dad, 28 October 1931, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1276.

[60] Women's Service League of Tanganyika, *Notes on African Domestic Labour in Dar es Salaam* (Dar es Salaam: Government Press, 1948), 5. Cited in Bujra, "Met at Work," 250.

legislation to cover juveniles in domestic service.[61] In July 1945 the members unanimously agreed:

> The Board felt that it was this form of employment [domestic service] that some control was most necessary, since it was in the urban areas that it was most common, and the result had been an influx of youngsters into the townships, particularly Dar es Salaam, which in recent years had been increasing out of all proportion. It was one of the growing social evils, for these children were exposed to all the dangers and temptations of life without any degree of parental control.[62]

In 1946 the Board redefined a child as a person under the age of fifteen and extended the protections afforded in the Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance to children working as domestic servants throughout the Territory.

The amendment of the Ordinance in 1946 better protected children employed in domestic service, but child labor continued. Evidence shows that it was customary for Europeans, including state officials, to employ *totos* until the end of the colonial era. In 1940 the Joly's employed a ten-year-old, who had "huge eyes and a huge tummy," named Adam.[63] In 1946 they were still employing children. Joan Joly wrote to her friend telling her of her new domestic staff, which included a cook who "is a youngster of 13, who is excellent" as well as "a small thing who washes the dishes and runs errands." This "small thing" was presumably the kitchen *toto*, and was most likely younger than Joly's thirteen-year-old cook.[64] In 1947 she again hired a new staff, which included "a grand little chap" of about twelve.[65] Mabel Tunstall recalls that she employed a kitchen *toto* on her first tour, which began in 1952. She insisted that she did not need the young boy, but that the

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[61] "Memorandum to the Labour Board: The Employment of Children in Domestic Service," G.K. Whitlamsmith, 12 March 1945, TNA 30136.
[62] "New Law Raises Ages for Employment of Children," *Tanganyika Standard,* 24 July 1946. TNA 11850/III.
[63] Letter from Joan Joly to Nancy, 19 February 1949, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.737.
[64] *Totos* were subservient to cooks. It would be extremely rare to employ a *toto* who was older than the cook and unlikely that a *toto* would be willing to work under someone who was younger than himself. Letter from Joan Joly to Nancy, 21 November 1946, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.737.
[65] Letter from Joan Joly to Nancy, 3 May 1947, Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.737.

employment of *totos* was a custom in European homes that friends and colleagues pressured her to uphold.

Administrators fret about the safety of children working in other occupations, but until the end of the decade they insisted that domestic service was suitable work for African children and youths. Their employment of African children in their own homes is one of the primary reasons officials originally excluded domestic service from Ordinance No.5 in 1940 and were so reluctant to regulate the employment of children in domestic service throughout WWII. Officials' objectives as administrators were in direct conflict with their interests as the employers of child servants themselves. They were clearly aware that abuses existed in domestic service, just as they did in any other sector, if not more so. They also knew that child servants negatively impacted the city and the urban labor market. However, they minimized and racialized the child labor problem. They did not see the employment of all child servants as a problem—they saw Asians' employment of child servants as a problem. Hickson-Mahoney even suggested to the Chief Secretary that, while Ordinance No.5 should definitely include regulations for child servants, an exception in the Ordinance should allow Europeans to continue to employ them.[66]

More importantly, administrators were reluctant to interfere with the employment of child servants because they refused to acknowledge that these children were in fact doing real work in their employers' homes. They did not equate work in households with work on plantations, in factories, or on the docks. Not only did they perceive domestic work to be less dangerous than these other occupations, the intimate nature of the relationships that developed between employers and employees caused administrators to

[66] Hickson-Mahoney to Chief Secretary, 11 March 1943, TNA 30136.

view servants differently than they did other workers. Due to the personal relationships many European employers developed with their servants, there was much slippage between employers viewing their servants as employees and viewing them as an extension of their household. They believed they were helping and nurturing child servants, not exploiting them as a source of cheap labor. Despite the adoption of the 1946 amendment, child servants were an ingrained part of colonial culture and they continued to work in European and Asian homes for abdominally low wages at the expense of other workers in the city.

"Hidden Emoluments" and Minimum Wages

The continued employment of youths and inexperienced servants over more expensive, skilled workers, coupled with the oversaturated urban labor market and poor economy, increased the unemployment of adult workers and deflated servants' wages in Dar es Salaam. The state's refusal to regulate servants' wages kept them low. Despite evidence that most servants earned less than half the average cost of living in Dar es Salaam, most officials adamantly argued against setting minimum wages for domestic servants. They insisted that figures suggesting domestic servants did not earn enough to ensure a minimum standard of living were misleading. To begin with, they argued, the state's estimated cost of living was too high. More importantly, the special circumstances of domestic work meant servants did not need to earn wages equal to other types of workers. In addition to their wages, servants enjoyed many of what the Labour Commissioner called "hidden emoluments."[67] Since servants often received food, water, soap, fuel, and housing from their employers, their wages, Governor Jackson explained,

[67] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 20 October 1944, TNA 32744, minute 3.

"do not by any means represent their total earnings from this employment." Calculating the compensation of workers in this way was a direct violation of the Master and Native Servants Ordinance, which required employers to pay their employees in currency.[68] However, Governor Jackson and Labour Commissioner Molohan, like many officials and employers, did not perceive servants as wage workers—servants were their own category of worker not subject to the same rules and protections as other laborers.

At the behest of the Colonial Office in London, Tanganyika launched several inquiries into the cost of living in Dar es Salaam throughout World War II. All of the investigations clearly concluded that wages in the city lagged well behind the cost of living and that the majority of the city's African residents lived in dire poverty. In 1940, shortly after dockworker strikes in Dar es Salaam and Tanga, Pike declared that the establishment of living wages in the capital was an economic and political necessity.[69] That year Tanganyika raised the daily wages of unskilled government workers by thirty-three percent in Dar es Salaam and Tanga, bringing minimum wages from Shs.-/60 to Shs.-/80 per day or Shs.20/80 per month. In October 1942, Molohan reported that the minimum wage for government employees in Dar es Salaam still did not equal the estimated cost of living for an African bachelor in the capital, which was Shs.27/50 per month.[70] That same year the government increased wages again to Shs.1/- per day. Unfortunately, inflation outpaced the increase in government wages and the wage increase did not solve the severe food shortage in the city. Periodic droughts, inflation, and over-population made food in Dar es Salaam increasingly difficult to come by during

[68] Section 21 of Master and Native Servants Ordinance. See Shivji, *Working Class*, 49.
[69] Burton, *African Underclass*, 92.
[70] M. J. B. Molohan. "Report of enquiry into wages and cost of living of low grade African government employers in Dares Salaam," 22 October 1942, TNA 30598.

the 1940s.[71] To ensure that government employees received proper nutrition, and could therefore be efficient workers, the government mandated all of its African employees earning less than Shs.60/- per month receive cooked meals provided at a canteen. Later that year, the state issued food rations to all government employees earning less than Shs.40/- per month or Shs.1/50 per day, which constituted eighty-seven percent of the government workforce.[72]

Although the state attempted to ensure that government employees received food and a standard minimum wage that would allow them to live and work in the increasingly expensive capital, workers in the private sector fared much worse. State officials hoped that increasing government wage rates would motivate private employers to increase wages. It did not. Comprising nearly half the city's labor force, domestic workers on average received half the monthly wages earned by government workers in Dar es Salaam.[73] Almost all servants in the capital, including those who worked for European employers, earned significantly less than the government's estimated cost of living of Shs.53/47 per month in 1944.[74] Europeans paid their servants an average of Shs.35/- to 45/- per month whereas Asians, the majority of employers in the city, paid their servants an average of Shs.20/- per month. The one out of eight domestic servants who were youths earned far less. Despite their inadequate wages, unlike government workers, the state did nothing to ensure servants received meals everyday to make up for their meager earnings.

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[71] Due to a drought, Tanganyika experienced a territory-wide food shortage in 1943 that further intensified inflation. There was also a famine in 1946. Burton, *African Underclass*, 94; Brennan, *Taifa*, 92, 100-101.
[72] See Burton, *African Underclass*, 91-95; "Report on enquiry into wages and cost of living of low grade African government employees in Dar es Salaam," September 1942, TNA 30598.
[73] 1942 Labour Office Report, Dar es Salaam Township, TNA 61/100/A/II/f.95; See Burton, *African Underclass*, 91-95; "Report on enquiry into wages and cost of living of low grade African government employees in Dar es Salaam," September 1942, TNA 30598.
[74] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 20 October 1944, TNA 32744, minute 3.

The gross disparity between servants' wages and the cost of living costs figures in Dar es Salaam concerned officials in London, particularly Member of Parliament Edward Keeling. In July 1944, Keeling asked Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley to discuss the possibility of establishing a minimum wage for domestic servants in Tanganyika with Governor Jackson.[75] The discussion among administrators pertaining to servants' wages in Dar es Salaam during the 1940s reveals a collective agreement amongst state officials that domestic service was not wage labor and that servants should be subject to special working conditions and compensation. Officials in Tanganyika almost universally acknowledged that servants' wages were low, but they did not share London's concern. After consulting with Labour Commissioner Molohan, Governor Jackson reported to Stanley that "on the whole domestic servants in Dar es Salaam are sufficiently remunerated, and that to invoke minimum wage fixing machinery to improve their conditions of service is unnecessary, and is also undesirable."[76]

Administrators worried that establishing a minimum wage for domestic servants in Dar es Salaam would result in increased migration to the capital, further exacerbating the city's overpopulation and unemployment problems.[77] The government would need to set higher wages for domestic servants in the city to compensate for the higher cost of living than in up-country areas, luring more Africans to Dar es Salaam. However,

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[75] "Extract from Official Report [Parliament] of 20th July, 1944: Tanganyika (Domestic Servants' Wages)," TNA 32744/f.1A.

[76] Confidential letter from Governor Jackson to Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley, 29 November 1944, TNA 32744/f.17.

[77] Ibid. Jackson's letter restated many of the objections raised to him by Labour Commissioner Molohan. Molohan argued that, without any regulations controlling the migration of Africans into the city, "any attempt to institute a minimum wage would merely result in an increased influx of natives into the Town." Molohan pointed out that servants who live-in receive "hidden emoluments," particularly "accommodation, water and fuel which account for Shs.13/60 of the total 'budget' of Shs.53/47: food and clothing are also provided to some extent in some cases." Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 20 October 1944, TNA 32744, minute 3.

officials mostly argued that setting a minimum wage was unnecessary because servants in the capital were already adequately compensated. To begin with, Governor Jackson insisted that the fact-finding committee's cost of living estimate was misleading because it pertained to a "reasonably adequate standard of living," not an "austere or minimum." "It is not therefore true that a wage of Shs.53/- would represent mere subsistence level for the general body of Africans in Dar es Salaam, and *it is even less true in the case of domestic servants*."[78] Another administrator pointed out there was "no doubt" servants' wages were quite low, but domestic service "is a job which has many other attractions for the African."[79] As Jackson explained to Stanley, servants' wages "do not by any means represent their total earning from this employment." Domestic employers, he elaborated, partially paid their servants in kind:

> Asians usually give their servants full board, while Europeans are accustomed to let their servants take all the water, fuel and soap they require. In addition (though admittedly less so now than in more prosperous times), many servants of Europeans are allowed to take tea and sugar, and receive substantial quantities of left-over food and cast-off clothing. Most Europeans provide their servants with an outer garment, worn when on duty in the house, and in many cases accommodation is also provided. Some European employers give a weekly bonus of one to three shillings, designed to assist the African servant in procuring extra quantities of fish, meat or sugar. When all these factors are taken into consideration, the apparent gap between the minimum necessary for subsistence and the wages received by domestic servants vanishes.[80]

Molohan calculated the value of these "hidden emoluments" and suggested "accommodation, water and fuel[…]account for Shs.13/60 of the total 'budget' of Shs.53/47: food and clothing are also provided to some extent in some cases." He also argued that youths and child servants did not require such a high wage because they were

[78] Confidential letter from Governor Jackson to Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley, 29 November 1944, TNA 32744/f.17. Emphasis added.
[79] 2 November 1944, TNA 32744, minute 11.
[80] Confidential letter from Governor Jackson to Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley, 29 November 1944, TNA 32744/f.17. Emphasis added.

"unmarried and live on the premises so that the figures given scarcely form a true comparison."[81] Rather than providing food and housing on top of workers' salaries, the government advocated that employers provide domestic servants these items in lieu of cash wages, which was a direct violation of the Master and Native Servants Ordinance.

Servants did receive some goods in exchange for their labor, but typically not enough to compensate for being underpaid. European employers usually did not provide servants with food, while Asian employers sometimes provided food to their servants. However, as discussed, Asian employers notoriously did not provide their workers enough food for proper nourishment. During times of economic duress, employers skimped on food remunerations even more so. Surely the tea, sugar, and salt European employers permitted their servants to take did off-set their cost of living. However, depending on the generosity of their employers, rather than being able to afford these basic items themselves, undermined servants' honor and masculinity. While the small weekly bonuses definitely helped, employers typically did not pay these consistently. The state introduced a rationing scheme for all established residents of Dar es Salaam after a drought exacerbated the already lacking food supply in the city and threatened to drive up prices in 1943, but long lines for goods and black market sales made food and textiles difficult to purchase.[82] In 1946, the President of the Women's Service League wrote the Produce Controller of Dar es Salaam to inform him that the housewives of the city were concerned "that domestic servants are experiencing great difficulty in obtaining their food supplies" because of the high cost and lack of goods available in Dar es Salaam.[83]

[81] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 20 October 1944, TNA 32744, minute 3.
[82] Brennan, *Taifa*, 103.
[83] President, WSL to The Produce Controller, DSM, 13 March 1946, TNA 32744/f.29A.

Due to the scarcity and cost of food, servants often depended on their employers' goodwill to feed them.

In addition to special remunerations, administrators stressed that the highly personal and variable nature of domestic work made a minimum wage neither "practicable or advisable," especially in a "country where labour is so entirely disorganized, and where conditions vary so greatly from area to area as they do in Tanganyika." Governor Jackson argued that domestic service "would be a particularly difficult" occupation to regulate because the hours and conditions of work were greatly individualized and, since servants worked in personal residences, it would be particularly trying to inspect and enforce labor regulations. He asserted that a minimum wage for servants "would give rise to a racial difficulty" because "the varying standards of service expected in different households" resulted in different standards of pay between European versus Asian employers:

> The difference in the scale of wages paid to their servants by Europeans and Asiatics is not only due to the fact that they latter give full issue of food and the former do not, but also to the fact that Europeans in the main make higher demands on their servants. The majority of Indians live simple lives than Europeans. Their homes are smaller, they keep different hours, and their standards of service are less exacting….Consequently, servants will accept lower wages from them than from the majority of Europeans. This difference will at once place the Wage Board in a dilemma. It would of course be impracticable to prescribe different rates of wages for service in Europeans and non-European households and the Board will be forced (unless they wished to throw hundreds of servants out of employment) to fix the minimum wage so low as to enable it to be paid by Asiatics. There would not only be of no benefit to those working for Europeans (who in proportion to their numbers employ more servants) but might well worsen their position by reason of the fact that a minimum wage often tends to become the standard wage.[84]

[84] Confidential letter from Governor Jackson to Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley, 29 November 1944, TNA 32744/f.17. Jackson's letter restated many of the objections raised to him by Labour Commissioner Molohan. Molohan argued that, without any regulations controlling the migration of Africans into the city, "any attempt to institute a minimum wage would merely result in an increased influx of natives into the Town."

As discussed, the wage scale in Tanganyika was indeed highly racialized. However, the difference in the wages paid by Europeans and Asians had less to do with "varying standards of service" and more to do with economics. Most Asians earned less money than Europeans and could not afford to pay their servants the same monthly wage. Asians held very high standards and, because they usually employed fewer servants to manage larger households, servants who worked for Asians often worked longer hours than those who worked in European homes. African servants' willingness to accept lower wages from Asians had little to do with the amount of work they performed and a lot to do with ideas of status and respectability that corresponded to the Territory's racial hierarchy. Europeans needed to pay their servants more than Asians paid to maintain their position at the top of the social ladder. Since Europeans were at the top of the hierarchy, African servants expected European employers to pay more than Asians, just as they expected Asians to pay more than African employers.[85] Although Jackson's reasoning was problematic, since Asians on average paid less than half the living wage in Dar es Salaam, he correctly suggested that setting a minimum wage could potentially put paid domestic labor out of reach for many Asians. Yet, he incorrectly argued that minimum wages would "worsen" the position of many servants who worked for Europeans.

The average wage of servants during the colonial era is extremely difficult to calculate. By comparing Issa Shivji's calculation of the average worker in Tanganyika earning Shs.40/- in 1951 to the Women's Service League of Tanganyika's pamphlet

[85] As will be discussed in Chapter 4, The African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association expressed an explicitly racialized view of labor relations and wage scales. In a document outlining the suggested salaries of domestic workers, union officers delineated a highly nuanced pay scale, breaking down wages not just by race, but also by religion and nationality. Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "Mapimo ya mishahara watu wekundu kwa watumishi wao waafrica," 3 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/A.

suggesting that employers pay their servants upward of Shs.50/- per month, Janet Bujra alleges that servants still earned wages competitive with other occupations into the 1950s. "Some specialized servants," she adds, "were able to earn double this amount."[86] Some workers surely found that they could make more working in domestic service than other jobs. There were likely even a few experienced cooks who earned the WSLT's suggested salary of Shs.100/- per month.[87] The *Tanganyika Standard* reported that in 1948 a number of houseboys demanded that newcomers to the Territory pay them Shs.100/- and even Shs.120/- per month, some of whom complied.[88] The outrage that established residents expressed over such wages, however, suggests that these large salaries were highly discouraged and quite rare even in European homes. They were hardly representative of the working conditions of the general servant population.

The WSLT explained that such houseboys were "exploiting" newcomers "who have never been to East Africa before, and have no idea of the local customs."[89] They asked administrators to better inform newcomers of local practices and the Dar es Salaam Chamber of Commerce suggested the government establish "a standard of wages for specific types of employment (of necessary on a sliding scale according to proved ability and experience)" to avoid the newcomer problem.[90] When the government refused, in 1948 the *Tanganyika Standard* published the Labour Department's estimates of the average salaries for servants in Dar es Salaam: cooks earned an average of Shs.60-70/- per month, houseboys Shs.60-65/-, dhobis Shs.50-60/-, ayahs Shs.45-55/-, shamba boys

[86] Bujra, "Men at Work," 253.
[87] Women's Service League of Tanganyika, *Notes*, 2 as cited in Bujra, "Met at Work," 251.
[88] "Wages are Higher and so are Living Costs," *Tanganyika Standard*, 2 March 1948.
[89] Secretary WSLT to Member for Education, Labour and Social Welfare, 26 August 1948, TNA 32744/f.54.
[90] "Wages Doubled, Work Halved?: Chamber Opinion on African Domestics," *Tanganyika Standard*, 1 March 1948, TNA 32744/f.37.

Shs.30-40/-. They noted that there were instances of servants employed for as little as Shs.25/- per month.[91] These figures matched up nearly perfectly with the monthly salaries suggested by the WSLT that same year.[92] However, these wage scales were suggestions and did not reflect the reality of what most servants actually earned. Only a few pages after the WSLT recommended these wages in their pamphlet, they also advised employers to hire servants with no previous training so that they could skimp on their wages.[93] Hence, servants who worked for Europeans needed the same wage protections as those who worked for Asians. A rare few may have suffered from lower wages if the government had established a minimum wage, but the competition for highly trained servants among the upper strata of colonial society likely would have prevented employers from paying these workers the same wage as a new, inexperienced cook or houseboy. Contrary to the Governor's assertion, the vast majority of servants, even those working for Europeans, would have benefitted from wage standards.

Most of the city suffered from low wages and soaring inflation during World War II, though some suffered more than others. As discussed, most government workers, who constituted the second largest employment sector following domestic servants, relied on loans to make ends meet because they did not earn enough money each month. However, setting a minimum wage and entitling government workers to daily food rations, however minimal, while simultaneously leaving servants to whims of their financially strained employers socially and financially devalued domestic service during the 1940s. In a time

[91] "Wages are Higher and so are Living Costs," *Tanganyika Standard*, 2 March 1948.
[92] The WSL suggested that experienced cooks could earn up to Shs.100/-, but on average cooks earned Shs.65-70/- per month. Houseboys should be paid about Shs.60/- per month, female ayahs Shs.50/-, and shamba boys Shs.35/-. Women's Service League of Tanganyika, *Notes*, 2 as cited in Bujra, "Met at Work," 251.
[93] Women's Service League of Tanganyika, *Notes*, 5. Cited in Bujra, "Met at Work," 250.

during which masculinity and honor were increasingly tied to the earning of cash wages, the state's stance that domestic service was not fully wage labor made African men look elsewhere for employment. Those who could find wage work in other sectors usually left domestic service for employment elsewhere. By the end of the decade, the era of respectable, skilled servants was quickly coming to a close.

Conclusion

Officials sought to increase labor and living standards in Tanganyika during the 1940s, but they allowed domestic servants to fall through the cracks. They failed to recognize domestic service as real work or to fully identify domestic servants as wage workers. Informed by numerous state-sponsored studies, administrators knew that most servants did not earn enough money to maintain the minimum standard of living in Dar es Salaam. They were also aware that the state's refusal to regulate domestic service as it managed other occupations directly contributed to unemployment and declining wages for servants in the city. By improving working conditions in other occupations and simultaneously refusing to establish or enforce regulations for domestic servants, administrators effectively established that domestic service was informal labor beyond state control and they allowed domestic employers to exploit their workers in ways the state increasingly viewed as unacceptable in other occupations. As worker consciousness grew in the 1940s, African men also viewed these working conditions as unacceptable, dishonorable, and emasculating.

As the state turned its back on domestic servants they lost power, status, and respect. Not only had domestic service become an unattractive occupation to African

men, but as more untrained workers and youths entered domestic service and experienced servants either voluntarily or forcibly left, the reputation of servants in Tanganyika declined. Despite the large number of out-of-work servants and those looking to enter the profession for the first time in Dar es Salaam, European employers continually grumbled about the servant shortage in the city. The problem was not that there were not enough servants available, but rather that there was a "shortage of efficient domestic servants" and that "the standard of work [had] degenerated."[94] Employers complained that servants demanded to be paid twice as much as they did before World War II, but that the quality of the work they provided did not increase along with the cost of labor. The quality of the work performed by youths or men who were new to the occupation was undoubtedly poor in comparison to that completed by those who had been trained in domestic service since they were youths themselves. Servants probably lacked the motivation to improve the quality of their work since they earned miniscule wages in exchange for long days. In addition to the quality of the actual labor, the deference learned and practiced by seasoned servants was not easy for new workers to pick up. As domestic service became a less profitable and respectable occupation, men felt less inclined to endure the daily humiliations encountered on the job. The servant problem was circular: low wages attracted inexperienced servants, and inexperienced servants attracted low wages.

After the WWII, European employers and state officials noticed a distinct change in the attitudes of their servants. The Secretary of the WSLT complained that domestic servants were trying to exploit the ignorance of newcomers by demanding higher wages and that "the African [was] going through a transitional period." Noticing that servants

[94] "Wages Doubled, Work Halved? Chamber Opinion on African Domestics," *Tanganyika Standard*, 1 March 1948, TNA 32744/f.39. Mrs. Morison, President of the Women's Service League, 6 September 1949, TNA 32744/f.55.

had become more demanding and less willing to quietly follow orders, she urged that "an understanding with the European should be maintained if at all possible."[95] In 1948, a Labour Officer in Dar es Salaam observed that "the present day attitude of the local domestic servants…has changed considerably in the post war years." While the women of the household had traditionally handled the hiring and managing of the domestic staff, the Labour Officer suggested to the Labour Commissioner that in the post-war years "European male supervision is essential to deal firmly with applicants for [domestic] employment."[96] Worker consciousness in Dar es Salaam was growing and, as illustrated in the next chapter, domestic workers were at the forefront of the Tanganyikan labor movement. Servants wanted better wages and labor protections equal to those of other workers, as well as to be seen and treated as part of the working class.

[95] Secretary WSLT to Member for Education, Labour and Social Welfare, 26 August 1948, TNA32744/f.54.
[96] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary,15 September 1948, TNA32744/f.55.

Chapter Four

The African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association

Domestic service transformed during the 1940s, but domestic workers did not let it go down without a fight. At the start of the decade a domestic servants association began to take shape in the capital. By 1943, domestic servants in Dar es Salaam had begun an active campaign to register their association as the first African trade union in Tanganyika. The Registrar of Trade Unions officially registered The African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association according to The Trade Unions Ordinance of 1932 on 28 August 1945.[1] Not only were domestic workers uniting in the capital, they were making demands for better working conditions and equal treatment to other workers throughout Tanganyika. Within three years the union boasted fifty-two branches throughout the Territory.[2] Officials dismissed the union's demands to establish a minimum wage, standardize working conditions, and run their own employment registry as the irrational demands of a small sector of power hungry labor agitators who wanted to earn more money in exchange for less work. As this chapter illustrates, however, the union sought to define the rights and responsibilities of domestic servants and to preserve domestic service as a respectable, skilled occupation as it became socially and financially devalued.

This chapter examines the formation of The African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association in Tanganyika and explores how the union tried to work with and around the state to fight the degradation of domestic service. Through analyzing the

[1] Certificate of Registration, 28 August 1945, ACC460 99/1/A/f.5.
[2] Lowrenzi [sic] Mikongoti, "Brief History of the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, Dar es Salaam," 11 September 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.112.

demands and complaints of the ACWHSA, this chapter further explores the various ways in which servants' notions of masculinity, honor, and modernity became tightly entangled with formal, skilled, wage labor in the post-war era. The central branch of the ACWHSA in Dar es Salaam was relatively small, especially compared to the number of servants in the capital, but vocal. It sent numerous petitions and correspondences to state officials outlining its requests. During the early years of its existence, the union feverishly sought to achieve three primary goals: minimum wages for domestic servants, labor regulations and rights equal to those of other permanent wage laborers, and a domestic servants registry set up and run autonomously by the ACWHSA in Dar es Salaam. Employers and administrators heard these demands, but they failed to consider the reasons behind them. They worried unionists thought "loosely in terms of strikes, pickets, minimum wages, shorter hours and vastly improved terms of service." They also believed that union officials principally sought to line their own pockets by appropriating union funds.[3] Servants certainly did want to earn more money and union officials surely had personal motivations for forming the union. Yet, the objectives of the union went beyond material gains.

Masculinity became increasingly entangled with wage labor during the 1940s. As in other parts of Africa, the successful creation and maintenance of an independent household was the foundation of adult, male identity in Tanganyika. During the colonial era, scholars have shown, cash became central to a man's ability to establish his own household, especially in urban areas—men required cash to pay the bridewealth that enabled them to obtain a wife and start a family, and they needed cash to provide food

[3] Confidential letter from District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 12 September 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.21.

and clothes for their wife (and in many cases wives) and children.[4] As domestic service became a less profitable and financially secure occupation for men, it threatened their ability to provide for their households. Not only did men have difficulty providing food and housing, they could not afford the schooling for their children that was becoming increasingly important to the making of successful, modern Tanganyikans. Domestic service emasculated men and undermined their status, as well as the status of their family, within the community. The ACWHSA fought feverishly for better wages, but wages carried cultural meaning that helped to define these men as men as well as senior members of their families and communities.

Money was deeply tied to status and masculinity, but the connection between status, masculinity, and wage labor involved more than money—it also involved skill and time. As part of the larger colonial project, the state sought "to induce African workers to adapt to the work rhythms of industrial capitalism: to the idea that work should be steady and regular and carefully controlled."[5] The adoption of European "clock time" would not only regularize and stabilize the African working class, it was the epitome of modernity and was a defining feature of formal labor.[6] The state fought fiercely with certain groups of casual laborers, particularly dock workers, who resisted European attempts to "colonize time."[7] Servants, on the other hand, embraced these capitalist work rhythms.

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[4] Men were increasingly considered the breadwinners. Lisa Lindsay, "'No Need…to Think of Home'? Masculinity and Domestic Life on the Nigerian Railway, c.1940-1961," *The Journal of African History*.
[5] Cooper, "Colonizing Time," 209.
[6] For the evolution of clock time and the difference between capitalist "clock time" and pre-caitalist "task time," see E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present* 38 (1967): 56-97.
[7] See Cooper, "Colonizing Time" and Frederick Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). For an example of other workers who embraced regularized work because the steady pay buttressed their masculinity and status, see Lisa Lindsay's study of railway workers in colonial Nigeria. Lindsay, "'No Need."

They used these ideas to appeal for better working conditions, and they married these work rhythms to their own conceptions of masculinity and modernity. Servants were not slaves, they were workers. They wanted employers and state officials to recognize that they owned their own time and sold it to their employers for cash wages. Employers, they argued, were not entitled to unlimited access to their servants' time and labor. If they wanted their servants to work longer hours and extra days, they needed to pay for it. Employers, as well as workers, were subject to the rules of time discipline. The ACWHSA appealed to the state to enforce set working hours and to force employers to pay domestic servants for overtime work not only too make more money, but also to bolster their status and gain respect.

The letters, petitions, and notes from union meetings demonstrate a longing for labor standards and respect, but also reveal the union's complete lack of faith in the state's desire to protect domestic servants. The ACWHSA continuously campaigned for the state to empower the union to regulate the employment of servants by allowing it to run an employment registry in the capital. The registry would have enabled the union to monitor the hiring and treatment of servants in Dar es Salaam—to ensure that employers paid their servants fair wages, paid them overtime, gave them leave time, and granted them the other benefits entitled to permanent wage laborers through Tanganyika's labor legislation. To the frustration of the ACWHSA and Saleh Fundi, the union's President, the government did not support their proposals or aid the union in any way. As the union became more irate and attempted to circumvent the authority of the state, administrators' aggravation with the union intensified. On 12 June 1949 the Labour Department revoked the union's registration. However, the union refused to fade away.

The Emergence of the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association

The African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association formed amidst the chaos of wartime Dar es Salaam and the early, disorganized moments of Tanganyika's labor movement. The Territory's labor movement peaked in the 1950s, but workers began formally and informally organizing throughout Tanganyika decades earlier. Workers in Dar es Salaam began organizing staff associations as early as 1922, when civil servants formed the Tanganyika Territory African Civil Services Association under the leadership of Martin Kayamba. After a lull in the 1930s, the association resumed activity in 1944 as the renamed Tanganyika African Government Servants Association. By October of that year, the TAGSA claimed 1,820 members in the Territory's urban centers of Tanga, Mwanza, Arusha, and Dar es Salaam. The Railway African Association formed as early as 1929 and claimed around 2,000 members by the end of World War II. Despite their strong numbers and activities, these associations never attained union status. Tanganyika's small, but strong, Asian population formed the Territory's first official trade unions in the 1930s. The Union of Shop Assistants registered in 1933, but fell apart by 1940. The Asiatic Labour Union, which was mostly composed of Sikh carpenters, formed in 1937 and organized Dar es Salaam's first significant labor strike later that year to demand higher wages.[8]

Although Tanganyika had no official African unions until 1945, the first substantial African labor strikes in the Territory occurred in the ports of Tanga and Dar es Salaam in 1939. On 17 July casual dockworkers in Dar es Salaam stopped work to demand higher wages, compensation for sickness and accidents equivalent to those of permanent workers, and better treatment on the job. However, after employers threatened

[8] Iliffe, *Modern History*, 346 and 96-397; Shivji, *Working Class*, 157-162.

to replace them, workers showed little solidarity and began returning to work on the second day of the strike. The spokesman of the strike—who remains unknown—officially called it off on the fifth day. The strike did not result in any substantial gains. A few months later in Tanga, dockworkers refused to work until their employers agreed to increase their wages. The next day, the dockworkers united with other African workers in Tanga to demand wages equal to those being paid to workers in Dar es Salaam, as well as sick pay, compensation for injuries, and leave time. When the state helped employers hire blackleg labor to replace the strikers, some of the strikers rioted, resulting in thirty-two arrests. The next day the state stepped up its police presence in the township in anticipation of escalated tensions. They fired into a crowd of some 1,500 Africans who had refused orders to disperse, killing one. The day after the incident nearly fifty percent of workers had returned to work.[9]

The ACWHSA was at the fore of the Territory's labor movement. Domestic servants first began organizing in Dodoma, a small town in central Tanganyika. In 1939 they came together to form *Chama cha Wapishi na Maboi*, "on account of the distress and difficulties which frequently fall on us who work as cooks and servants in our duty."[10] A few years later, the organization spread to Dar es Salaam. ACWHSA records suggest that the association formed in 1943, but there are indications that domestic workers began organizing in the capital as early as 1941.[11] The ACWHSA met

[9] Iliffe, *Modern History*, 399-401 and Shivji, *Working Cass*, 166-169.
[10] Shabani Abdallah and others to AA Dodoma, 14 August 1939, TNA 46/A/6/3/I. Cited in Iliffe, *Modern History*, 397. I was unable to locate this file myself in the TNA. As of December 2011, this file was lost. Dodoma township was the main urban center in central Tanganyika, but in comparison to Dar es Salaam is was rather small. In 1934 the town had only 3,000 inhabitants and grew to 9,144 inhabitants in 1948. Clement Gillman, "A Population Map of Tanganyika Territory," *Geographical Review* 26 (1936): 370; A.M. Hayuma, "Dodoma: The Planning and Building o the New Capital City of Tanzania," *HABITAT INTL* 5 (1981): 655.
[11] Iliffe, *Modern History*, 397.

periodically in Kariakoo, the city's African quarter, to discuss the plight of domestic workers and to strategize how to improve the living and working conditions of domestic workers in Dar es Salaam.

Saleh bin Fundi, a Wahehe man around 45 years old at the time of the union's registration in 1945, presided over these meetings and later became the association's first president.[12] John Iliffe describes Fundi as "Tanganyika's first African Labour leader" and suggests that he "was almost certainly (and perhaps still was) the capital's Arinoti leader."[13] Arinoti was the most prominent *beni* band in Dar es Salaam. Although the importance of *beni* in the capital had faded during the 1930s, Fundi was likely quite well known among Africans within the city because of his position as the leader of a famous *beni* band. His position within Arinoti would also have put him in close contact with many members of Tanganyika's nationalist elite, including Zibe Kadasi, an officer in Arinoti and founding member of the African Association, and Ramadhani Ali, founding member of Arinoti and first Vice President of the African Association. Fundi likely came into contact with Kliest Sykes, Secretary of the first executive committee of the Tanganyika African Association in 1929, who was also heavily involved in Dar es Salaam *beni*. Fundi's position and social circle would have bolstered his status as a labor organizer and attracted the curiosity, if not the attention, of many workers in the city.[14] In addition to Fundi, Paul Mguvumali served as Vice President, Salemani Pembe as

[12] In 1953 the Superintendent of Police estimated Saleh Fundi to be about 53 years old. Confidential letter from Superintendent of Police, Special Branch to Sir John Lamb, Political Liaison Officer, 21 October 1953, 37681/5/25/f.12.
[13] Iliffe, *Modern History*, 397.
[14] Terrance Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa, 1890-1970: The Beni Ngoma* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 60 and 90-98; For information on Arinoti and beni in Dar es Salaam see Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002).

Treasurer, and Lorenzi Mikongoti as Secretary of the ACWHSA. While little is known about Fundi, unfortunately even less is known about the lives of other union officers.

Although it lacked official registration, throughout the mid-to-late 1940s the ACWHSA met publically every few weeks and frequently corresponded with government officials. The state's concern with the ACWHSA grew as the association became more vocal towards the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945. Hence, the Intelligence and Security Bureau began surveilling association meetings and members as early as January 1945. Since the British reserved the Special Branches of the Intelligence and Security Bureau to investigate matters that potentially jeopardized the public order and security of their colonies, the fact that they were surveilling the ACWHSA indicates that the state initially took the association quite seriously.[15] The Intelligence and Security Director informed the Labour Commissioner "there is nothing at present to suggest that the activities of this type of association are likely to lead to harmful results," but the Labour Department remained interested and concerned enough to order the Bureau to continue to closely monitor the ACWHSA's activities.

Administrators kept a close eye on the ACWHSA, but paid little attention to numerous requests it made before registering as a trade union. The association captured the state's attention in March 1945 when Seleman Pembe formally submitted the "Supplication of the Servants to their Masters" to the Chief Secretary. The Supplication contained nineteen demands that the union found to be central to improving the condition of servants in Tanganyika. Not knowing what to do with the demands, the Chief Secretary contacted the Labour Commissioner for advice on how to interact with the

[15] For more information on the Intelligence and Security Bureau in Africa see Philip Murphy, "Intelligence and Decolonization: The Life and Death of the Federal Intelligence and Security Bureau, 1954–63," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29 (2001): 101–130.

ACWHSA and respond to their appeals. Unsure of what to do himself, Labour Commissioner Molohan sought advice from Major Orde-Brown, the former Labour Commissioner of Tanganyika who remained a labor adviser to the colonies. After consulting with Orde-Brown, Molohan informed the Chief Secretary "this Association is in fact a Trade Union as defined in section 3 of Ord.30/1941. Such being the case the Association is required to register itself."[16] Molohan then instructed the Chief Secretary to direct local Labour Officers or the District Commissioner to consult with the ACWHSA to "point out their responsibilities under the Trade Union Ordinance" and "to tell them that their organization is an unofficial trade union and that they will be required to comply with the provisions of that ordinance."[17] Tanganyika, like other colonial states, required unions to register because it allowed administrators to better monitor labor agitators who posed possible threats to state power. Registration also enabled the state to cancel, disband, and outlaw threatening and disorderly unions. In compliance with Trade Union Ordinance of 1932, the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association officially registered as a trade union one month later, on 28 September 1945, and established its official residence at No.88 Stanley Street in Kariakoo, Dar es Salaam.[18]

Administrators were astonished that domestic servants effectively organized a union, much less the first African trade union in the Territory. Since it was Tanganyika's first African union, they were also confused about how to handle the ACWHSA and anxious that it would provoke disorder. They had valid concerns that the servants union

[16] Orde-Brown was then serving as a Labour Adviser. Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 10 April 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.10.
[17] Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 17 July 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.11.
[18] Certificate of Registration, 28 August 1945, ACC460 99/1/A/f.5.

would spark the burgeoning labor movement in Tanganyika, which was already well underway elsewhere on the continent. On 12 September 1945 the District Commissioner of Dar es Salaam wrote the Provincial Commissioner a confidential letter to inform him of the union's registration. He reported that "this recent development was a surprise," and he expressed concern that union leaders had their own, personal agendas for forming the ACWHSA and that they would convince servants to strike for better wages and working conditions.[19] The DC conveyed that the Liwali of Dar es Salaam, the town's highest "native" official, was also apprehensive of the new union. The DC suggested that the Liwali:

> views this latest move with grave misgivings; he considers that the Association is being led by a small group of agitators with ulterior motives and that misconceptions regarding the rights, powers, and privileges of Trade Unions will lead to serious unrest among domestic servants, which may well spread to dock labour and other trades.

The Liwali, a wealthy Arab, had good reason to be concerned about the union since he likely employed multiple servants of his own.[20] The DC continued:

> The Liwali's opinion of the Association may be unjust and his fears groundless – though they seem reasonable enough to me. Be that as it may, there is an obvious risk of some unrest due to misunderstandings and misconceptions. The word "Trade Union" has a magic ring to the unsophisticated, who are apt to overlook its limitations and responsibilities and think loosely in terms of strikes, pickets, minimum wages, shorter hours and vastly improved terms of service. It is highly desirable that these misunderstandings and misconceptions should be removed, so far as possible in the early stages before they become widely accepted.[21]

"Trade union" may indeed have had a magic ring to it, but most Africans were quite confused about its meaning and quite apprehensive about joining the union. Since

[19] Confidential letter from District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 12 September 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.21.
[20] For more on the Liwali and racial tension in Dar es Salaam see Brennan, *Taifa*, 67-68.
[21] Confidential letter from District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 12 September 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.21.

most domestic servants were men, the overwhelming majority of members and those who attended ACWHSA meetings were men. However, a few African women did attend union meetings, presumably those who worked as *ayahs*. Women's participation in ACWHSA was quite limited, but consistent.[22] Several hundred Africans initially attended ACWHSA meetings in the capital, but worker interest in the Dar es Salaam ACWHSA dwindled after it officially registered as a trade union. Union officers claimed to have 272 members in 1943, and the Intelligence and Security Bureau reported 200-300 attendees at multiple meetings held at the beginning of 1945. However, towards the end of the year the Intelligence and Security Bureau reported meetings of only fifty to sixty members. In the union's first annual report to the Registrar of Trade Unions in January 1946, Fundi and Mikongoti reported that "the delay in registration of the Association caused a breakdown and today we only have sixty strong members in Dar es Salaam who are fighting tooth and nail to establish this Association and hope we shall get more members not in the too distant future."[23] Unfortunately, official membership decreased the following year. The membership and dues list the union submitted to the Registrar contained only fifty-one names in March 1946.[24] While it is likely that other workers were involved in the union, official union membership remained extremely low, especially in comparison to the number of servants living and working in the city.[25]

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[22] The Intelligence Officer reported that eight ayahs were present at a meeting held on February 21, 1945. He also noted that they "did not seem interested" in the matters being addressed. Intelligence and Security Bureau, "Meeting of the Native Domestic Servants at Mbuyuni wa Siba Mwene, Wednesday the 21st February 1945," 22 February 1945, ACC460 99/I/f.7.

[23] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "Report No.1 of The African Cooks, Washermen and House-Servants Association," 28 January 1946, ACC460 99/1/A/f.13.

[24] Report to the Registrar of Trade Unions, 26 March 1946, ACC460 99/1/I/f.52.

[25] In 1942 the Labour Department estimated 7,000 domestic servants working in Dar es Salaam, 6,000 adults and 1,000 children. Molohan, 1942 Labour Office Report DSM, TNA 61/100/A/II/f.83 and 95. Cited in Brennan, *Taifa*, 98.

There are a number of possible reasons for the low union membership. To begin with, the ACWHSA was Dar es Salaam's first African trade union. Although the capital had a lively associational life, most urban residents were unaware of the functions of a union, the consequences and benefits of joining one, or its connection to the state. The ACWHSA formed during a period of great transition in African labor history. During this era, Africans throughout the continent began co-opting the universal labor ideology of colonial powers and saw unionization as the path to improved living and working conditions. Yet many Africans remained unconvinced. At a meeting in October 1945, Fundi announced "he expected difficulties owing to the lack of understanding amongst the Africans, and said, that even if the present generation were sceptical and suspicious regarding the bona fides of the trade union, their children would benefit."[26] Both Fundi and Mikongoti attributed the ongoing membership problem to the African population's ignorance of the principles and importance of trade unionism, as well as the general lack of education in Tanganyika:

> If Africans would understand the importance of this Association just as we understand the mosque of Mohammad or as we understand the Holy Church, of if we should understand like how white people understand it, we would enjoy and depend on the union. Illiteracy is a bad thing, because we do not understand important things.[27]

The leadership committee saw itself as the way forward, but most servants in Dar es Salaam were not yet ready to unionize.

In addition to being unfamiliar with the fundamentals of trade unionism, workers worried the union was merely a moneymaking scam. Union membership in Dar es

[26] Report from Intelligence and Security Bureau to Labour Commissioner, "African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Union," 3 October 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.29A.
[27] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "Reports Nos. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7," 13 January 1948, ACC460 99/1/A/f.14c.

Salaam was expensive. The Dar es Salaam ACWHSA initially required members to pay a membership fee of Shs.3/- per month, an exceptional sum when most servants in the city earned less than Shs.20/- per month. Fundi attempted to assuage the fears of potential members by "carefully explain[ing] that he was a wealthy man and would not run away with their money."[28] Yet, workers understandably hesitated to turn over a significant percentage of their monthly earnings, especially when they did not know how the union would use their money.

An intelligence officer gathering information about the association overheard men leaving a meeting held on 21 October 1945 remarking: "I am not a fool" and "I am not going to let myself be cheated." They were apparently upset about Fundi's suggestion that that union use its funds for some sort of tea party.[29] It is possible that he proposed using union funds to supply tea at union meetings, as it was occasionally provided at meetings held thereafter. However, he had previously proposed using union funds to finance community festivities. In February 1945, for instance, he suggested that servants working for European employers donate Shs.5/- and those who worked for Asian employers donate Shs.2/- to pay for a Maulidi festival in honor of the prophet Mohammed's birth later that year.[30] Such disagreements over the proper use of union funds illustrate a tension among servants about the purpose of the union. The festival would have fostered unity and made the union more visible within the community. It also

[28] Report from Intelligence and Security Bureau to Labour Commissioner, "African Cooks, Washermen and House Sevants Union," 3 October 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.29A.
[29] Report from the Intelligence and Security Bureau, "African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Union," 24 October 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.32A.
[30] Intelligence and Security Bureau, "Meeting of the Native Domestic Servants at Mbuyuni wa Siba Mwene, Wednesday the 21st February 1945," 22 February 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.7.

would have displayed the union's power. Some, however, thought tea and festivals were excessive and beyond the scope of a trade union.

Employers and administrators capitalized on servants' confusion and fears to discourage them from joining the ACWHSA. In addition to worrying about unrest in the capital, they fret about losing control over the Africans who worked in their own homes. Employers complained to Labour Officers "that since this Association has started functioning, some of their domestic staff have become dissatisfied and continually ask for higher wages and different conditions. i.e. Less work, accommodation etc, etc."[31] State officials acknowledged that the "attitude" of domestic servants in the city "changed considerably in the post war years"; they were less complacent and more demanding.[32] Hence, employers and administrators discouraged and sometimes intimidated servants from joining the union. Fundi continually complained "Government officials are not in favour of this Association in that they tell their house servants that the Association in not recognised by the Government. These words have greatly annoyed the President and members of the Association."[33] He pleaded with the state to "warn Government Officers to stop spreading bad propaganda to their servants." Fundi claimed:

> The Labour Commissioner, District Commissioner, the Bwanas of the companies and all the memsahibs do not like this Association, they all have the same idea…the majority of these Bwanas tell their servants that "you are foolish, you are losing your money for nothing; it is a useless Association, it is not recognized here; the better organization is that of the Labour Commissioner." With these words from the Bwanas, the servants become embittered, and say that "it is true that the Association is not recognized and that it why the Bwanas say it is useless."[34]

[31] Confidential letter from Labour Officer, Lindi to Labour Officer, Dar es Salaam, 3 March 1949, ACC460 9/1/I/f.146;
[32] Chief Secretary to Labour Commissioner, 1 September 1948, TNA 32744/f.55.
[33] Saleh Fundi, "Letter No.2," 15 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/I/f.62 and ACC460 99/1/A.
[34] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti to the Registrar General, 15 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/I/f.65-66.

Servants who worked for Europeans as well as Asians likely feared reprisal from their employers, especially employers who explicitly expressed disapproval of the union. Jeopardizing a secure job to join a union that was in its infancy, with no proven record of unity or success, was not an appealing prospect. Servants probably also worried about the possibility of the union exposing them to state authorities. In addition to submitting their financial records, the Trade Union Ordinance required unions to submit membership lists to the Registrar every year. The state also kept tabs on union members through its Intelligence and Security Bureau. Although Tanganyika did not have a history of victimizing union leaders or members outside of protests and strikes, the state had arrested numerous agitators in Dar es Salaam and Tanga. The possibility of attracting the attention of the state by joining a union likely frightened a number of potential members.

In addition to their naïveté and fears, most servants simply could not afford to pay subscription fees. At the beginning of 1946, only six of the fifty-one members listed by the union secretary had paid their fees every month. Not even all of the ACWHSA officers paid every month.[35] In an attempt to attract more members, in March 1946 the association passed a resolution to reduce the membership fees from Shs.3/- per month to Shs.1/- per month or Shs.12/- per year.[36] The following year, it further revised its rules to ensure that office holders would pay their fees. As of January 1947, the failure of an office bearer to pay his fees resulted in their dismissal from office.[37] Thereafter, membership increased; the union reported one hundred forty-six members in 1947.[38] However, it continued to have difficulty getting members to pay their dues every month.

[35] Report to the Registrar of Trade Unions, 26 March 1946, ACC460 99/1/I/f.52.
[36] Letter from Saleh Fundi to Registrar of Trade Unions, 26 March 1946, ACC460 99/1/I/f.52.
[37] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "The African Cooks, Washermen and House-Servants Association, Report," 15 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/A and ACC460 99/1/I/f.61.
[38] Annual Report of the Labour Department 1947, CO736/28.

Its 1948 report listed two hundred eighty-seven members, but indicated that only twenty-seven of those listed had fully paid their subscription fees.[39] While the ACWHSA considered them to be members, the state did not.[40]

Shortly after the ACWHSA officially registered in Dar es Salaam, other domestic servants associations appeared throughout Tanganyika. Initially, the Dar es Salaam association had fewer members than several of its other branches. In 1946 the Morogoro branch reported 104 members, Dodoma 140, Iringa 100, Mbeya 104, and Kigoma 87.[41] Some local associations may have initially begun independently of the official union in the capital, but most were offshoots of the Dar es Salaam ACWHSA. The nature of the relationships between the Dar es Salaam union and the local associations remains unclear, but it is apparent that the associations throughout Tanganyika communicated with one another. In fact, likely due to migrant workers who frequently travelled between Dar es Salaam and rural areas, association branches were better informed about each other's activities than some state administrators. For example, in January 1946 the Office of Police in Kigoma, the westernmost region of Tanganyika, contacted the Director of Intelligence and Security in Dar es Salaam to inform him that a group of domestic workers in Mwanga, a very small village in the region, had formed an association and threatened to strike if employers did not increase their wages. The Kigoma office posited that "such Associations are in existence in all the big centers of the Territory and are

[39] S. Hamilton for Labour Commissioner to African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, 12 April 1949, ACC460 99/1/I/f.150.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Letter from Saleh Fundi to Registrar of Trade Unions, 18 February 1946, ACC460 99/1/I/f.49.

linked together."[42] The Director of Intelligence and Security, of course, already knew this because his Bureau had been surveilling the ACWHSA for over a year.

Fearing unrest, administrators sought to prevent local associations from unionizing or uniting with the Dar es Salaam ACWHSA. One week before the ACWHSA registered in September 1945, forty member of the Domestic Servants Association in Mbeya met with their local District Commissioner to discuss the possibility of unionization. They likely went to their local DC after receiving information of pending unionization in Dar es Salaam. Unaware of the developments in the capital, the DC informed those who came to his office that there were no registered trade unions in Tanganyika and that domestic servants "had not reached a sufficient standard of education to enable them to run their association properly." He advised them to refrain from registering as a union, suggesting they remain an association; he also insinuated that if they remained an association they would be able to erect the clubhouse they had proposed to build, but that if they attempted to register as a union they would run into trouble doing so. Not surprisingly, the servants left this meeting having abandoned the idea unionizing.[43] After receiving word from the Labour Commissioner in Dar es Salaam that the ACWHSA had officially unionized, the Mbeya DC held another meeting with the local servants association to reinforce his suggestion that they refrain from unionizing or joining the Dar es Salaam branch. He then informed them that they would each need to pay Shs.3/- per month to join the ACWHSA and that they would not receive any benefits for their subscription. Rather than spending their money on joining the union, he suggested they use their money to build themselves a clubhouse and to run their own

[42] Letter from Officer of Police, Kigoma to Director of Intelligence and Security, Dar es Salaam, "House-Boys Association," 3 January 1946, ACC460 99/1/I/f.42.
[43] PTO, "Trade Unions and Association," ACC460 99/1/I/f.33.

local association. A member of the Mbeya association then proposed their branch should not take any steps towards joining to Dar es Salaam association until they had a discussion with the Dar es Salaam leaders, and he proposed sending members to talk with them in Dar es Salaam. The DC interfered again and suggested that the Dar es Salaam association should incur the expenses and should therefore send representatives to Mbeya. After some consideration, the servants agreed with the DC's suggestion and they do not appear to have pursued a connection with the ACWHSA.[44]

Money, more than ideals, appears to have been the greatest site of disagreement between the branches and the central ACWHSA. In addition to the Mbeya branch, the Morogoro servants association, which had over one hundred members, resisted becoming an official branch of the Dar es Salaam union because it was not in their financial interest to do so. The Morogoro association, like other branches, had its own leadership committee and charged a subscription of Shs.1/- per month. By February 1946, Morogoro had Shs.209/- on deposit. The Dar es Salaam association requested that the Morogoro branch pay them Shs.100/- as an entrance fee to join the union, but reportedly did not inform Morogoro or the other branches how they would use or distribute these entrance fees. Hence, members of the local branch decided that they wanted to register as a separate union and keep their funds. The following year, the Morogoro African Personal Servants Association successfully registered as an independent trade union.[45]

Despite resistance in some regions, by September 1948 the Dar es Salaam ACWHSA boasted fifty-two branches in Tanganyika, with over one thousand total

[44] PTO, "Trade Unions and Association," ACC460 99/1/I/f.33.
[45] LO, Morogoro to Labour Commissioner, "African Personal Servants Association," 22 February 1946, ACC460 99/1/I/f.50; Annual Report of the Labour Department 1947, CO736/28.

members.[46] Administrators in Dar es Salaam and other parts of the Territory were extremely confused about the status of local servants associations; they did not known if they were all separate associations, which would require them to register separately, or if they were official branches of the Dar es Salaam ACWHSA.[47] The actual relationship between the Dar es Salaam ACWHSA and most local branches is indeterminate; some branches informed their local administrators that they were autonomous from the Dar es Salaam association, but the union insisted that all local branches were part of and paying dues to the central union. [48] In October 1946, Saleh Fundi went on a tour of all the up country branches. He wanted to solidify Dar es Salaam's relationship with the other branches, make sure they were all properly registered with their local bomas as official branches of the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, and ensure that they sent their required annual reports or records to the Registrar of Trade Unions.[49]

Time, Money, and Masculinity

Since its inception, the ACWHSA strove to unify domestic workers in Dar es Salaam and to create a network for servants throughout Tanganyika. In the union's original charter, the association asserted that its main objective was:

[46] Mbeya, Tukuyu, Chunya, Iringa, Njombe, Dodoma, Mpwapwa, Singida, Kondo-Irangi, Dar es Salaam, Kilosa, Morogoro, Utete, Rufiji, Muhoro, Mafia, Bagamoyo, Mahenge, Kisarawe, Mwanza, Bukoba, Shinyanga, Musoma, Nguda, Maswa, Arusha, Moshi, Mbula, Liliando, Ndali, Lud[illegible], Tanga, Lushoto, Handeni, Korogwe, Pangani, Lindi, Mikindani, Liwale, Kilwa, [illegible], [illegible], Tundulu, Songea, Tabora, Kigoma, Kibondo, [illegible], [illegible], Sumbawanga, Ufipa, and [illegible]. Lowrenzi Mikongoti, "Brief History of the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, Dar es Salaam," 11 September 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.112.

[47] This issue became especially problematic when the Registrar eventually cancelled the registration of the ACWHSA – the legal status of domestic servants associations throughout the Territory was blurry and contested.

[48] Report 9 February 1946, ACC460 99/1/I/f.46.

[49] Letter from Lowrensi Mikongoti to Registrar of Trade Unions, 15 October 1946, ACC460 99/1/I/f.55.

> to provide a cord for binding all workers of this group together, and enable them to regulate their affairs and help each other in word and deed, and in consultation with Government fix a special status of pay for its members who are employed, and make rules affecting employer and employee to enable them [to] live in harmony.[50]

Over the years, the unity of workers remained central to its objectives. In September 1948, Mikongoti listed the aims of the association in the "Brief History of the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, Dar es Salaam." "The aims of this Society," he began, "are to form a brotherhood among all those Africans working in the capacity of Cooks, Washermen and House Servants."[51] The union did not have its own office until 1947, when it established itself at No.87 New Street.[52] For years, union leaders pled with government officials to help them find a suitable space because "the shortage of accommodation in Dar es Salaam has deprived us of the possibilities of lodging a house for this Association." Not only would a residence afford them a sense of officialdom and provide them a space to run a registry, the union also proposed to establish a shop, a hotel, and to create a communal farm on the property.[53] Workers coming to the city could stay in the hotel while they searched for work. It would provide the union with additional funds while simultaneously serving as a place for workers to network. Union leadership wanted servants to work together to achieve better working conditions, but also to create a supportive, urban community of workers who helped one another, rather than fought one another, to find work.

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[50] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "The Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association," ACC460 99/1/I/f.19C-D.
[51] Lowrenzi [sic] Mikongoti, "Brief History of the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, Dar es Salaam," 11 September 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.112.
[52] Letter from Saleh Fundi to Registrar General, 15 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/I/f.66.
[53] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "Report No.1 of The African Cooks, Washermen and House-Servants Association," 28 January 1946, ACC460 99/1/A/f.13.

While the ACWHSA sought to facilitate unity among workers, the union's demands largely consisted of stipulations that would maximize the financial and social rewards of domestic work. In March 1945, union officials submitted a large list of requests to the Chief Secretary entitled the "Supplication of the Servants to their Masters." The ACWHSA appealed:

1. Any master has to see that his servant gets sufficient food and clothing with [a] good sleeping place. When a master parts with his servant in a good way without quarrel, the master has to pay his servant sufficient gratuity for his remaining advanced years.
2. If they have not parted in good condition, but if the servant has right to get gratuity, his master has to pay him accordingly.
3. The master has to take care and look after his servants when on journeys and look after him also in sickness and other difficulties, but the master will not stand for his servant, if the servant has been caught in theft.
4. The servant must take care and look after his master as the Government protects him.
5. The master ought to give sufficient wages to his servant to enable him to cover house expenses and with a reserve balance.
6. The master ought to fix special hours for work and recreation hours for his servant.
7. The master ought to pay over-time for any additional hours worked by his servant after the usual fixed working hours.
8. There must be love between master and servant.
9. The master ought to give full pay to his servant for all the days his servant may be admitted in the hospital when sick.
10. The master ought to give leave and passage together with full pay to his servant for the month he will allow him to stay to his home.
11. The master ought to be patient and listen to his servant's financial difficulties with a view to lending him any agreed amount with an agreed fixed time for repayment.
12. This Association asks from Government to be entrusted with the looking after all the servants of Europeans and Asiatics and that their taxes will be paid to the Government through this Association.
13. We ask Government to allow us to use the Discharged Prisoners house situated in Nyasa Street, Dar es Salaam for our offices.
14. If Government be good enough, we ask our Government to build us a house for our offices at "Tuwa Tugawe-Mbuyu was Simba Mwene", where we are meeting always, or if Government cannot build us a house there, we ask permission to build ourselves a house at the above-mentioned place.

15. In this house we want a Club, shop and rooms for guests who come to Dar es Salaam with their masters, they will stay in this house and eat there until they leave Dar es Salaam.
16. On the day a servant leaves Dar es Salaam, his master will be presented with a bill for the expenditure incurred by his servant in the Association house for the says he stayed there.
17. We shall run this Association ourselves locally and the Labour Officer will direct us.
18. Every master ought to know that he will get a servant from this Association in the same rule and manner as that former one of the Women Service League.
19. A master ought to assign duties to his servants according to their degrees and not mix them up. Every servant must do his job for which he was engaged.[54]

As discussed in the previous chapter, during the 1940s servants were having an increasingly difficult time stretching their monthly earnings to cover the rising cost of living in the city. The union continually asserted the need for the state to establish sufficient minimum wages. They appealed to the state not only as workers who wanted better compensation for their time and labor, but as fathers, sons, and husbands who required more money to fulfill their familial obligations and provide a better future for their children. They wanted their children to have better lives than they lived, but their work was putting their children at a disadvantage. In a petition to the Colonial Secretary in London, Fundi pled, "We are poor Africans, we cannot educate our children with money, our children have to work for Europeans and Indians to get money for their help."[55] In another appeal, union officials cried:

> We fathers of our children we have no means at all to feed our fathers and our children and our wives, and we can not afford to send our children to high educations, as our [illegible] is like a daily wage, so our sons and daughters are working to support themselves working for Europeans and Indians, and the reason is because we elders do not have enough money to do so, and you people there

[54] Seleman Pembe to the Chief Secretary, "Supplication of the Servant to their Masters," 2 March 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.9A.
[55] Petition from Salehe bin Fundi to Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1951, TNA37681/5/25/f.4.

> wonder why T.T. is not progressing, the reason is money, education comes after money.[56]

Like other trade unions throughout the continent, the ACWHSA appropriated colonial discourses on progress and development to appeal for higher wages. Better wages would strengthen their financial security, bolster their positions within the community as well as their own household, and ensure that their children would attain the success and status they desired.

Unlike other unions, the ACWHSA suggested wages based not only on the minimum required for servants to live on, but also what they believed employers could pay. In January 1945, the association suggested to the Chief Secretary that the government set minimum wages for cooks and headboys at Shs.60/- per month, second boys Shs.50/- per month, and all other household servants Shs.40/- per month.[57] In addition to their wages, the union wanted employers to pay for their servants' food, uniforms, and housing.[58] Yet, like the state, the union expressed an explicitly racialized view of labor relations and wages. In 1947 Fundi and Mokongoti delineated a highly nuanced pay scale, breaking down wages not just by race, but also by religion and nationality. They suggested that the cook of an African employer earn Shs.25/- per month, plus food, clothes, and a place to sleep. However, the cook of a Somali or Sudanese employer should earn Shs.28/- per month, Shs.35/- working for an Arab, Shs.37/- for a Bahora, Shs.49/- for a Punjabi, Shs.50/- for a Goan, and Shs.55/- for a

[56] Petition from S. Fundi, L. Mikongoti, P. Nguvumali, A. Omar, S. Mwenda, and O. Athumani to Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1951, TNA37681/5/25/f.4.
[57] Letter from Director of Intelligence and Security Bureau to Labour Commissioner, "Re: African Domestic Servants Association," 19 January 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.3. In his report, the officer writes that 200 Africans attended the meeting, but it is unclear if all of these were domestic workers are other interested members of the community.
[58] Petition from The African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association to U.N.O Visiting Commission, Dar es Salaam, 1 September 1951, 37681/5/25/f.4.

Muslim or Hindu Indian.[59] The union likely chose not to suggest a minimum wage to be paid by European employers because social pressures would compel Europeans to pay wages significantly higher than those paid by Asians. They wanted to set minimum wages, not maximum wages.

This racialized pay scale reflects the union's view of the social and economic hierarchy of the capital. Neither fully colonizer nor colonized, the literature on Indians in East Africa suggests that the Indian population constituted a "subject race" that occupied the middle position in a three-tiered, racialized social structure.[60] However, the union's proposed pay scale indicates that servants' understanding of the socioeconomic structure of Tanganyika was much more intricate. They did not view "African" as not a homogenous category, nor "Asian." By suggesting that different employers pay different wages to their servants, the union was effectively flipping the racialized colonial economy on its head. It was standard for employers throughout colonial Africa to pay employees of different races different wages for essentially performing the same job. By this same logic, workers should be able to require employers of different racial backgrounds to pay different wages for receiving the same work. Employers at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy should pay their workers more, because they could afford to pay their workers more.

As wages went down during the 1940s, workloads went up. Many employers minimized their household expenditures by cutting down on the number of servants they employed. Not only did this practice increase unemployment, it increased the daily

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[59] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "Mapimo ya mishahara watu wekundu kwa watumishi wao waafrica," 3 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/A.
[60] J.S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa, c. 1886-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

workload of servants and catalyzed the transformation of domestic service from skilled to unskilled labor. In the 1920s and 1930s, servants often apprenticed as *totos* before they were qualified to find work. Entry into domestic service required access to an exclusive, specialized form of knowledge. Servants trained to become experts at cooking European or Asian foods, washing and ironing, or cleaning different types of houses and household goods. Their unique knowledge and training entitled them to higher wages, as well as respect. Domestic service was not work just anyone could do; only those who trained had the knowledge and skills required. During the economic crisis, however, almost anyone could work as a domestic servant if they were willing to work for the right price. Along with its exclusivity, domestic service lost part of its allure.

To keep domestic service a skilled occupation, the union pleaded with the state to create definitions and standards for domestic work and to legally enforce the "Indian system." As it stated in the last point of the Supplication, the association wanted an employer "to assign duties to his servants according to their degrees and not mix them up. Every servant must do his job for which he was engaged."[61] In a later document, the association again insisted that employers employ specific workers to perform specific tasks:

> employers must employ specialized servants, a cook is a cook, an employer should not give him other work without agreement, he has no right. A *boi* is a *boi*, an employer should not give him other work without agreement, he has no right. A *dobi* is a *dobi*, an employer should not give him other work without agreement, he has no right….An employer will distinguish between these servants if he wants the comfort of a European lifestyle. If he wants this he is required to have 8 or 7 or 6 or 5 or 4 or 3 servants. This is the desire of this union.[62]

[61] Seleman Pembe to the Chief Secretary, "Supplication of the Servant to their Masters," 2 March 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.9A.
[62] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "Mapimo ya mishahara watu wekundu kwa watumishi wao waafrica," 3 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/A.

Requiring employers to employ multiple, specialized servants rather than allowing them to hire one or two general servants to maintain the entire household would increase the number of jobs available and decrease the amount of work servants performed. Defining and limiting the tasks employers could assign to individual workers would also preserve the dignity of servants. Servants did not want to be subject to the sudden whims of their employers—forced to do whatever their masters wanted whenever they wanted it done. They wanted constraints on what their employers could order them to do and to be treated as professionals. Employers should hire their cooks to cook, they should not be permitted to require their cook to wash the floors or do the laundry.

In addition to having defined occupation, the union wanted servants to be entitled to the same benefits as other permanent workers. As elsewhere in Africa, Tanganyika was attempting to combat the problem of an unpredictable, unreliable, and unstable labor force by transforming casual workers into permanent workers.[63] Unlike many other laborers who worked on daily contracts, domestic servants had almost always been permanent workers. Domestic service was, by nature, a permanent occupation. Servants were not nameless, faceless, anonymous labor; employers required and relied on their servants, whom they knew and trusted, to show up for work everyday and take care of their homes. Servants usually worked at least six days a week. Most worked half-days on Sundays, but some received the whole day off and others needed to work all day. Being permanent workers, the union believed servants should receive sick pay, leave time, and other benefits. "Why Cooks, Dhobis and house servants, are not granted leaves, or off duties, or over times in [sic] sundays or holidays" they asked. "Why are we not provided

[63] For a detailed history of this transformation in all sectors of the economy in Tanganyika, see Shivji, *Working Class*, 106-154. For a history of this process throughout French and British Africa see Cooper, *Decolonization*.

with places to sleep or posho [food rations] or clothes when we are working for Europeans"?[64] Servants wanted employers to provide them food, housing, and uniforms on top of decent salaries as was common in other occupations, not in lieu of livable wages as proposed by government officials.

The union especially emphasized the need for defined work hours and overtime pay. Many servants, especially those who lived-in, worked from the moment they woke up in the morning until they went to sleep at night, having relatively no time for leisure or to spend with their families. Rather than working fixed hours, servants usually worked until their employers decided they no longer needed them at night. Many employers who had live-in servants would often call on their workers even after they dismissed them for the evening. Sometimes employers would pay a small bonus for the additional work, but servants usually did not get paid for their extra hours of service.[65] As the colonial state commodified time in its efforts to create a more stable work force, servants insisted that they be paid accordingly. The union demanded that the state regulate and enforce the number of hours employers could require their servants to work per day and to require employers to pay their servants overtime for the additional hours worked outside of the set amount.

Being at an employer's beck and call was not only exploitative, it was degrading. Leisure time was important to demonstrating respectability and status. Spending time socializing and participating in community events was just as important to social standing

[64] S. Fundi, L. Mikongoti, M. Ladi, A. Omar, O. Adhuman, A. Ahomedi, Selemani, Edward, Signature illegible, Fripo, Mauti, Simba, Abbar, Omar Hassani, Singature illegible, Signature illegible, Hasani, O. Hasani to U.N.O. Visiting Commission, 1 September 1951, TNA 37681/5/25/f.4.

[65] Jill Stanley informed me that she paid her servants a bonus if she required them to stay late when she hosted a dinner party. Another employer, however, told me that he often called his live-in cook to fix him something to eat when he was hungry in the middle of the night without compensating the cook for his time. Jill Stanley, personal communication, Dar es Salaam, 31 May 2011; Anonymous interview, Dar es Salaam, 31 May 2011.

as wearing respectable clothing. Unlike slaves, who had no right to their own leisure, free men owned their time and sold it in exchange for wages.[66] Like other workers, servants wanted their employers to acknowledge that their personal time was indeed their own and for the state to protect it. If employers wanted to cut in to their servants' personal time, they needed to pay for it. Since this was the norm for other workers, the union argued it should be standard for servants as well. Servants wanted to be seen as workers with a defined, skilled occupation, not as slaves who simply did whatever they were told. They wanted to protect the personal time they spent with their families and socializing with others.

The union insisted domestic servants should be entitled to the same rights and benefits as other workers, but their demands and petitions also indicate a hesitation to completely transform the relationship between domestic master and servant into a fully capitalist relationship between employer and employee. Rather than employers simply exchanging money for their employee's time and labor, the union expressed some desire to retain various benefits of a reciprocal, pre-capitalist, master-servant relationship. For instance, in their Supplication the union requested a domestic employer "be patient and listen to his servant's financial difficulties" and be willing to give their servant a loan. Since Africans had difficulty accessing affordable lines of credit, one of the benefits of domestic service had been the servant's ability to borrow money from their employer. Servants could access the funds they needed and, in return, employers hoped to engender loyalty, as well as dependency, from their domestic staff. Servants also wanted loyalty from their employers. In a later petition, the union complained that servants "do not get any help from them [their employers] even if you work for 29 or 30 years, you can be

[66] McMahon, 122-129.

dismissed any time."[67] The union's expectation that employers should offer assistance and loyalty beyond the wages and remunerations paid to their servants suggests some anxiety, and even reluctance, for servants to be regarded solely and completely as workers.

Not only did servants want employers to extend reciprocity and loyalty towards them, the union expected servants to extend the same loyalty to their employers. From the outset, the union denounced servants caught stealing. Few things showed more disrespect and betrayal than theft. Untrustworthy servants not only dishonored themselves, they jeopardized the reputation of the entire occupation. The union wanted to preserve the reputation of African servants in the city and would blacklist servants caught stealing. Just as servants took pride in being able to be trusted, they also took pride in their roles as protectors. A servant had the responsibility to "take care and look after his master," and "the master has to take care and look after his servants…and look after him also in sickness and other difficulties."[68] While not in their job descriptions as cooks, washermen, and *ayahs*, it was the servants' responsibility to protect the home when the employers were out of the house and to protect the family when the *bwana* was gone on safari. The union wanted there to be "love between master and servant." The daily interaction servants had with their employers left little room for them to not get along. Not only would it create an unpleasant work and home environment for servants and employers, animosity could be dangerous as well.

[67] ACWHSA to The U.N.O. Visiting Commission, DSM, 1 September 1951, TNA 37681/5/25/4.
[68] Seleman Pembe to the Chief Secretary, "Supplication of the Servant to their Masters," 2 March 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.9A.

The Registry

The union's numerous petitions and correspondences annoyed administrators. While they were at first quite anxious about the union, within a few years administrators mostly dismissed the ACWHSA as a small group of uneducated and disorganized troublemakers. They mostly ignored the ACWHSA's requests to set minimum wages, enforce standard working conditions, and afford servants the same benefits as other permanent workers. Union officials knew that the state needed to support and uphold these ideas to make them a reality. They grew increasingly frustrated with the state's lack of support and response to the union's concerns. They also lost faith in the state's willingness to ever set and enforce regulations for domestic service or work with the ACWHSA to improve the living and working conditions of servants in Tanganyika. Therefore, they attempted to take matters into their own hands. Throughout its existence, the union asked the state to entrust the ACWHSA with regulating domestic employment and enforcing work standards by opening and managing its own domestic servants' registry in Dar es Salaam as well as in up country stations. Although administrators and employers acknowledged that the capital desperately needed an employment registry for servants, they adamantly opposed allowing the ACWHSA to independently run such an office. Despite numerous warning from administrators, the union attempted to control the hiring and employment of servants in Dar es Salaam by requiring employers to obtain their servants from the union, for a fee, as well as requiring all domestic servants to seek employment via the union. Administrators could not ignore the union's attempts to circumvent the authority of the state.

Opening and running an independent servants' registry had always been on the union's agenda. From the outset, the union proposed that employers in need of servants should go directly to the union to recruit domestic servants and that the union would supply the employers with servants for a fee of Shs.5/- per employee.[69] Shortly after registering, the union repeatedly asked the government to assist them in informing the public "any European or Asiatic willing to get a Servant has to negotiate with this Association; also that any African in need of employment under the jurisdiction of our Association has to apply to this Association."[70] The registry would be both profitable and practical. The union would obviously profit from employers who sought servants from the registry, but it would also profit from the servants by requiring everyone looking for work in domestic service to become a member of the union and pay a subscription fee. In addition to making money, controlling hiring would better enable the union to standardize servants' wages, regulate the conditions of their employment, and control who became domestic servants.

By controlling who was eligible to work, the union could effectively end child labor in domestic service and rid the occupation of those workers the union deemed unfit for employment. The Trade Unions Ordinance prohibited anyone under the age of sixteen from joining a union; therefore all of the servants provided by the ACWHSA would at least be sixteen years of age. In addition to denying membership to juveniles and children, the union could deny membership and employment to workers previously caught stealing or proven untrustworthy. This would create more jobs for adults and protect the reputation of domestic servants from being soiled by thieves. They could

[69] See ACC460 99/1/I.
[70] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti to District Commissioner, 10 September 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.21A

attempt to create an occupation of trained professionals rather than a group of riffraff who only worked as servants because they could not find work elsewhere.

Requiring employers to hire union members would force them to pay set union wages and abide by union labor standards. Union members, in theory, would not work for wages below a minimum standard set by the ACWHSA or perform household duties outside of those defined by their specific position. For instance, an employer would not be able to force a union cook to wash linens or ask a union *dhobi* to wash dishes. Non-union members on the other hand might undercut wages and be willing to do the work of multiple servants, thus contributing to the further destruction of the "Indian system" and threatening the status of the entire occupation. If the union could monopolize the supply of servants and make it illegal for employers to recruit servants independently, they could attempt to enforce standardized wages, working hours, leave time, over time pay, and other working conditions. This would protect servants from exploitable wages and help to preserve domestic service as a skilled, dignified occupation.

The association had always had a turbulent relationship with the state. However, the proposed registry was a particular site of tension between administrators and the ACWSHA. Both administrators and employers resented the union for stirring up dissatisfaction amongst domestic servants and attempting to overstep its authority with servants and, more importantly, employers. The union wanted exclusive and complete control over employment and it threatened to take action against employers who recruited servants from elsewhere. "Let it be known," the union wrote in its annual report:

> that every master who arrived here from Europe and stationed at Dar es Salaam shall only employ a servant on recommendation by this Association….Any

> master engaging a servant without the notice of the Association or Labour Officer, both the master and the servant will be sued by this Association.[71]

Fundi additionally suggested that he would send his own investigators to the Labour Office to keep watch for servants attempting to find work and employers trying to find servants via the Labour Office, rather than through the union. He even went as far as to instruct the Registrar not to interfere with any actions performed by the union's investigators and advised the District Labor Officer to defer all matters pertaining to domestic workers to the union, rather than handling them himself.[72] The union wanted to assume the state's role of investigating all complaints made by servants against their current and former employers and demanding reparations on behalf of union members when it believed employers had broken labor laws or unfairly dismissed servants.[73] Employers and officials, not surprisingly, objected to the union being in charge of all servants, and especially opposed the servants' union having power over employers and telling government officials what to do.

The union did not just threaten action, the ACWHSA attempted to implement these controls. The Provincial Labour Officer for Mbeya reported that the local branch fined members Shs.10/- or more for applying directly to employers for work, rather than through the union.[74] In Tanga, the local union reportedly attempted to fine servants, both those who were union members and those who were not, Shs.5/- to Shs.6/- for not

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[71] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "The African Cooks, Washermen and House-Servants Association, Report," 15 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/A and ACC460 99/1/I/f.61.
[72] Saleh Fundi to The Registrar General, 15 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/I/f.66; Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, "Report No.1 of The African Cooks, Washermen and House-Servants Association," 28 January 1946, ACC460 99/1/A/f.13.
[73] Lorenzi Mikongoti to Mrs. H.E. Colins, 15 December 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/128; Lorenzi Mikongoti to Frazer Smith, 28 December 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.130.
[74] "Extract of Quarterly Report for the Qaurter ended 31st March, 1948, from the Provincial Labour Officer, Mbeya Dated 9th April, 1948," ACC460 99/1/I/f.100.

attending union meetings.[75] Another Labor Officer reported "difficulties have arisen because of the manner in which this union has exceeded its authority in demanding toll from employers of domestic servants."[76] Administrators repeatedly informed union officers that they could not force employers to pay for servants nor compel them to recruit servants directly from the ACWHSA. The state had warned them since they registered to follow the orders and suggestions given by state officials and not to overstep their authority. When the union first registered, the Labour Comissioner met with the Managing Committee of the Association to dispel the rumor circulating through the capital that "this association is now an integral part of Government, by reason of having received its Certificate of Registration as a Trade Union." He told the Managing Committee that they only had authority over their own members, they could not force non-members to join the union, and domestic servants in Dar es Salaam did not all automatically become members of the union upon their registration. They certainly did not have the power to compel employers to do anything.[77]

Union officials were reluctant to heed the state's warnings, especially since there was a popular demand for a servants registry in the capital. They were exceptionally perturbed that upcountry Labour Offices permitted the WSLT to use space in their buildings to run and to profit from a servants registry of their own.[78] The League previously ran a domestic servants registry in Dar es Salaam in which they charged houseboys Shs.-/50 to register and employers Shs.1/- if they took a servant supplied by

[75] Labour Officer, Tanga to Labour Commissioner, 17 January 1949.
[76] "Extract from Port Labour Officer's Quarterly Report dated 1-7-48," ACC460 99/1/I/108.
[77] Molohan, LC, "Notes on Meeting with Managing Committee of 'The Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association' in the Labour Commissioner's Office on Monday 17th September 1945," 18 September 1945, ACC460 99/1/I/f.25A.
[78] Saleh Fundi to Labour Commissioner, 9 September 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/124; Labour Officer, Tanga to Labour Commissioner, 24 November 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.125; Labour Commissioner to Saleh Fundi, 27 November 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.126.

the WSTL.[79] The Dar es Salaam registry, which the League had run since the 1920s, eventually closed after numerous employers complained about the quality of the servants the WSLT supplied. While the registry closed in the capital, the League continued to run registries in other parts of the Tanganyika through local Labour Offices. The government Labour Exchange, which facilitated employment in other occupations, had also previously assisted domestic servants in finding employment, but it officially stopped working with domestics in the early 1940s because of staff shortages.[80]

Along with the union, in the late 1940s the WSLT was also trying to revive the servants registry in Dar es Salaam with the aid of the state. Both the League and state administration agreed that there was a need for some sort of registry in the capital in order to alleviate the growing "servant problem" (i.e. the shortage of trained servants). After nearly a year of discussion about the possibility of reviving the WSLT registry, the Labour Commissioner acknowledged that "everyone agrees that a domestic servants' registry would be a 'good thing,'" but the state refused to spend its time and resources on domestic servants.[81] The Labour Department reported that there were "numerous objections to Government taking any part in the running of such an agency at the present time, or of financing its operation by anyone else."[82] The "excessive amount of time and personal attention" required by Labour Officers to place servants distracted them from "their other more important duties."[83] Administrators believed that the Labour Office should focus its attention on placing workers in more productive spheres of employment,

[79] Mrs. Haylett, President of the Women's Service League, DMS, to Barclay Leechman, Member for Education, Labour and Social Welfare, 13 October 1948, TNA32744/f.60.
[80] See TNA 32744.
[81] Minute from LC to Y.H., 25 July 1949, TNA 32744. Also see minutes 20-88, TNA 32744.
[82] Mr. Pennington to President of the WSLT, 6 September 1949, TNA 32744/f.40.
[83] Labour Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, Mwanza, 22 April 1946, TNA 32744/f.44.

not involve itself in these types of personal affairs. Though they agreed with the WSLT that a registry would be greatly helpful, both the state and the WSLT concurred that servants should not be permitted to run the registry themselves, even at their own expense. European administrators and employers, who sometimes were one in the same, refused to allow African servants to control who they could employ and the terms of their employment.

In 1947, Fundi complained to the Registrar about the lack of government support and to inform the government that he had lost patience with their continual snubs.[84] He accused administrators of being bias against the ACWHSA and refusing to aid the domestic servants' union because it conflicted with their own, personal interests. "I have the honour to inform you that this Association has genuine grievances," he wrote:

> What it thinks is that if this Association would be for Ngoma or sale of rice or potatoes or vegetables or any other retail things unconnected with white employers, I feel it would be very strong. Otherwise if it belonged to Indians it would be strong. But because it is against your side, I am uncertain whether it can be strong….Will my Association become successful if the Governor, the Chief Secretary, the Provincial Commissioner, the District Commissioner, Game Officer, Labour Officer or any other Indian or Goan employer wants to pay little?[85]

Fundi was in tune with the state's bias against African unions and that servants had no administrative allies to advocate on their behalf. He alleged that there was a tension between administrators' role as state officials who were supposed to protect African interests and their role as employers who did not want the price of domestic labor to increase. Fundi accused them of putting their personal interests over their professional duties. Administrators did have a strong conflict of interest and they saw little wrong with

[84] Saleh Fundi to The Registrar General, 15 January 1947, ACC460 99/1/I/f.66.
[85] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti, The African Cooks Washermen and House Servants Association, 13 January 1948, ACC460 99/1/A/f.16.

the status quo. They insisted that servants were well taken care of and stood firmly behind their own employment practices.

Fundi's accusation that a Labour Officer in Tanga was operating a servants' registry out of the local Labour Office himself appears to have been the last straw. On 9 Septmeber 1948 Fundi wrote the Labour Commissioner to inform his officer that he "happened to see the Labour Officer, Tanga charging fees at Shs.1/- per head supplied by him."[86] The Labour Officer in Tanga declared that Fundi's accusation was "a plain perversion of the truth." "This Mr. S. Fundi," he continued, "appears to be deliberately going out of his way to create trouble…Mr. S. Fundi knew quite clearly that the Women's Service League were running the Domestic Registry." He demanded that Fundi retract his statement.[87] After this episode, the state was reluctant to interact with the union for any reason.

In January 1949, a Labour Officer in Lindi asked the Labour Commissioner for advice on how to handle the demands of the local branch of the Association. The Commissioner's office replied:

> While this association has been registered since 1945 and seeks to represent domestic servants, it has not yet been able to function as a trade union, and refuses to carry into effect the advice offered by this Department. The manner in which the books are kept is open to criticism and steps are being taken to cancel the registration of this Union.
>
> In view of this I would suggest you do not have further contact with this organisation…[88]

On 12 April 1949, the Labour Department informed the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association that the Registrar of Trade Unions would be cancelling their

[86] Saleh Fundi to Labour Commissioner, 9 Septmeber 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.124.
[87] LO Tanga to Labour Commissioner, 24 November 1948, ACC460 99/1/I/f.125.
[88] S. Hamilton, Labour Officer, DSM, to Labour Officer, Lindi, 8 February 1949, ACC460 99/1/I/f.143.

registration. The Labour Officer explained that the union did not compile or supply to the Registrar the information about their members and accounts required by the 1932 Trade Union Ordinance, the "executive have consistently refused to listen" to the advice or requests of the Department, and that only twenty-seven of two hundred eighty-seven listed members had fully paid their membership fees. "In view of this unsatisfactory state of affairs," he explained, "I am of the opinion that the business of your association is not being conducted in accordance with the Trade Union Ordinance of 1932, and further that your association is not representative of the majority of house servants."[89] The Registrar of Trade Unions cancelled the union's registration effective 12 June 1949.

Conclusion

The union helped to identify servants as part of the working class. It gave them a sense of officialdom, legitimacy, and power that they otherwise lacked. Forming a union, and belonging to a union, gave servants a platform from which they could negotiate with their employers and gain recognition from the state as workers who were entitled to the same rights and benefits as other workers in the capital. They would not allow the state to simply take away their power and respect by revoking their Certificate of Registration. The Registrar's cancellation of the ACWHSA only served to provoke them.

Shortly after dissolving the ACWHSA, labor unrest in Tanganyika increased and the state began a campaign to unregister all of the Territory's trade unions. Rather than forming unions, administrators encouraged domestic and other workers to form labor *organizations* and *associations*. They discouraged the formation of trade unions that they

[89] S. Hamilton for Labour Commissioner to African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, 12 April 1949, ACC460 99/1/I/f.150.

believed would be prone and legally permitted to strike. The ACWHSA was steadfast that it be recognized as an official trade union, it did not want to be a club. Union officials responded to the government's suggestions by proclaiming "all our members have no interest to form such an association as it would not be helpful to us."[90] Trade unions carried an air of officialdom and authority that clubs and associations lacked. They also had legal authority to negotiate with the government and with employers on workers' behalf. ACWHSA officials believed a union gave servants power that they lacked as individuals. They could acquire in the political arena what they could not in the work place. Moreover, unions were a specific privilege of workers. As part of its campaign to have domestic service recognized as respectable wage labor and for domestic servants to be acknowledged as members of the African working class, the ACWHSA insisted recognition as a valid labor union.

To the annoyance of local officials, the ACWHSA continued to function, illegally, under a number of guises for another six years. Saleh Fundi, Lorenzi Mikongoti, and a group of followers adamantly fought the union's cancellation and persevered in their struggle to achieve better compensation and equal labor protections for domestic servants. While they mostly limited their complaints and demands to labor matters in the 1940s, during the 1950s their petitions took on a distinctly political tone. The ACWHSA's fruitless efforts to secure minimum wages, basic labor rights the government afforded to is own permanent employees, and recognition as a legal union representative of servants in the capital fostered larger complaints about the injustices of colonialism and the inefficiency of the local administration. They asserted that the colonial system,

[90] Saleh Fundi, Lawrence [sic] Mikongoti, and Alimasi Omari to Chief Secretary, 22 February 1950, ACC460 99/1/II/f.202A.

which functioned under the guise of progress and development, was exploiting and impoverishing them. It was stripping men of their dignity and their ability to provide for their families. Their appeals were not just those of workers, but of colonized men.

Chapter Five

"A Trial of Strength:" The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union and the Dar es Salaam General Strike of 1956

Saleh Fundi died in 1955.[1] After his death, the association of domestic workers officially re-registered under new leadership as the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union.[2] With new leadership and empowered by the massive unionization movement underway in the capital, the TDHWU quickly grew. Servants in Dar es Salaam had been reluctant to join the ACWHSA, but the TDHWU boasted over 4,000 members, about 3,000 of whom were domestic workers.[3] Shortly more than a year after forming, the union instigated a citywide general labor strike involving more than a quarter of the capital's workforce after a local hotel fired over forty of its African employees. Initially, servants in Dar es Salaam threatened to strike in solidarity with the fired hotel workers. As the strike neared, however, it became clear that the strike was about more than solidarity. It was about servants' wages and rights, but it was mostly about honor and servants' identity as workers.

The state cracked down on African unionization in Tanganyika during the first half of the 1950s after a turbulent dockworker strike in the capital. While domestic servants welcomed the "work rhythms of industrial capitalism" and struggled to obtain the rights and benefits of permanent laborers, dockworkers resisted the state's attempt to decasualize labor. As part of its plan to create a permanent labor force, the Labour

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[1] The cause of Fundi's death does not appear in the historical record.
[2] The union registered on 23 December 1955 as The Domestic and Hotel Workers Union under the 1932 Trade Unions Ordinance. When the state required them to re-register under the new 1956 Trade Unions Ordinance, they slightly changed their name. On 20 June 1957 the union re-registered as the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, but they had their registration back-dated to reflect their 1955 registration date. K.C. Ashfold, "Registration of Trade Union, Trade Unions Ordinance, 1956," *Tanganyika Gazette*, No. 38, 5 July 1957, ACC460 98/40/f.49.
[3] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 159.

Department sought to implement a mandatory registration scheme for dockworkers. Dockworkers were required to register with the Labour Department and if they missed more than six days of work in a single month the department would revoke their registration. Without registration, the worker would then lose their job as well as all of the benefits that went along with it. The dockworkers attempted to resist the registration scheme by initiating a strike on 1 February 1950. The state embraced the strike as an opportunity to crush both the dockworker's union and the growing labor movement in Tanganyika. Administrators charged one hundred forty-five men with offences, including eight members of the union's executive, and cancelled the union's registration effective 2 June 1950.[4]

Shortly thereafter, the government decided that Tanganyikans were "quite unable to accept the responsibility in a Trade Union sense." The Labour Commissioner declared that their experience with the dockworkers had shown administrators that "the vast majority of workers here are at present completely incapable of comprehending the principles of trade unionism."[5] The reaction of officials to unionization in Tanganyika was part of a larger trend throughout British Empire. In theory, British officials wanted Africans to unionize. But they were wary African unions, such as the ACWHSA, "were bedeviled by the lack of informed membership and by the prevalence of 'irresponsibles' among the leadership."[6] The only African union on the Trade Union Register at the end of 1950 was a thirty-three-member tailor's union in the Lake Province. The following year, no African unions remained registered.

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[4] Shivji, *Working Class,* 174-177.
[5] John Iliffe, "Dockworkers," 192. Cited in Shivji, *Working Clas*s, 175.
[6] Cooper, *Decolonization*, 325.

In the mid-1950s the British Empire changed its policy towards unionism as nationalist, anti-colonial movements ignited throughout Africa and threatened Britain's control of its colonies. The British eventually learned "the proper industrial relations machinery could make the difference between chaotic mass movements and the orderly posing of demands and the negotiating of differences."[7] Properly trained and supervised unions had the potential to stabilize the empire. Hence, in 1955 Tanganyika's trade union movement revived with the state's support. The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Worker's Union was one of sixteen new unions to register that year, bringing the total number of unions in Tanganyika to twenty-three.[8]

The unions that formed in Tanganyika the mid-1950s were starkly different than those from the previous decade. They were larger, better organized, and heavily involved in nationalist politics. Whereas the 1940s were a period of trade unionism from below, John Iliffe and Issa Shivji argue that the 1950s were an era of trade unionism led and directed by elites.[9] During the 1950s, Iliffe explains, "trade unionism was revived by educated men seeking to create a labor movement from above, on a territorial scale, and with the overt leadership which most earlier labour actions lacked."[10] But, as this chapter shows, domestic servants continued to form their own union from below and grappled with finding their place in the Tanganyika's burgeoning trade union movement.

The TDHWU strategically affiliated itself with the Tanganyika Federation of Labor (TFL), the Territory's dominant, centralized labor organization, and became

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[7] Cooper, *Decolonization*, 453.
[8] K.L. Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1955, 31 January 1957, CO 736/43; The Labour Department Annual Report lists twenty-three unions, whereas Iliffe notes twenty-two and Shivji notes only nineteen. See Iliffe, *Modern History*, 539; Shivji, *Working Class*, 183.
[9] See Iliffe, *Modern History*, 537; Shivji, *Working Class*, 182-217.
[10] Iliffe, *Modern History*, 537.

increasingly entangled with the Tanganyika's nationalist party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). The decade long struggle between the ACWHSA and the state alienated servants from the administration, but the support of TFL gave the TDHWU legitimacy and power that its predecessor lacked. Affiliation with TFL and TANU also came with its downsides. TFL and TANU attempted to assert their dominance over the TDHWU and usurp the authority of the union's officers. The TDHWU had political grievances and aims, but union officials did not want to lose control over their union or for nationalist political objectives to overshadow their labor demands. In addition to struggling with the state, the union also needed to grapple with the internal politics of Tanganyika's emerging nationalist movement.

The year after Tanganyika's union revival, labor unrest peaked. There were fifty-four industrial disputes in 1956 and, while most of them were quite small, they involved an estimated 17,700 workers and resulted in 58,000 lost man-days of labor.[11] That December the TDHWU initiated a strike of domestic and hotel workers throughout the Territory that triggered a multi-industry strike in Dar es Salaam. Through analyzing the persistent demands of the illegal ACWHSA, the formation of the TDHWU, and the organization of the 1956 strike, this chapter examines domestic servants' struggle to be recognized as part of the emerging African working class. They wanted higher wages and shorter work hours on par with those of government employees in Dar es Salaam, but they mostly wanted recognition as workers and to reclaim their honor as working men capable of supporting their families and eking out a respectable life in the city.

[11] Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1956, TNA.

The Domestic and Hotel Workers Union

Fundi and Mikongoti refused to stop union activities and continued to display their certificate of registration at ACWHSA's offices at No.87 New Street long after the Registrar revoked their registration in 1949. In addition to the main branch in Dar es Salaam, local branches throughout the Territory also functioned during the early 1950s. In response to the Labour Commissioner's letter informing the ACWHSA of its cancelation, Fundi argued that it had not done anything wrong and urged the registrar to be patient with the union. He twice reminded officials that this was a union of uneducated servants who repeatedly requested and were denied government assistance.[12] In addition to relentlessly petitioning the government to reinstate its registration, the ACWHSA infuriated government officials by continuing to hold public meetings, intervening in labor disputes with employers on behalf of domestic workers, and lobbing the government for better wages and working conditions. Despite administrators' repeated instructions to the union to stop functioning, the ACWHSA persevered.

By the time the Registrar revoked the union's registration, administrators had run out of patience with the ACWHSA. Union officers knew they would have little or no luck negotiating with local officials themselves. Therefore, they appealed to their local elders council for help. After receiving another letter from Labour Commissioner Jerrard asking the union to cease its activities, Mikongoti convened a meeting of the elders in Dar es Salaam. Shortly thereafter the elders requested a meeting with the Labour Commissioner to discuss the union's cancellation.[13] Jerrard, however, did not even respond to the their request. Instead, he wrote directly to Mikongoti informing him that the ACWHSA ceased

[12] Saleh Fundi and Lorenzi Mikongoti to Labour Commissioner, 12 April 1949, ACC460 99/1/I/f.154.
[13] Confidential letter from Mohamed Raddi on behalf of the local elders to the Labour Commissioner, 27 July 1949, ACC460 99/1/I/f.182.

to be a legal organization on 12 June 1949 and that therefore "no useful purpose will be served by an interview and I am not prepared to accord one." He then reminded the former union officers, again, that they needed to surrender their certificate of registration.[14]

After their attempt to send intermediaries failed, the ACWHSA tried to skirt around local authorities by taking its grievances up the chain of command. First it appealed to the Governor. Fundi, Mokongoti, and Alimasi Omari, a member of the former executive, communicated to Governor Twinning that the Labour Commissioner illegally and unfairly cancelled the union's registration without giving them reason.[15] B. Leechman, Member for Social Services, replied on the Governor's behalf that the Labour Commissioner had provided them with a sufficient explanation in previous correspondence and "His Excellency [the Governor] is unable to comprehend why you cannot, as you say, understand these grounds." Leechman agreed to an interview between himself and the men, but he insisted that he would only meet with them as private individuals and not as representatives of a trade union, since the ACWHSA no longer existed.[16] Not satisfied after meeting with Leechman, they appealed to the Governor again. This time E. W. Baker, the interim Member for Social Services, responded. "The Labour Commissioner's decision must be accepted as final," he notified them. "You are advised to accept that, and, further to accept the counsel and advice given to you by the

[14] R.C. Jerrard, Labour Commissioner, to Laurent Mikongoti [sic], 28 July 1949. ACC460 99/1/I/f.183; R.C. Jerrard to Mohamed Raddi, 28 July 1949, ACC460 99/1/I/f.184.
[15] Saleh Fundi, Lorenzi Mikongoti, and Alimasi Omari to Edward Twinning, 7 October 1949, ACC460 99/1/II/f.195.
[16] B. Leechman, Member for Social Services to Saleh Fundi, Lowrens [sic] Mikongoti, and Alimasi Omari, 2 December 1949, ACC460 99/1/II/f.196. The Member for Social Services was one of nine members of the Tanganyika Executive Council who reported directly o the Governor. The Member for Social Services was formerly titled the Members for Labour, Education, and Social Welfare. For more information see James Clagett Taylor, *The Political Development of Tanganyika* (Palo Alto: Stanford University press: 1963), 80.

Labour Commissioner and his officers as to how an Association or club can best be directed towards the welfare of the African servants you desire to assist."[17]

Administrators were clearly frustrated and confused by the ACWHSA's dedication to re-registration. Officials could not understand why ACWHSA officials wanted to unionize so badly; some alleged it was because the officers could earn a salary from being an officer of a trade union.[18] Fed up with the ACWHSA's incessant pestering, Twinning eventually advised all members of the government to stop responding to any correspondence from the union and instructed Leechman to inform the ACWHSA that the government would no longer entertain its grievances or requests. On behalf of Governor Twinnings, on 13 June 1950 Leechman notified Fundi and his associates that the Governor had directed all government officials "not to give you any more interviews, and neither to acknowledge nor to reply to any further letters you may send regarding the affairs of the former African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association."[19]

Servants, more than anyone, understood the importance and value of respect. They knew their employers, many of whom were government administrators, did not take kindly to being embarrassed, especially in front of superiors. Fundi and Mikongoti attempted to use the threat of embarrassment to advance their political agenda. When Jerrard refused to meet or reconsider the union's cancellation, they threatened to publically humiliate the Labour Department. They informed the Labour Commissioner that if he could not satisfy their demands they would write a formal Memorandum of Appeal to the High Court. "In our appeal," they warned, "we shall have to express

[17] E. W. Baker, Member for Social Services, to Saleh Fundi and Others, 23 January 1950, ACC460 99/1/I/f.201.
[18] George Hamilton, Industrial Relations Officer to A.H. Maddocks, African Affairs Officer, 6 June 1950, ACC460 99/1/II/f.208.
[19] B. Leechman to Mr. Saleh Fundi and others, 13 June 1950, ACC460 99/1/II/f.209.

heartedly our general dissatisfaction in the methods employed by your Labour Inspectors."[20] Discouraged by the continual lack of response from the territorial administration, union officers decided to make their grievances an international affair. They also used their frustration with local officials as grounds to critique the entire colonial system.

The ACWHSA first took its complaints to the Colonial Secretary, James Griffiths, in London. Union officials again challenged the revocation of the union's registration and asked Griffiths to force the Governor to meet with representatives of the ACWHSA. Their larger concern, however, was with how local officials governed Tanganyika and the poverty and oppression they faced on a daily basis in the Territory. They portrayed the Labour Commissioner, Chief Secretary, and Provincial Commissioner as oppressive, out of touch, and uninterested in entertaining the views of ordinary Africans. In addition to asking if King George had sent British officials to mistreat Africans, "we also want to know that if the Governor was sent here T.T. do [sic] deal only with Europeans and Indians or with the Africans, if so," Fundi questioned, "why these officials do not allow the Africans to see the Governor at the time and [sic] Africans wish to interview him?"[21] "When you people come here in T. T.," Fundi and others complained in another letter:

> you hold your meeting with Arabs who are working at the Bomas who are not in need, and you also here [sic] the well to do Africans who do not care about the poor other Africans, those are the people who are fighting for there [sic] own interests not for the others. The common town people are those who know the needs of the people because they can starve for 2 or 3 days, but you people hold your meetings with the rich people, so you cannot find out the difficulties of T. T.[22]

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[20] Saleh Fundi and Lowrenzi Mikongoti to the Registrar of Trade Unions, 2 August 1949, ACC460 99/1/I/f.187.
[21] Saleh Fundi to James Griffiths, Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1951, TNA 37681/5/25.
[22] S. Fundi, L. Mikongoti, P. Nguvumali, A. Omar, S. Mwendo, O. Athumani to James Griffiths, Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1951, TNA 37681/5/25.

Administrators' lack of interest in the lives of ordinary Africans, they argued, was jeopardizing the progress of the entire Territory. While administrators insisted that Tanganyika was not progressing because of a lack of education, the workers asserted that the root causes were poverty and low wages. They told the Chief Secretary, "we have no means at all to feed our fathers and our children and our wives and we cannot afford to send our children to high education…education comes after money."[23] They suggested it was critical that they see the Governor to personally convey their grievances. "Our Governor is good," Fundi insisted, "but the [local] officials mislead him."[24] The ACWHSA never received a reply to its letters.[25]

When the Colonial Secretary failed to respond to their concerns, union officials appealed to the United Nations. Aware of the unique status of Tanganyika Territory as a United Nations Trustee Territory, the ACWHSA alleged that the British were not properly governing Tanganyika and pleaded with the United Nations to intervene on their behalf. They perhaps also hoped to embarrass the British Empire enough to force action. In accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, the UN Trusteeship Council oversaw the governance of the Trustee Territories and sent Visiting Missions to inspect the territories to track their progress and ensure the administrative powers complied with the trustee agreement.[26] The ACWHSA requested to meet with the UN Visiting Mission in 1951, and the Mission agreed to meet with them on 4 September, but the union members were unable to keep their appointment. On the day of the scheduled

[23] Ibid.
[24] Salehe bin Fundi to James Griffiths, Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1951, TNA 37681/5/25.
[25] Saleh Fundi, Edward Mwitike, Omari Hasaan, Omari Athumani, Alimasi Omari, Raphael Charles, Amri Ahmed, Phillip Amrani, and Selemani Mwanda to Secretary General, United Nations, 10 September 1952, TNA 37681/5/25.
[26] For more on the Trustee Agreement see Michael Callahan, *A Sacred Trust: The League of Nations and Africa*, *1929-1946* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2004).

meeting the ACWHSA requested another appointment time because Fundi needed to leave Dar es Salaam to attend to his sick mother and Mikongoti's employer would not allow him to leave work. George Hamilton, on behalf of the Labour Commissioner, informed them that by the time they requested a different meeting day, the Mission had left Dar es Salaam for Tanga. However, apparently without the knowledge of the Labour Department, the members of the Visiting Mission arranged a meeting with the servants themselves before leaving.[27] After a brief meeting with the UN, they again requested to meet with the Governor Twinning, who had recently returned from leave, and were again denied.[28] Although the UN did little to aid the servants and the Governor still refused to meet with them, the petitions forced Twinnings to justify the actions of his administration to the Trusteeship Council and the General Secretary of the United Nations. The Governor explained that the petitioners were incompetent and "the 'Union' comprised little more than a handful of self-seeking office-holders of very doubtful integrity."[29]

Between 1951 and 1955 the ACWHSA submitted several written petitions to the United Nations. The union continued to challenge the cancellation of their registration and demand improved labor standards. For instance, they asked UN inspectors "why Cooks, Dhobis and house servants, are not granted leaves, or off duties, or over times in [sic] Sundays and holidays?...Why are we not provided with places to sleep or posho [food rations] or clothes when we are working for Europeans?"[30] The campaign for labor protections and compensation equal to other permanent wage laborers remained a

[27] L. Mikongoti, 4 September 1951, ACC460 99/1/II/f.214A; George Hamilton to Mikongoti, 7 September 1951, ACC460 99/1/II/f.216.
[28] George Hamilton to Mikongoti, 24 September 1951, ACC460 99/1/II/f.221.
[29] "Petition for the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, Observations by the Government of the United Kingdom," TNA 37681/5/25/f.5.
[30] Letter from ACWHSA to The U.N.O. Visiting Commission, DSM, 1 September 1951, TNA 37681/5/25/f.4.

priority, but the majority of their communication to the UN addressed the exploitation of Africans, the injustices of colonialism, and the incompetence of the local administration. They wanted to know:

> Why we Africans, our lands being sold?…Why we are driven from our original lands since our forefathers, we are placed on hills, and the rich people take our lands?...Why these new comers are working as Liwalis in our countries…Why the costs are raised before we are informed, like Poll tax?...Why we pay land rent just like house taxes?[31]

They asked the Secretary General of the UN to help unemployed servants in Tanganyika find jobs in the United States or elsewhere because in Tanganyika the unemployed are "roaming around joblessly" and "these people have nothing to eat."[32] As Africans' living and working conditions deteriorated, they complained that they "cannot get any help from the C.D. or the Chief Secretary or the Labour Commissioner."[33] They resented that Africans had no political authority in Tanganyika and alleged that British officials in the Territory lied, treated people unfairly, and wanted to keep Tanganyika from progressing. They believed Africans should govern Africans. "European, Indians, Arabs and their family [sic] in this country…should all return to their mother countries," they declared. "We do not want to be governed by any white, red, coloured men for the work of Liwali except an African."[34]

The ACWHSA's petitions and correspondences from the 1950s were quite different than those from the previous decade. Fundi and others expressed political objectives that were absent from their earlier grievances. These anti-colonial critiques

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Letter from The African Cooks to Secretary General, United Nations, 23 October 1952, TNA 37681/5/25/f.6.
[33] Letter from ACWHSA to The U.N.O. Visiting Commission, DSM, 1 September 1951, TNA 37681/5/25/f.4.
[34] Letter from Tanganyika Government Trade Union [an alias of the ACWHSA] to the Secretary General, United Nations, 10 September 1952, TNA 37681/5/25/f.8.

were likely influenced by the nationalist movement underway in the Territory, but they were also the product of years of frustration caused by unresponsive and belittling government officials. In 1953, union representatives addressed their concerns directly to Queen Elizabeth of England. They communicated that Tanganyikans were living in poverty, but they mostly presented a criticism of the colonial system and Governor Twinnings' management of the Territory:

> S. Fundi cried before her Majesty the Queen, at her feet; he weeps tears for mercy, if she saw him she would cry too….The reason for calling on her is that she may come and issue licence No. 3 because the Governor has put it away….this Governor uses deceitful words to the empires. He agrees to what he is told by you to do and when he gets to Tanganyika he changes what you told him and treats it as nonsense and does what he likes.

They requested that the Queen send Twinnings back to England because "he is not fit to stay here in Tanganyika." They also conveyed concerns that should the Governor stay in Tanganyika, the Territory could experience a violent revolt like the Mau Mau that was occurring in Kenya: "Tanganyika will soon be like Kenya. The Governor with all his followers will bring Maji Maji to Tanganyika….The Governor wants to spill blood in Tanganyika; S. Fundi wants to keep Tanganyika in peace….I do not want to hit people with machetes as is done in Kenya." In addition to the removal of Governor Twinnings, they again requested the removal of all Europeans, Indians, and Arabs from Tanganyika.[35]

Not surprisingly, British officials found the letter addressed to the Queen, which alluded to a potential violent uprising in Tanganyika, extremely inflammatory. Placing the Governor in an awkward position, the Colonial Secretary asked the Twinnings for his advice on how to respond to the petition, which prompted the Tanganyika Secretariate to

[35] Letter written by Omari Hasani on behalf of Tanganyika Government Trade Union No. 3 to Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth, 10 September 1953, TNA 37681/5/25/f.11.

launch an investigation into Saleh Fundi and the ACWHSA.[36] The Superintendent of Police reported "the Union was not assiduous in presenting demands for better wages and conditions, etc., but never succeeded in bringing any material benefit to its members" and that their registration was cancelled "owing to their failure to account for current expenditure and monies received from up-country branches." "SALEH is intensely anti-Government and anti-European," he continued, "and is a mischief maker who seeks to stir up feelings and exploit grievances. He does not appear to have any great following or backing, but is associated with a group of like-minded individuals who co-operate with him in the composition of letters of complaint."[37] After receiving the Superintendent's report, Twinnings informed the Colonial Secretary "the present document is the latest of a series of ill-written, abusive and offensive communications" requesting the reinstatement of the ACWHSA and notified him that Tanganyika's policy towards this illegal union was to not acknowledge their correspondences.[38] After attempting to discredit Fundi, he recommended to the Secretary that he also ignore the union. However, Twinnings suggested that if the Secretary felt compelled to respond he should advise the ACWHSA "registration of such a union will again become possible only if and when an association is formed showing itself capable of understanding the principles of trade unionism."[39]

In July 1954, union representatives renewed their request for a meeting with the Governor. Governor Twinnings' secretary would not grant them an audience, so in

[36] Letter from Secretary of State for the Colonies to Officer Administering the Government of Tanganyika, 13 October 1953, TNA 37681/5/25/f.10.
[37] Confidential letter from Superintendent of Police, Special Branch, to Sir John Lamb, Political Liason Officer, The Secretariate, 21 October 1953, TNA 37681/5/25/f.12.
[38] Confidential letter from Governor Twinnings to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 November 1953, TNA 37681/5/25/f.13.
[39] The second page of Twinnings' letter to the Colonial Secretary is missing from the archive. This last piece of information is quoted from TNA 37681/5/25/f.13 in Bujra, *Serving Class*, 70.

August they personally appeared at government headquarters to insist on an interview. The Governor's secretary directed them to the District Commissioner, who then directed the members to a Labour Officer. None of the four members who presented themselves as representatives of the ACWHSA were then employed as servants, or employed at all; P. Moses was an unemployed cook, Omari Asmani and Raphael Chale unemployed houseboys, and Edward Tomaki the unpaid clerk of the association. Though they had stopped collecting subscriptions, they notified the Labour Officer that the ACWHSA had never accepted the decision of the former Labour Commissioner to cancel the union's registration and alleged that it still had thousands of members in various parts of Tanganyika. The Labour Officer refused to acknowledge these men as official representatives of the ACWHSA, since no such union officially existed, and both he and the Labour Commissioner again dismissed their concerns.[40]

The following month the ACWHSA renewed the attention of the Labour Department by sending another petition to the United Nations. This time the union addressed the poor labor and living conditions in Dar es Salaam and highlighted its requests for higher wages, fixed work hours, and overtime pay. Union representatives insisted that the state grant domestic servants the same rights and protections as other workers. Union officials informed the UN "the salaries given to different categories of domestic servants are not enough to meet the requirements of life in these present circumstances." They explained:

> Our pay is Shs.70/- or Shs.100/- and the unfortnunate ones only receive Shs.50/-. With such salaries no one can live without being in perpetual debt to the shopkeeper. We, therefore, ask the U.N.Visiting Mission to consider the increment of our salaries. We would like our pay to be increased as follows:-

[40] Confidential letter from K.L. Sanders to The Honorable Members for Social Services, 19 August 1954. ACC460 99/1/II/f.267 and f.268.

		Increment per annum Shs.
1.	Cook should receive Shs.350/-	by 15/-
2.	Steward " " Shs.350/-	by 20/-
3.	Head-boy " Shs.250/-	by 15/-
4.	House-boy " Shs.180/-	by 12/5-

They requested an additional allowance of Shs.39/50 for rent each month and insisted they "should be given Cost of Living Allowances of Shs.40/- or at least the Cost of Living allowed to Government Servants should be given as well. The reason," they explained, "is that the high cost of living does not effect Government Servants alone, but effects everyone including domestic servants." They also insisted their work days to be fixed to eight hours a day, anything above eight hours should be considered paid overtime, and that "as any other worker needs a rest after hard and long working, we also need rest." Hence, they requested leave time every year as well as paid sick time, "as it is the case with Government Servants." Their last request was for a bicycle allowance of Shs.7/50 "because bicycles are used for the service of the master."[41] In addition to helping them get to and from work, servants often ran domestic errands throughout the day (i.e. going to the market, delivering messages, etc.) that needed to be done quickly. A bicycle was an important tool of the trade.

Administrators again insisted that the petition was written by a small committee of people who "represent no one but themselves." They refused to consider the issues the union's leadership tried to bring to their attention concerning servants' equality with government workers and instead they focused on the union's inability to function effectively as well as the unreasonably high salaries the leadership proposed. After offering a lengthy description of the ACWHSA's financial irresponsibility and poor

[41] Omali Asani, E. Tumwitike, Omalo Asuma, Latule Chaleri, Lukasi Amulani, P. Mosesi, and S. Fundi to The United Nations Visiting Mission, 16 September 1954, ACC460 99/1/II/f.270.

organization, administrators suggested "there is no evidence that the committee have reformed in any way or that they look upon the Union anything but a means to salaried appointments for themselves." Officials argued that the citywide salary increases they requested for servants were unreasonable and unrealistic; the suggested salaries were two to four times the average salaries paid at that time, which ranged from Shs.60/- to Shs.150/-. Moreover, officials maintained that a housing allowance was unnecessary because housing was usually provided for free by the employer. [42]

The government's explanation to the UN either highlights how out of touch administrators were with the realities of African life in Dar es Salaam or how willing they were to deceive the UN Trusteeship Council. Administrators provided a description of employment norms within European households but, as they well knew, Asians employed the overwhelming majority of domestic servants in Tanganyika. While many European households did provide housing to their servants, this was certainly not the case in most Asian homes. Asians also tended to pay their servants significantly lower salaries than Europeans, placing the average wage of servants below Shs.60/- per month. The employment standards officials suggested existed in the Tanganyika were neither legally enforced nor accurate. Moreover, they completely failed to acknowledge the union's claims that servants, as permanent workers, should be entitled to the same protections the state offered its own permanent employees. The administration only viewed servants' grievances in terms of money, but in reality servants were fighting for much more.

In July 1955, the Chief Secretary of the "Tanganyika Government Trade Union" sent a letter demanding to know what had become of the various petitions they had sent

[42] "Draft Observations: Petition No.T/Pet.2/177 from the Trade Union of African Cooks," ACC460 99/1/II/f.272 and f.271.

to the United Nations. Trying to circumvent the authority of state officials, he also claimed that the UN Trusteeship Council had not approved the cancellation of the ACWHSA and that therefore the Tanganyikan Labour Commissioner could not have legally revoked its registration.[43] Referring to the decision made by Governor Twinnings five years earlier, H.R.G. Hurst, the new Labour Commissioner, directed the Labour Officer of Dar es Salaam to disregard the letter. "In accordance with the decision taken by Government and conveyed to the ex-President of the Association," wrote Hurst, "this recent communication will not be acknowledged neither will the various matters contained therein be made the subject of a reply." He directed the Labour Officer to disregard all similar letters from these individual or purported representatives of this association in the future. Although, Hurst did wish to be kept informed of any "significant developments" and "any flagrant breaches" of the Trade Unions Ordinance.[44]

That same month, Saleh Fundi died. After his sudden death, Omari Hasani, who had previously taken over for Mikongoti as the Secretary of the ACWHSA, was elected president.[45] When the union sent another communication to the United Nations in September 1955, the state finally considered taking "firm action…against this small group of people."[46] In a public display of defiance, the ACWHSA published an advertisement in the *Tanganyika Standard* one month earlier for a meeting that requested "all members and non-members" to attend.[47] The advertisement, not surprisingly, enraged officials because it "infers that there exists a registered Trade Union of such

[43] Letter from the Chief Secretary, The Tanganyika Government Trade Union, to the Public Relations Officer, 24 June 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.277.
[44] H.R.D. Hurst, LC, to the Labour Officer, DSM, 5 July 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.279.
[45] Confidential telegram from Humanities to Labour Commissioner, 4 August 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.280.
[46] Ibid.
[47] "Standard Notes – African House Servants," *Tanganyika Standard*, 2 April 1955.

employees." The Labour Commissioner requested that the *Tanganyika Standard* publish a correction of the advertisement, as it "could cause some misunderstanding."[48] Despite the provocations, the Labour Commissioner informed officials "it is considered unlikely that these persons will ever attempt to regularise their position under either the Societies Ordinance or the Trade Union Ordinance." He cautioned "any action instituted against them…would only result in due course in stimulating the flow of correspondence and petitions from them and, at the same time, would provide them with another imaginary though welcome grievance."[49] The best thing to do, especially with Fundi out of the picture, was to ignore them.

A New Era in Trade Unionism: The Emergence of the TDHWU

The Tanganyikan labor movement experienced a radical transformation in 1955. Sixteen new unions registered that year, bringing the total number of unions in the Territory to twenty-three.[50] By the end of the year, seventeen of the twenty-three unions were affiliated with the newly formed Tanganyika Federation of Labour.[51] In association with TANU as well as the nationalist labor movement that was well underway in Kenya, the TFL emerged in October to coordinate unionization in the Territory. Although the TFL was not officially connected to TANU, TANU provided the TFL with office space, financial support, and guidance. Moreover, the first president of the TFL was a prominent member of TANU and the TFL was able to elect its own representatives to the TANU

[48] Labour Commissioner to The Public Relations Officer, 6 April 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.275.
[49] Confidential letter from H.D.R. Hurst to the Member for Social Services, DSM, 10 August 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.281.
[50] K.L. Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1955, 31 January 1957, CO 736/43; The Labour Department Annual Report lists twenty-three unions, whereas Iliffe notes twenty-two and Shivji lists only nineteen. See Iliffe, *Modern History*, 539; Shivji, *Working Class*, 183.
[51] Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1955, TNA.

executive council.[52] The TFL was also connected to prominent Kenyan trade union activist Tom Mboya, the General Secretary of the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions and later the General Secretary of the Kenyan nationalist party, the Kenyan Africa National Union. Mboya visited Dar es Salaam in July 1955 to address the leaders of Tanganyika's emerging unions and to help Tanganyika create a unionization movement modeled after the movement stirring in Kenya.[53] With the backing of the nationalist elite, the TFL dominated the Tanganyika labor movement through and even after independence. However, there appears to have been something of a struggle within the labor movement between the larger, better organized, and more educated TFL and smaller, less well-organized unions such as the emerging TDHWU.

Knowing that the state refused to deal directly with members of the ACWHSA, the union's leadership chose to use the TFL to their advantage. On 10 September 1955, several people declaring themselves to be representatives of the ACWHSA requested a meeting with the Labour Officer. They brought Maynard Mpangala, Secretary of the African Commercial Employees Association, predecessor to the emerging TFL, along with them.[54] The Labour Officer declared that "in view of the past history of this Union" he would not meet with the representatives of the ACWHSA, but he did agree to meet with Mpangala alone. Mpangala, the soon-to-be Assistant General Secretary of the TFL, explained to the Labour Officer that a group of ten domestic servants in Dar es Salaam solicited his to assistance to form a new union. The Labour Officer was pleased to see

[52] Stephen Goodman, "Trade Unions and Political Parties: The Case of East Africa," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 17:3 (1969): 342-343.
[53] See Iliffe, *Modern History*, 537-538; Shivji, *Working Class,* 185-187; Goodman, 341-343.
[54] The Commercial Employees Association was founded in 1951, but not officially registered until 1953. It was one of the founding members of the TFL. See Iliffe, *Modern History*, 537-538; Shivji, *Working Class*, 185-187.

that the ACWHSA had finally given up on fighting the legitimacy of their union's cancellation and was instead planning to form a new union with the assistance of more experienced, and less disruptive, labor organizers.[55] He was hopeful that the servants would organize the type of orderly union the state desired for African workers.

Less than a week later, on 16 September 1955, five to six hundred Africans attended a meeting to discuss the formation of the new union, the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union. Despite the state's continual skepticism about the interest of the city's domestic workers in unionization, the large turnout suggests that domestic workers in Dar es Salaam were indeed interested in organizing. "The Object and purpose of this meeting," declared the announcement, was "to create or form an association of workers, viz: House boys, Cooks and Ayahs. There will also be a selection of leaders for the said association."[56] Attendees elected a subcommittee to draft a constitution as well. In a blatant exhibition of the TFL's deep involvement with the new union, Mpangala made a statement to the *Sunday News* on the TDHWU's behalf. He announced that the union "would like to negotiate a minimum wage for domestic servants and hotel workers. We do not want to make enmity. We want good relations with the employers."[57] The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union officially registered under the Trade Unions Ordinance of 1932 on 23 December 1955 with Omari Hasani as President and N.T.C. Msumba as General Secretary.[58] Maynard Mpangala was named a Trustee.[59]

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[55] Labour Officer, "Meeting with Mr. Mpangala, Secretary of the African Commercial Employers Association on 10 September 1955," 12 September 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.282.
[56] M. M. Mpangala, "Taarifa ya Mkutano," ACC 99/1/II/f.284.
[57] "Dar Houseboys to set up a Union," *The Sunday News*, 18 September 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.283.
[58] The original certificate of registration is lost, but the original date of registration appears in several documents and correspondence. "Application for Registration of a Trade Union," 25 May 1957, ACC460 98/40/f.34; K.C. Ashfold, Assistant Registrar of Trade Unions, "General Notice: Trade Unions Ordinance 1956, Registration of Trade Unions," 21 June 1957, ACC460 98/40/f.44.

The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Worker's Union was modeled after the long-established Domestic and Hotel Worker's Union of Kenya, which claimed to have a membership of over 4,000.[60] Although domestic workers in Tanganyika had previously considered forming a joint union with hotel workers, the final decision to unite with them was likely the result of pressure from Mpangala and Mboya.[61] The name of the union might suggest the equal involvement of domestic and hotel workers, but domestic servants overwhelmingly dominated the TDHWU. Of the estimated 4,000 members in Dar es Salaam, about 3,000 were domestic servants. The dominance of domestics in upcountry branches was likely even more pronounced. Erasto Matayo, District Chairman of the Tanga branch of the TDHWU, explained that while Tanga had thousands of private homes in the 1950s, "the hotels were very few in those days."[62] Dar es Salaam had more hotels than Tanga, but still relatively few as compared to the thousands of private residences African domestic servants maintained in the capital.

The relationship between the TFL and the TDHWU was rather tense. Archival records suggest that domestic workers did invite Mpangala to help them unionize. However, it may have been at the insistence of TANU and the looming TFL or because they saw few other options. They had already alienated themselves from the Labour Department and needed new allies to help them advance their cause. While they may have initiated the collaboration with the TFL, it appears that the TDHWU greatly

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[59] Mpangala was replaced as a Trustee in April 1958. "Notice of Change in the Officers and Trustees," 29 March 1958, ACC460 98/40/III/f.42.

[60] The Kenyan DHWU emerged out of the Kenya Houseboys Association, which had been active since at least 1945. The union applied to register in 1949, but because of bureaucratic delays the Registrar did not issue the DHWU their certificate of registration until 1951 when the union threatened to strike if the Registrar delayed them further. Makhan Singh, *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969), 130-131, 207, 300, and 305.

[61] See ACC460 99/1/I.

[62] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 159 and 163.

resented the TFL's attempt to control them. On 26 September 1955, Omari Hasani wrote a letter to the Labour Commissioner and the General Secretary of Tanganyika to complain about Mpangala's attitude and attempts to interfere with their union's activities. Since the TFL was so closely connected to TANU, Hasani also sent a copy to TANU's president, Julius Nyerere. Hasani's letter indicates that there was a confrontation between Mpangala and representatives of the union following his meeting with the Labour Officer on 10 September. Alluding to the quarrel, Hasani asked the Labour Commissioner, "did you send him to direct his members to come to insult the leaders of the Trade Union?" He then asked Nyerere, "is that how your Secretary does, to punish and insult those who are weak? What would happen if these things were done unto him, would he be pleased?"[63]

The following year the TDHWU experienced more friction with TANU. The Secretary of TANU approached union members claiming that the Labour Commissioner had personally appointed him to help run the union. He directed the Treasurer of the TDHWU to hand over the union's cash book, suggesting that the Labour Commissioner had instructed him to collect the union's cash book along with several other union files. Hasani asked the Labour Commissioner to stop creating tension between Africans and asked Nyerere to prevent TANU members from interfering with the union's affairs.[64] Unfortunately, there is no other information on the confrontations between Mpangala, the TFL, TANU, and the union members. However, it is quite possible that Mpangala spoke with TDHWU members after a meeting with the Labour Commissioner and that he then insulted the union's leadership and organization skills. It is also likely that the TFL and TANU wanted more control over the union than the officers were willing to allow.

[63] Letter from O.H. [Omari Hasani] Kikulado to The Labour Commissioner, The General Secretary, President J.Nyerere, 21 September 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.287.
[64] Letter from Omari Hasani Kikulacho to Labour Commissioner, 3 April 1956, ACC460 99/1/II/f.290.

The Tanganyikan labor movement was taking off quickly. Rather than try to crush it, the government attempted to steer and control it. Therefore, in 1956, the Labour Department passed a revised trade union ordinance. Administrators felt the 1932 Ordinance, which was created before any trade unions even existed in Tanganyika, was too simplistic and could not address the emerging situation. Like the 1932 Ordinance, the 1956 Ordinance enforced compulsory registration of trade unions and gave the state the power to revoke registration if a trade union did not comply with all of its provisions. The new legislation allowed the Registrar to keep track of unions' activities and gave him more control over the unions' funds, rules, and appointment of officers. Most importantly, the new Ordinance restricted unions' use of their main bargaining tool—strikes. The state provided statutory machinery for conciliation between employers and employees, but the state was far from neutral and usually sided with employers in arbitration. Anticipating the court's bias, workers preferred to strike rather than go through arbitration. However, the 1956 Ordinance made strikes in "essential services" illegal.[65] Tanganyika encouraged unionization, but only the type it could control.

The Houseboys Strike

As with the ACWHSA, the formation of the TDHWU was a source of anxiety and animosity between employers and employees. One houseboy even reported that his Indian employer fired him after finding out that he attended the meeting merely discussing the formation the union.[66] Another former domestic worker explained that he did not join the union because "in those days employers warned you not to get mixed up

[65] See Shivji, *Working Class*, 206-208.
[66] "Dar Houseboys to set up a Union," *The Sunday News*, 18 September 1955, ACC460 99/1/II/f.283.

in politics or you would be dismissed."[67] Despite the intimidation, thousands of workers did support the TDHWU. Tension in Dar es Salaam's households peaked when thousands of domestic servants went on strike in December 1956.

The catalyst for the strike occurred in October of that year, during Princess Margaret's visit to Tanganyika. The head waiter and three other waiters employed at the Kinondoni Hostel in Dar es Salaam were fired for being drunk at work. Initially, East African Airways, the owner of establishment, claimed that the employees had also stolen the liquor from the hostel, but a representative of the employer later retracted that allegation. Msumba publically alleged that at a meeting with the management, representatives of the strikers, and government officials "it was pointed out repeatedly that the liquor was given to them by the Manager in the presence of two other servants."[68] The owners denied these allegations and explained that when the manager discovered the drunken waiters he terminated their employment. The other forty-five employees of the hostel "immediately came out on strike in protest against these dismissals," for which they too were fired.[69]

The TDHWU tried to negotiate with the employer on behalf of the terminated employees, insisted on their reinstatement, and threatened to call a strike of all hotel and domestic workers in Tanganyika if the establishment did not reinstate all of the fired workers within three days.[70] The management offered to reinstate the head waiter, but on the condition he be demoted, "it being recognized that he would be eligible for

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[67] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 163.
[68] "You and your Servants," *Sunday News*, 4 November 1956; "Tell us, say Police, If Your Servants are Threatened," *Sunday News*, 4 November 1956; Editorial note in "Letters to the Editor," *Tanganyika Standard*, 6 November 1956.
[69] Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1956.
[70] "Domestic Workers to Strike," *Tanganyika Standard*, 1 November 1956.

restoration to his former positions as head waiter following six months satisfactory service." The three other waiters could return to work, but would be given a written warning. The union would not accept this offer. The TDHWU could have followed the provisions offered under the Master and Native Servants Ordinance for labor disputes and taken their complaint to the Magistrate's Court. However, the union did not trust the state to act on the workers' behalf. Rather than go to court, the union organized a strike.[71]

At the end of October, Msumba published and circulated a pamphlet calling on all servants to stand up for their rights, join together, and join the union. "Let us pull together," he urged. "Do you wish to become weak? If you are dismissed without cause? If you are treated with scorn at your work? If you are called a dog? Come quickly and become a union member."[72] Msumba urged workers not to put up with their poor treatment and informed them of where they could find the union offices. Shortly after printing the first pamphlet, the union printed a notice to strike in support of the workers who were fired from the Kinondoni Hostel.[73] Msumba notified the *Sunday News* that the strike would be held 8-10 November and that it was voted on at a general meeting of "not less than 6,000 people."[74]

The weeks leading up to the strike were tense and quite dramatic. Threats and insults were launched from all directions. Labour Department officials and employers charged that union members pressured and intimidated many workers to support a strike they were actually against.[75] The *Sunday News* published the headline "Tell Us, Says

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[71] Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1956.
[72] N.T.C. Msumba, "The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union: Union of House Workers," ACC460 724/25/f.1.
[73] N.T.C. Msumba, "The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union," ACC460 724/25/f.3.
[74] "Tell us, say Police, If Your Servants are Threatened," *Sunday News*, 4 November 1956.
[75] Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1956; "Tell us, say Police, If Your Servants are Threatened," *Sunday News*, 4 November 1956; "You and your Servants," *Sunday News*, 4 November 1956.

Police, If Your Servants are Threatened" on the front page. Workers undoubtedly made threats in a number of cases, but the coercion went both ways. Almost as soon as the union announced the strike, employers and state officials, with the help of the media, intimidated potential strikers with promises of unemployment and destitution. The Dar es Salaam hotel and restaurant owners quickly published an announcement that they had unanimously agreed all employees who participated in the strike were liable to be sacked. They urged the private employers of domestic servants to support their sentiments.[76] In an anonymous editorial to the *Sunday News*, someone warned servants that "if the servants strike, the Union must realise that many of the hotel and domestic servants will not be re-engaged and within a day will become homeless and without money with which to support themselves and their families." The author urged employers to explain this to their employees and to encourage them to report any signs of intimidation to the police.[77] Two days later the *Tanganyika Standard* published an article reminding servants that if they failed to show up for work the day of the strike they would run the risk of finding themselves "among the unemployed – and there are one thousand domestic and hotel servants out of work in Dar es Salaam already."[78] "Bulldog" wrote that he was delighted to learn of the impending strike because "the majority of hotel and domestic servants in this town are over paid and under worked (not that they ever work hard!). This will give employers a good opportunity to reduce staff and dismiss all those who are stupid enough to go on strike." In an effort to make servants feel expendable and easy to replace,

[76] "Strike is Definitely 'on' Says Union Official," *Tanganyika Standard*, 6 November 1956.
[77] "You and your Servants," *Sunday News*, 4 November 1956.
[78] "Domestic Servants," *Tanganyika Standard*, 6 November 1956.

Bulldog continued: "There are well over a thousand unemployed servants in Dar es Salaam, so there is no cause for alarm."[79]

Servants were reasonably apprehensive of going on strike. One worker, who requested to remain anonymous, wrote: "I do not want to strike because of the Kinondoni boys and why must I not get my pay for three days…if I strike I lose my job if my bwana tells me to go."[80] Someone alleging to by an African employee of a hotel, but who certainly did not sound like one, wrote:

> It sounds to me a little absurd that my fellow-workers fail to appreciate the fact that abstaining from work for two or three days of the strike would only mean loss of income for that period….if the union membership is in the region of 6,000-7,000 as claimed, it would be a wise course to ask each member to forfeit his two days' wages that would not be earned by him if he supports the strike.

The author proposed that such a plan would benefit the fired workers much more than a strike.[81] In addition to losing their jobs and their livelihoods, they could lose the status associated with being wage-workers and respect as men who provided for their families.

Strikers also ran the risk of being arrested for any number of legal violations during the township roundups the police conducting during strikes. Workers undoubtedly endured pressure from their wives, children, and parents not to strike on top of the intimidation from employers and the state. Churches and missionaries also tried to dissuade servants from striking. "It has been given out in churches that this [the strike] is bad, but is this evil on the side of the workers only and not the employer?" Msumba retorted. "I am not surprised," he continued, "for, are the Missionaries treating their own servants properly who might have worked for 35 years? It is very apparent that the

[79] Bulldog, "Servants and the Strike," *Tanganyika Standard*, 6 November 1956.
[80] "Letters to the Editor," *Tanganyika Standard*, 6 November 1956.
[81] "Strike is Definitely 'on' Says Union Official," *Tanganyika Standard*, 6 November 1956.

Missionaries are siding with the Government and employers."[82] He urged workers not to be frightened or discouraged.

The day before the strike was supposed to begin, the TDHWU called it off at the behest of the TFL. Representatives from the TFL met with TDHWU officers and advised them to first take the dispute to the courts before initiating a strike. The decision to cancel the strike came only a few hours after a meeting in which seventy domestic employers collectively decided "if any domestic servant decided to strike, his employment would be terminated forthwith on the grounds of breach of contract between himself and his employer." In addition to being fired, the servant and any family living with them would be required to immediately vacate any quarters provided by their employer.[83] In other words, striking would immediately result in the homelessness of their entire family. Although the seventy employers represented only a small fraction of the thousands of domestic employers in the capital, their threats clearly resonated with the workers. Nonetheless, the threats only delayed the strike.

At the end of November, the union announced that the strike would commence on 6 December. The TFL tried to negotiate with the state on behalf of the union to garner higher wages and institute some "statutory machinery" for domestic servants. However, administrators continued to insist that servants' wages were adequate and "that the contract of employment was essentially a *personal* one between employers and employees."[84] They effectively denied that servants were entitled to the same standards and protections as other workers and reinforced the notion that domestic service was not

[82] N.T.C. Msumba, "The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers' Union: Views of the Union," ACC460 724/25/f.34.
[83] "Servants Strike Off: 'Withheld' Says Union Officials," *Tanganyika Standard*, 7 November 1956.
[84] "Federation of Labour Replied to Government," *Tanganyika Standard*, 8 December 1956. Emphasis added.

the state's concern. Private employers described servants' demands for increased wages, bonuses, gratuities, leave, and other benefits as "ridiculous" and "outrageous."[85] They did not want to negotiate or give in to their servants' demands.

When they heard the strike was back on, employers immediately sprang into action and organized a meeting at the WSLT's headquarters to discuss establishing a domestic employers association, how to respond to the strike, and how to handle employees who planned to participate. Some employers worried that losing their servants would disrupt their lives, others viewed the strike as only a minor disruption. One employer wrote that the strike might:

> create something of a tangle in the town, but that there is no need for it to disrupt life completely. Most people can make other arrangements for meals, and surely those women who do not work can willingly give some of their time, in an emergency, to look after other people's children and keep things moving smoothly.[86]

Others took the opportunity to demonstrate that their servants were lazy and useless. "Just finished washing up, got the rooms in shipshape and settled down to read the Sunday News an hour or so later than usual," proclaimed one employer, "but well content as proving to yourself just how easy it is to get through most of your servants' day's work by ten in the morning?" The employer had apparently already fired his/her servants who intended to strike. Another writer, who identified him/herself as "New African," requested that the newspaper print a list of charitable organizations so that employers could donate the Christmas bonuses they normally paid to their servants in December.

[85] "Many Reports of Threats of Violence: Last Minute Changes Caused Confusion," *Tanganyika Standard*, 8 December 1956.
[86] "Strike Threat," *Tanganyika Standard*, 30 November 1956.

Those who were striking "can hardly be expecting any Christmas baksheesh this year," s/he argued. The editor printed the list.[87]

Employers' most immediate concern was that the first day of December marked the beginning of a new pay period and they did not want to be locked into paying an employee who was planning to strike. They normally made oral monthly contracts with their servants at the beginning of the month and paid their servants their full month's wage at the end of the month. In an effort to inform employers of their legal rights and responsibilities should their servants strike, before the scheduled strike in November the *Sunday News* reported that if a worker were to go on strike employers should pay their servants for their satisfactory service up until that point. However, employers were not required to reinstate them or pay them for the time they were on strike should the employer choose to continue to employ them at all.[88] In anticipation of the December strike, the Labor Department publically advised employers to ask their employees if they intended to participate in the strike. "The employer concerned," a government spokesperson continued, "should point out that it would not be possible for him to enter into an oral monthly contract to employ that servant during December, since the servant had clearly stated his intention to break the contract by going on strike." It was then up to the employer to decide whether or not to continue to employ that employee at all on a daily basis, "and thus subject to termination on any day in that month."[89] The Labour Department's recommendations seriously escalated the situation.

The TDHWU viewed the Department's suggestion that employers ask their employees directly of their plan to strike, and then to terminate them if they did intend to

[87] New African, "Domestic Workers' Strike," *Tanganyika Standard*, 3 December 1956.
[88] "Tell us, say Police, If Your Servants are Threatened," *Sunday News*, 4 November 1956
[89] "Strike: Employers are Advised by Government," *Tanganyika Standard,* 30 November 1956.

strike, to be "an illegal way of threatening members."[90] Not only did it threaten individual workers, it threatened to erode on of the few benefits of the entire occupation: the security of monthly contracts. The workers perceived the proposal to be unmistakable evidence that the Labour Department was backing employers in the dispute.[91] The government's support of the employers, the union argued, was causing the employers to be unwilling to negotiate. "From the statement made by the Labour Commissioner," Msumba charged, "it was abundantly clear that the Government is telling employers that they should dismiss their servants and put them on daily rates of pay, confirming that it is introducing great enmity into relations between workers and their employers." He blasted the government for not facilitating negotiations between the two bodies and not intervening in the proposed strike.[92] J.P. Attenborough, a representative of the Labour Department, wrote to the union to refute their allegations that the government was partial to the employers. He tried to clarify that the Labour Department's only objective was to notify employers of their legal rights and obligations, as well as to enlighten servants who had also requested information of their legal duties.[93]

Regardless of the Labour Department's true intentions, the statement caused quite a stir. The Hotel Keepers Association's had already refused to negotiate and private employers were coming together to present a united front against strikers. Following the Labour Department's announcement, private employers decided against forming an employers' association, but agreed "firm action should be taken in the event of the

[90] N.T.C. Msumba, "The Tanganyika Hotel and Domestic Workers' Union: Habari za Ugomaji," ACC460 724/25/f.27.
[91] "Still Prepared to Talk, Says Servants' Union," *Sunday News*, 2 December 1956.
[92] N.T.C. Msumba, "The Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers' Union: Views of the Union," ACC460 724/25/f.34.
[93] J.P. Attenborough, Member for Social Services, to The General Secretary, Tanganyika Federation of Labour, 6 December 1956, ACC460 724/25/f.33.

threatened strike." The employers collectively decided to fire any employee who failed to show up for work and to immediately force them to vacate any housing provided by their employer. Employers could choose to reinstate their employee after the strike if they wanted to, but because servants would be breaking their contracts by going on strike employers were not obligated to reemploy them.[94] It was important for employers to assert their dominance over their servants. Conceding to the domestic staff would suggest that masters could neither control their servants nor their own homes.

The state's apparent support of employers not only antagonized the TDHWU, it provoked other labor organizations as well. The "houseboys strike," as the papers called it, quickly turned into a citywide general strike. On 2 December, the members of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union announced their intention to strike for two days in support of the TDHWU. They intended to strike not against the termination of the Kinondoni employees or in favor of higher wages, but against the government advising employers to retain workers only on a daily wage during December and suggesting employers could sack workers who went on strike.[95] In addition to the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, the TFL helped to orchestrate sympathy strikes from the Eastern Province Building and Construction Workers' Union and the Dar es Salaam Dockworkers' and Stevedores' Union.[96]

To the frustration of officials and employers, it was growing increasingly unclear what the strike was for or how to prevent it. The union initially called the strike to demand the Kinondoni Hostel reinstate the terminated workers, but a flyer published by the TDHWU stated the reason for the December strike was that employers refused to

[94] "Householders Agree to Take Firm Action," *Tanganyika Standard*, 4 December 1956.
[95] "Industrial Workers to Strike," *Tanganyika Standard*, 3 December 1956.
[96] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 160-161; Shivji, *Working Class*, 196-197.

increase servants' wages in addition to sympathizing with the Kinondoni workers.[97] In an editorial to the paper, a writer berated union officials for stirring up trouble and insisted that the strike was not the desire of the general houseboy population, but rather of a small group of individuals. He pointed out that the union had made no specific wage demands and had not tried to negotiate with private employers; they simply wanted to strike. He accused the union of trying to holding employers "to ransom" without giving them the opportunity to negotiate. "By all means," he wrote, "let the union help in establishing a really fair living wage for its members, but let this come about by friendly negotiation: not by threat of strike."[98] Seeing neither the union's claim to support the Kinondoni workers nor their demand for higher wages as legitimate claims, the author declared: "This is a trial of strength."[99]

The strike was a trial of strength. It was also about servants asserting their identity as workers. Domestic servants had real concerns regarding their working conditions. A large part of the dispute was over the negligent treatment of domestic work in labor laws and the unwillingness of the state to extend servants the same rights and protections that it offered its own government employees. The strike was about wages and about time, but it was mostly about legitimacy. In the midst of growing militancy in East Africa's trade union movement, it is quite likely that the TDHWU initiated a strike partly to show that domestic servants could carry out a strike. A successful strike would help to validate servants' position as part of the African working class and demonstrate that the TDHWU was a union the state and employers could not ignore. By depriving employers of the

[97]N.T.C. Msumba, "The Tanganyika Hotel and Domestic Workers' Union: Habari za Ugomaji," ACC460 724/25/f.27; "Servants to Strike on December 6," *Tanganyika Standard*, 29 November 1956.
[98] "Strike Threat," *Tanganyika Standard*, 30 November 1956.
[99] "Who Strikes First?" *Tanganyika Standard*, 2 December 1956.

domestic labor that they all too often took for granted, servants hoped to remind employers and officials that they were real workers and that the services they provided were important to the maintenance of individual households as well as the functioning urban economy.

The strike began as scheduled on 6 December 1956. The *Tanganyika Standard* reported that there were no records of actual violence occurring during the strike, although there were several reports of threats, and that about seventy percent of houseboys reported for work as usual the morning the strike began.[100] The Labour Department suggested that "the strike of domestic workers from the outset was not strongly supported," but reported "by the 7th December the majority of the hotels and catering establishments in the town, together with a considerable number of private households where domestic servants had gone on strike, were affected." In total, the Labour Department concluded about forty percent of workers employed in private households, an estimated 2,400 domestic servants, went on strike in addition to 450 hotel employees.

In addition to the hotel and domestic workers, the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union and the Eastern Province Building and Construction Workers Union carried out a two-day sympathy strike in Dar es Salaam starting 7 December. On those days, "building work in the town was virtually brought to a standstill."[101] The *Tanganyika Standard* reported only a handful of building workers showed up to work, but that many commercial and industrial workers turned up as usual, including some of the officials of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union. The union's officials had

[100] Ibid.
[101] Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1956.

some last-minute disagreements over whether or not to conduct the strike, contributing to the low level of support from commercial and industrial workers.[102] On 8 December the Dar es Salaam Dockworkers and Stevedores Union gave a seven-day notice to strike in sympathy with the TDHWU unless employers reached a satisfactory agreement with TDHWU officials. However, the Labour Department notified them that such a strike would be illegal since the dispute did not concern dockworkers or stevedores and because the 1956 Trade Union Ordinance prohibited workers in "essential services" from striking. When the Tanga Dockworkers and Stevedores Union announced their sympathy strike, the Labour Department supplied them with the same reasoning, causing them to cancel the strike. In total, an estimated 10,000 out of 37,000 workers in Dar es Salaam went on strike at its peak.[103]

Domestic and hotel workers in other parts of the country also went on strike, but due to the lack of central organization their support was uneven. Officials from the Arusha branch of the TDHWU claimed they were unaware that the Dar es Salaam TDHWU intended the strike to be territory-wide until the day the strike started in the capital. They stated that while they sympathized with the workers in the capital, "it is almost impossible and unwise to call on domestic and hotel workers in Arusha to go on strike in view of the present stage of development and, second, the short notice."[104] Yet in Morogoro the employees of both local hotels as well as approximately sixty percent of the local servants did not show up for work. Nearly a quarter of the servants in Mbeya

[102] "Many Reports of Threats of Violence: Last Minute Changes Caused Confusion," *Tanganyika Standard*, 8 December 1956.
[103] Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1956.
[104] "Union Chiefs Split on Strike: The Moderates Gain Support, Police Round-up at Kinondoni," *Sunday News*, 9 December 1956.

participated in the strike.[105] The Tanga branch initiated a strike on 16 December, explaining "the reason for the delay in strike action in Tanga of domestic and hotel employees is that it was thought advisable that the day of the strike should at least coincide with the proposed Tanga workers' strike in sympathy."[106]

The Labour Commissioner reported that there were no cases of actual violence during the strike, but "it was evident that a considerable amount of intimidation took place and that as a result of this many domestic servants joined the strike who would otherwise have wished to continue working."[107] As before, the intimidation worked both ways. Just as workers pressured each other to strike, employers warned their servants not to. There were multiple reports of domestic servants coercing other workers to support the strike and attempting to prevent others from going to work. The state arrested several servants for unlawful assembly and criminal trespass when they went to employers' homes whose servants had refused to strike in order to intimidate the workers. Others were arrested for unlawful picketing when they threatened non-strikers.[108] But the police also intimidated potential strikers by conducting a series of neighborhood round-ups. For instance, the day the strike started the police raided Kinondoni, an African section of Dar es Salaam, looking for tax offenders. They screened numerous Africans and the District Commissionr arrested forty-one men for tax offences. The police detained several others

[105] "Union Chiefs Split on Strike: The Moderates Gain Support, Police Round-up at Kinondoni," *Sunday News*, 9 December 1956.
[106] Secretary of the Tanga TDHWU, as quoted in the *Sunday News*, 16 December 1956. Cited in Bujra, *Serving Class*, 163.
[107] Sanders, Labour Department Annual Report 1956.
[108] "Jailed for Unlawful Assembly," *Tanganyika Standard*, 15 December 1956; "Threatened Domestic Servants," *Tanganyika Standard*, 15 December 1956.

for further questioning.[109] Many potential strikers likely refrained from striking, or showing support for strikers, out of fear of being arrested.

Within three days of the initial TDHWU strike, employees started to return to work. Labor conditions in the private home and hotel sectors had almost returned to normal after one week.[110] But the other sectors continued with their sympathy strikes and the TDHWU refused to officially stop the strike until employers agreed to negotiate with the union.[111] Nearly three weeks after the strike began, the Labor Commissioner met with representatives of the TFL to negotiate an end to the strike and the TFL called for a return to work on 28 December. In return, the TFL asked employers to welcome back their workers so as to avoid future disputes.[112] Most workers complied, but for many strikers resuming work was troublesome; some employers did not welcome them back. The following day, the *Tanganyika Standard* reported "many former employees reported yesterday to their places of former employment and were advised that no work was available."[113] In Tanga, Matayo recalled that most European employers tolerated not having their servants for a few days, but many Asian employers sacked servants who went on strike and hired non-unionized workers instead.[114] Following the strike, the Dar es Salaam District Commissioner announced on a radio broadcast that employees should not be surprised if their employers do not want to take them back on account of the trouble they caused. "It is natural that employers should be angry," he said, "and, personally, I think that if a person really wants his job back, he should be careful not to

[109] "Union Chiefs Split on Strike: The Moderates Gain Support, Police Round-up at Kinondoni," *Sunday News*, 9 December 1956.
[110] Ibid.
[111] "Warning to Strikers," *Tanganyika Standard*, 10 December 1956.
[112] "Strikes Called off by T.F.L.," *Tanganyika Standard*, 28 December 1956,
[113] "'Strike Ended' Statement was Premature, Caused Confusion Among Ex-Employees," *Tanganyika Standard*, 29 December 1956.
[114] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 163.

increase his employer's annoyance: he should ask for his job back politely and with good manners." He warned servants not to continue to pester employers who chose not to re-hire them, but rather to give "his employer time to recover from his annoyance" and to wait until the end of the month to try again.[115]

Many commercial and industrial employers did not re-employ workers who participated in the two-day sympathy strike. Workers in the motor trade were hit particularly hard. According to the unions, 5,000 workers were sacked because of the strike.[116] An official of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union warned that employers' refusal to rehire strikers "would give rise to a serious situation" in which "workers in essential industries would also be called upon to take part in any strike action which might be decided."[117] On 12 December they threatened an "indefinite" strike would begin the following day if employers did not reinstate their former employees. They also demanded that all building and construction workers should be employed on permanent, monthly contracts by the end of the month, entitling them to annual leave, medical benefits, paid travel allowances, and at least an eighty percent salary increase.[118] Employers refused to budge.

As Shivji describes, the TFL, which was coordinating the strikes, was "undoubtedly facing a new situation of which it had no experience. The situation was made worse by the unsympathetic Labour Department and stubborn employers."[119] While the General Secretary of the TFL, Rashidi Kawawa, was out of the country at a meeting

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[115] "'Ask for Job back Politely' – Says D.C." *Tanganyika Standard*, 10 December 1956.
[116] Shivji, *Working Class*, 197.
[117] "Workers Warned by D.C. to Stay out of Trouble, Servants' Strike is at Crucial Stage, Essential Workers may be Called Out," *Tanganyika Standard*, 10 December 1956.
[118] "Strike Threat by Building Workers," *Tanganyika Standard*, 12 December 1956.
[119] Shivji, *Working Class*, 197.

in Accra, workers approved a resolution to call a territory-wide general strike at a mass meeting held by TFL officers on 20 January 1957. The next day, the TFL gave the Labour Commissioner twenty-one-days' notice of their intention to call a general strike, which the Labour Commissioner retorted was illegal and unconstitutional. As the tension escalated, Kawawa returned to Dar es Salaam, reportedly astonished the TFL called for a general strike while he as away. Shortly thereafter, Kawawa and other union officials worked with the government to extinguish the situation. The TFL conceded to calling off the strike in exchange for employers' representatives only agreeing to recommend that employers reconsider reinstating their former employees.[120]

The strike was a material failure—employers did not agree to reinstate any of the sacked workers or to increase wages. With the state's support, employers stuck together to show their employees who held the upper hand in the employment relationship. However, the strike created significant unease in Dar es Salaam. Many servants had worked in the same household for years and bonds of trust and affection developed between employer and employee. Whereas employers may have been under the impression that their servants were completely devoted and loyal, they now questioned the relationships they had with the people who worked in their homes.

Employers' sense of loyalty quickly turned to bitter feelings of betrayal when their servants participated in the strike. When sentencing strikers for unlawful picketing, the Resident Magistrate scolded several servants, not for threatening violence, for attempting to drive a wedge between masters and servants:

> It is quite outrageous that you, Kassim, should intimidate one and you, Ferdinand, two domestic servants, the first of whom, Rajabu, has been a cook for the same employer, an Arab shopkeeper, for no less than 13 years and the second, Mzee, as

[120] For an overview of the TFL threatened general strike, see Shivji, *Working Class*, 197-199.

> a houseboy to Dr. Joseph for ten years, and thus try to rupture such a commendable relationship between employer and employee to your own selfish ends.[121]

Employers could no longer pretend that their servants were friends or "part of the family." Servants asserted themselves as workers and, even if for brief moments, they forced their employers and state officials to view them as part of the African working class.

Conclusion

The TDHWU completely changed its leadership shortly after the strike. N.T.C. Msumba, General Secretary, and Hassan Abdalla, President, were forced to resign from their offices. The circumstances surrounding their resignations are unclear, but the union's 1957 annual audit indicate that Msumba personally owed the TDHWU Shs.699/-. In connection with the missing funds, the Registrar of Trade Unions urged the union's new officials to review section 53 of the Trade Unions Ordinance, which discussed the penalty for stealing union funds or property. It does not appear that Msumba was ever arrested and there is no discussion of Abdalla's connection to the missing funds.[122] The union's new Secretary, A.B. Mkelle, declared that the men were ousted due to "general incompetence mingled with failure to meet the needs of members in their difficulties."[123]

The union suffered from a high turnover and crisis of leadership until the Registrar revoked its registration on 10 June 1960 for failing to supply the proper annual

[121] "Threatened Domestic Servants," *Tanganyika Standard*, 15 December 1956.
[122] Registrar of Trade Unions to General Secretary TDHWU, 28 July 1958, ACC460 98/40/IV/f.32.
[123] A.B. Mkelle, Acting General Secretary TDHWU to Labour Commissioner, 17 March 1957, ACC460 98/40/I/f.1.

account documents to the state.[124] Shaabani Mabruki, a forty-five year old cook, took over for Abdalla as President in March 1957. Alfred Tingatinga, a forty year old houseboy, became Vice President. The union hired Mkelle, a young clerk, as General Secretary. Edward Tumwitike, also a forty-five year old cook, worked as Assistant General Secretary. Philip Moses, a forty-seven year old houseboy became General Treasurer and Hession Mtale, a fifty-nine year old houseboy, became the Assistant General Treasurer.[125] The following year Alfred Tingatinga, who had become a fish vendor, took over as President and Joseph Hemedi, and unemployed fifty-one year old cook, became Vice President. A few months later Chris Komba took over for Mkelle as General Secretary of the union.[126]

In November 1958 a union member, Martin Panduka, accused President Tingatinga and General Secretary Komba as well as the Secretary of the Dar es Salaam branch of stealing Shs.270/- in wages they had collected from his employer of his behalf. During the trial it was revealed that TDHWU officials had made it union practice in mid-1957 to retain the arrears of members' wages. The officers accused of stealing Panduka's wages claimed that they collected members' wages for the benefit of the union, but union financial records never showed the money going in to union accounts. It appears that the men pocketed Panduka's wages and had likely done so numerous times in the past to

[124] "Cancellation of Registration of a Trade Union," *Tanganyika Gazette* 35(XLI), 17 June 1960; A.S. Ramadhani II, "Kufungwa kwa Chama," *Mwafrika*, 27 June 1960.
[125] "Notice of Change in the Officers and Trustees," 23 April 1957, ACC460 98/40/I/f.3; "Names of Officers of the Trade Union, Domestic and Hotel Workers Union," 17 June 1957, ACC460 98/40/I/f.34.
[126] "Names of Officers of Trade Union," 2 July 1958, ACC460 98/40/IV/f.2; "Notice of Change in the Offices and Trustees," 9 September 1958, ACC460 98/40/IV/f.57.

other members.[127] The Resident Magistrate sentenced each of the men to nine months in prison. Joseph Hemedi stepped up as President when Tingatinga went to prison.[128]

Despite the chaos of the leadership, union membership remained quite strong. The TDHWU had officially registered branches in the large towns of all provinces of the Territory, as well as in many smaller towns and some rural areas. Although it claimed to have only 4,418 members, the union likely had closer to 5,000 members.[129] While there are no membership lists, Branch Committee lists suggest that several women were active in union affairs. Salima Hassan, a thirty year old *ayah*, served on the Dar es Salaam Branch Committee in 1957.[130] The union appointed her the representative of all *ayahs* in Dar es Salaam and she acted as a recruitment agent throughout capital.[131] Hassan did not remain on the committee the following year, but two other women joined. Fatima Mfaume, a fifty-two year old *ayah*, and Victoria Kondo, a thirty-nine year old *ayah*, served on the Dar es Salaam Branch Committee for 1958.[132] Women were involved in other branches throughout the Territory as well. Four women served on the Branch Committee in Musoma, all of whom were *ayahs*.[133] As their involvement in the union's

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[127] "Union Chiefs on Theft Charges," *Tanganyika Standard*, 12 November 1958; "Union Leaders Took my Pay—Houseboy," *Tanganyika Standard*, 15 November 1958; "Union Rule on Wage Arrears," Tanganyika Standard, 20 November 1958; "Officials 'Betrayed Union'—Jailed," *Tanganyika Standard*, 24 November 1958.

[128] "Notice of Change in Officers and Trustees," 4 December 1958, ACC460 98/40/IV/f.91.

[129] "Annual Return of a Trade Union, Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union," 15 July 1958," ACC460 98/40/IV/f.11. The union reported 1,569 new members in 1957, who generated a total of Shs.9,739/- in new membership fees. Since new membership fees were Shs.5/- per member, they should only have made Shs.7,845/- from the 1,569 new members. The TDHWU later admitted that its members list should have been longer, but because so many new members joined that year they lost track of everyone. Registrar of Trade Unions to General Secretary TDHWU, 22 July 1958, ACC460 98/40/IV/f.32.

[130] "Names of Offices of the Branch of a Trade Union, Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, Dar es Salaam Branch," ACC460 98/40/I/f.66.

[131] A.B. Mkelle to Director of Medical Services, 1 October 1957, ACC460 98/40/I/f.93; A.B. Mkelle, 12 September 1957, ACC460 98/40/II/f.2.

[132] "Names of Officers of the Branch of a Trade Union, Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, Dar es Salaam Branch," 3 April 1958, ACC460 98/40/III/f.52.

[133] "Names of Officers of the Branch of a Trade Union, Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, Musoma Branch," 2 July 1958, ACC460 98/40/III/f.99.

leadership suggests, women were beginning to play a larger role in Tanganyika's domestic service industry.

Conclusion

Colonial society changed in the 1950s, and with it so did domestic service. Large, well-trained, disciplined domestic staffs had become a thing of the past. In the wake of rising costs of living and the increasing availability of labor saving devices, the "Indian system" of employment was replaced by more cost effective ways of managing the home. "In the five years I was in Tanganyika from 1947 to 1952," explained June Duffus, a stenographer in the Secretariat's office, "I saw many changes."

> In the early days one followed patterns set by others: for instance, wives seldom worked and a family would employ several house servants (male) each of whom had his very own strict guarded "territory", with the cook refusing to do anything in the house, and the houseboy refusing to cook etc, however urgent the situation might have been. Five years later, with the ever-spiraling cost of living, many European wives went out to work. Servants's [sic] wages were higher, so one tended to employ fewer servants, demanded a higher standard of work and did more oneself in the house. I knew several women who installed electric stoves in their houses and did their own cooking, so that the outside kitchen with the smoky wood stove became obsolete, as did the old-time "Mpishi".[1]

European employers, who had once coveted their impressively large domestic staffs, significantly downsized and servants became less important to their daily lives. Europeans certainly still needed their African servants and depended on the labor they provided, but the transition from life in Europe to life in colonial Tanganyika in the 1950s was much less severe than it had been in the 1920s. More familiar and convenient domestic technologies, such as refrigerators and electric stoves, had arrived in Tanganyika and there were more Europeans living in the Territory for newcomers to rely on for knowledge, advice, and companionship.[2] While they were becoming less important

[1] June Duffus, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa," Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (11).
[2] The European population of Dar es Salaam increased from 1,043 in 1940 to 3,606 in 1952 and 4,479 in 1957. Burton, *African Underclass*, 282.

in the homes of Europeans, servants continued to be quite significant to the daily maintenance of Asian households and became more important in the homes of Africans. Unfortunately, these were also the populations in the worst position to pay their servants livable wages. Servants remained a significant sector of the urban labor market, and continued to be an essential part of the urban economy and urban life, but the occupation changed dramatically.

Whereas it was once the work of male breadwinners, domestic service has slowly become an occupation dominated by young women. Towards the end of the colonial era, the state made active efforts to push more African women into domestic service. In 1957 it finally established a citywide minimum wage in Dar es Salaam to help workers better cope with the rising cost of living. The Wage Regulation Order of 1957 set minimum wages according to age and sex. Since officials believed "a substantial proportion of the women and children in employment are dependents of contract workers who have accompanied their men-folk from the tribal areas," the legislation made the minimum wage for women significantly lower than that of men.[3] The legal rate of pay for adult men eighteen or older was Shs.-/42 per hour compared to Shs.-/32 for adult women over the age of eighteen. If employers provided housing the rates of pay for men and women dropped to Shs.-/36 and Shs.-/26 per hour respectively. At the age of fifteen male youths earned Shs.-/21 per hour, Shs.-/26 per hour at sixteen, and Shs.-/32 at age seventeen regardless of whether or not employers supplied housing. Young women earned only Shs.-/16 per hour at age fifteen, Shs.-/20 at age sixteen, and Shs.-/24 at seventeen with or without housing. Working an average of forty-eight hours per week, adult men should have earned a minimum of Shs.87/50 without housing or Shs.69/12 per month with

[3] 1956 Labour Department Annual Report, CO736/49.

housing. Adult women on the other hand should have earned a minimum of Shs.61/44 without housing or Shs.49/92 per month with housing.[4]

Women slowly began entering domestic service during the later half of the 1950s, ending the monopoly men had over the industry since the beginning of the colonial period. Since the legal minimum wage for women of age sixteen was about one third that of a man aged eighteen or older, employers had a large financial incentive to hire young women rather than adult men. Women were also an inexpensive alternative to child servants, which the state began to increasingly crack down on in the later half of the 1950s.[5] Colonial administrators wanted African women to replace men in domestic service. If women could supply the reproductive labor in not only African homes, but also European and Asian homes, thousands of African men could be "released for work of greater productivity."[6] Molohan argued:

> It is ludicrous that domestic service in Tanganyika should be the prerequisite of the male. The territory cannot afford for much longer the luxury of locking up so many able-bodied men in the unproductive sphere of employment for which women are far better suited and equipped.

He proposed renewing discussions held a few years earlier on setting up training courses for women in the domestic service. The WSLT had already been training African women to work as *ayahs*, but the state was now interested in moving women into other domestic jobs that had previously been considered men's work.[7]

While employers had incentives to hire women, African women had their own reasons for seeking work as domestic servants. They were able to avoid domestic

[4] 1957 Labour Department Annual Report, CO736/51.
[5] 1955 Labour Department Annual Report, CO736/43; 1956 Labour Department Annual Report, CO736/49; 1957 Labour Department Annual Report, CO736/51.
[6] 1956 Labour Department Annual Report, CO736/49.
[7] Molohan, *Detribalization*, 42; Hall, "A Bushwife's Progress."

employment during the interwar period, but the rising cost of living in both urban and rural areas restructured households after World War II. The number of African women migrating to cities dramatically increased towards the end of the colonial era, and it continued to increase in the post-colonial period. Scholars have uncovered numerous reasons for this migration, notably new financial pressures on households and women's desires to escape the restrictions of patriarchal family structures in rural areas.[8] The employment opportunities available in Dar es Salaam and other urban areas offered women the control they increasingly sought over their lives. Until very recently, domestic employment was one of the only opportunities for regular, wage-earning employment available to women in Tanzania.

Just as women opted out of domestic service before WWII, the rise in the percentage of servants who were female was aided by African men increasingly opting out of domestic work themselves as the occupation declined. After the War, it was not the highly paid, well-respected occupation it once was—domestic service was degrading work. It was not work that men chose, it was work they resorted to because they could not find employment elsewhere. In addition to the work becoming less profitable and more exploitative, domestic service became exceptionally humiliating as anti-colonial sentiment grew in Tanganyika. While servants once gained social prestige from being associated with European households, as Africans increasingly resented their European colonizers they also resented the African servants who worked for them.[9] Men did what they needed to do to make money and survive in the city, but they were not proud of it.

[8] See Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi, "Women in Tanzania." Also see Bujra, *Serving Class*; Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in Southern Africa 1900-1983* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1991).
[9] Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 163.

They sought other occupations, which offered higher wages, more autonomy, and more respect.

Domestic service continued to decline and transform in post-colonial Tanzania. Although the occupation has not been entirely feminized, domestic wage labor in Tanzanian cities has increasingly been considered women's work as the number of female servants grew since independence in 1961. Only three percent of domestic servants in Tanganyika were women in 1949, but fourteen percent of paid domestic workers in post-colonial Tanzania were female in 1971.[10] Women comprised nearly seventy-eight percent of servants in 1990, and over eighty percent by 2006. Domestic service has a higher concentration of women than any other occupation in the country.[11]

In stark contrast to how the occupation was perceived at the beginning of the twentieth century, domestic service in Tanzania today is, as one former servant described, "a job without honour."[12] In addition to being some of the lowest paid workers in cities, servants are considered lazy, stupid, and expendable. African men still work as servants in Dar es Salaam and elsewhere, but mostly in wealthier European and Asian homes. They have managed to maintain their foothold in the houses of the upper classes, leaving the lesser-paid work in the homes of Africans and lower class Asians to African women. Most of the jobs in upper class homes pay fairly well, but as domestic service becomes increasingly identified as women's work, as opposed to men's work, it no longer carries the same meaning it held during the interwar period, regardless of the wages it brings in. Domestic work today it, by and large, emasculating. The houseboys of the colonial era,

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[10] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 7.
[11] *The Labour Force Survey, 1990/91*, (Dar es Salaam: Bureau of Statistics, 1993), 86; LABOURSTA, accessed 23 October 2013, http://laborsta.ilo.org/STP/guest.
[12] Bujra, *Serving Class*, 176.

once the "elité of native society," have become poorly paid housegirls throughout most of post-colonial Africa.[13]

Domestic service in contemporary Dar es Salaam is mostly performed by young women who migrate from rural areas to both live and work in their employers' homes. With few opportunities for these girls to earn an income in rural areas, their families send them to cities for indeterminate periods to earn money working as servants for African families. They hope to earn enough money to send home to their families, but most housegirls earn little to nothing at all. In 2011, Tanzania's minimum wage was TSH65,000 (about $38.00) per month. However, since they provided servants with food and housing, employers could legally pay live-in servants as little as TSH25,000 (about $15) per month. Most of the young women I interviewed who worked as servants in Dar es Salaam earned less than the legal minimum wage, and many never received regular, monthly payment. Removed and isolated from their families, and unable to afford the journey back home if they chose to leave their employers in the city, several of these women described feeling enslaved.[14]

Domestic workers are overlooked and taken for granted. Although they are treated as expendable, they provide the reproductive labor that keeps the economy of Dar es Salaam and other cities throughout the continent running from day to day. With a current growth rate of 4.3 percent per annum, Dar es Salaam is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. The 2002 Tanzanian census reported the population of Dar es Salaam to be

[13] For a thorough overview of the current situation of housegirls in Africa and servants worldwide, see International Labour Organization, "Decent Work for Domestic Workers," 2010 Report.
[14] Pariser, "From Houseboys to Housegirls."

2,497,940, compared to 1,360,850 in 1988, and just 272,821 in 1961.[15] In 2012, the census recorded 4,364,541 people living in Dar es Salaam, representing over ten percent of the mainland's entire population.[16] As more people move to the city, more domestic workers are needed to support these urban households. Honester, a woman with a full-time administrative job in Dar es Salaam, explained to me that there is an urgent need for domestic workers in the city. These days, both the husband and the wife work in many urban households. "The city is expensive," she explained, "so everyone is trying to increase the income of the family. Everyone needs domestic workers."[17]

The increase in Tanzanian women entering the wage labor force in Dar es Salaam is greatly contributing the growing need for domestic labor in the city. With women no longer staying at home to take manage their households themselves, domestic workers are more critical to the economy of the African urban household than ever before. The Tanzanian government and international organizations have used the increasing number of women entering the workforce as evidence of growing gender equality and the empowerment of women in Tanzania. As Annamarie Kiaga suggests, however, these figures are misleading. Kiaga's research on housegirls in Sinza, a ward in Dar es Salaam, illustrates that the empowerment of a specific population of women in Tanzania is directly causing the exploitation of another female population—rural women. The increase in the number of formally employed, middle-class urban women is paralleled by

[15] United Republic of Tanzania, 2002 Population and Housing Census Report Summary. As cited in UN-HABITAT, "Tanzania: Dar es Salaam City Profile," 2009.
[16] The United Republic of Tanzania, "2012 Population and Housing Census," 2013. In 1964 the independent Republic of Tanganyika merged with the independent islands of the Republic of Zanzibar to form Tanzania. The total population of Tanzania in 2012 was 44,928,923. 43,625,354 people lived on the mainland and 1,303,569 lived in Zanzibar.
[17] Interview with Honester, Dar es Salaam, 11 May 2011.

an increase in the number of "rural housegirls [who] are increasingly employed to fill the gap left by urban middle-class women in their households."[18]

As this dissertation has shown, the importance of domestic servants to the urban economy is not new. Domestic servants have always been a significant part of Dar es Salaam's labor force and, in many respects, the backbone of the urban economy. Instead of domestic service becoming less important as Tanzania transitioned into the post-colonial era, it became more important. Without servants, the urban economy would not be able to effectively function. Yet, these workers continue to be overlooked. Scholars and lawmakers alike do not consider servants part of the working class, and thus leave them out of academic literature as well as many labor laws. Servants have begun appearing in more Africanist scholarship, but they usually function as tools to understand the making of difference, the intimacies of power, and the oppressive forces of capitalism. These are, of course, important and worthwhile projects. Scholars, however, have largely failed to examine servants as workers.

This dissertation is, as Carolyn Steedman describes her study of domestic servants in industrializing England, "in part, the beginning of an attempt to see what happens to a historiography once a majority of the working class are added to their own story."[19] Just as E.P. Thompson overlooked the role of the largest occupational group in industrializing England in *The Making of the English Working Class*, so too have scholars of African labor, colonialism, and urbanization. Considering the important connections made between the labor question, the urban question, and the making of the colonial project,

[18] Kiaga, "Blaming the Other Woman," 2.
[19] Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 22.

scholars' neglect of servants is highly problematic.[20] The history of domestic service not only adds to these narratives—it changes them.

The linear narrative suggesting African workers moved from temporary to permanent employment during the colonial period is incorrect. The majority of urban workers were domestic servants, and the majority of servants were permanent workers who worked six or seven days a week, for at least ten hours per day. Their labor was far from casual, and they liked it that way. Initially, domestic employment served men well. They enjoyed the stability of their regular paychecks as well as the non-monetary remunerations that accompanied domestic work. Men eagerly sought domestic employment; it paid well and provided many men a route to honor and respectability previously denied to them. They were proud of their work. However, the decline of the urban economy and the state's reaction to the unrest of the small, but powerful, industrial work force restructured domestic service.

African workers were not a homogonous mass, and the colonial state did not view them as such. As this dissertation illustrates, colonial administrators did not envision a single hegemonic project that would transform urban workers into respectable industrial men, subject to the universalist disciplinary power of wage dependency. In Tanganyika, as well as other colonial states, administrators made an active effort to keep living wages out of the hands of the majority of urban workers. To keep the economy functioning, they needed to keep domestic labor affordable. They did not have the desire or the labor power to regulate domestic service. Administrators believed that domestic service was beyond the purview of the state, but it was also well beyond their control. They simply could not,

[20] On the labor question, see Cooper, *Decolonization*. On the urban question, see Brennan, *Taifa*.

and would not, enforce labor standards in thousands of private residences throughout the capital, much less the whole of Tanganyika Territory.

Servants in Dar es Salaam loudly objected to the state's attempts to leave them vulnerable to the types of exploitation administrators and workers alike increasingly viewed as unacceptable. Through their union, servants left a deep imprint in the archival record. Despite the evidence available, scholars have looked past them. Servants did not form large, successful unions like railway workers, miners, and dockworkers. The one strike they organized themselves resulted in no material gains and many workers losing their jobs. However, servants were an important part of Tanganyika's labor force and labor movement. They should be central to scholarly analysis of the many facets of colonial life and colonial labor in Africa. By examining the struggle between servants and the state over labor standards and their status as workers, this dissertation sheds new light on the changing visions and meanings of work and forces scholars to reconsider the dominant narrative of Africa's colonial past.

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