

The Racialization of Politics in Revolutionary Zanzibar

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“Against all predictions at the time and against all odds the Revolution has been able to cultivate an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect among Zanzibaris of all races and creeds.” – Omar Mapuri¹

“The situation was really bad. Karume was killing people, undermining everybody and the economy was in a mess... The country was ushered into a thirty-year rule of unprecedented brutality and loss of Zanzibari identity.” – Abdulrahman Babu²

Introduction

On January 12, 1964, a group of African youth led a revolution on the island of Zanzibar, overthrowing the nation’s independent government that had been established only a month prior. The words of Omar Mapuri and Abdulrahman Babu represent the juxtaposing memories that the Zanzibari Revolution and the resulting revolutionary government have left in Zanzibari society. To some, the revolution, with the expulsion of evil Arab occupiers, represented a new future, ending centuries of African subservience. Yet to others, what resulted was not progress, but rather a step backwards into a world of stagnation and racialism. In many respects, the revolution is far from over, as evidenced by the bloodshed over recent elections and a re-emergence of the same racial rhetoric that sparked revolutionary violence over forty years ago. In this paper, I will examine the racialization of Zanzibari politics, not only before but, just as importantly, after January 1964, and its effect on the Zanzibari population.

Much of the debate over the origins of the Zanzibari Revolution centers on authors who seek to describe it as either a racial/ethnic driven revolution or class-based

¹ Omar Mapuri, *The 1964 Revolution: Achievements and Prospects* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Tema Publishers, 1996), 58.

² Abdulrahman Babu in Haroub Othman, ed., *Babu: I Saw the Future and It Works: Essays Celebrating the Life of Comrade Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, 1924-1996* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: E&D, 2001), 49, 77.

one.³ The first group focuses on classifications like Shirazi, mainlander African, Arab and Asian, while the latter prefers categories like peasants, landowners, and bourgeoisie. However, many of these authors, from both sides, have neglected two key elements in their debate. First, policy and action were not always driven by what was, but rather what was perceived, and second, the events before and after 1964 were equally important in shaping revolutionary society in Zanzibar. While many scholars have considered “ethnicity, race, and nation as analytically distinct,” they are in fact interconnected.⁴ Genocide and racial violence often “tend[s] to be accompanied by rhetoric in which ethnic categories are imagined as hierarchical strata.”⁵ This was the case in Zanzibar where Africans viewed themselves relegated to the bottom of a social structure, reinforced during colonial rule, which empowered their Arab and Asian oppressors. The actual level of oppression was less relevant than the perception that Africans were the victims of enslavement.

Some have tried to counter this by explaining, correctly, that class lines transcended race; there were both poor Arabs and well-to-do Africans.⁶ However, they inaccurately state that the revolution was not racial because the Zanzibar National Party (ZNP), the party overthrown by the revolution, was supported by a large contingent of

³ Although one’s “ethnicity” incorporates a number of varying factors, to include language, race, heritage, religion, and common culture, for the purposes of simplicity in this paper, I will use ethnicity and race interchangeably unless otherwise noted. This fits the pattern established by Zanzibari newspapers like *Afrika Kwetu* which used *kabila* to denote both terms; see Jonathon Glassman, “Sorting out the Tribes: The Creation of Racial Identities in Colonial Zanzibar’s Newspaper Wars,” *The Journal of African History* 41, no. 3 (2000), 396. For a greater discussion on the development and literature of raciology, see Glassman, “Slower Than a Massacre: The Multiple Sources of Racial Thought in Colonial Africa,” *American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (Jun., 2004), 723-730.

⁴ Glassman, “Slower,” 729.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 730.

⁶ For more on this argument, see Ibrahim Focas Shao, *The Political Economy of Land Reform in Zanzibar* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1992), and Issa Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism? Lessons of Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2008).

African voters. Despite the fact that the ZNP did have a substantial African backing, necessary for any party to gain control in Zanzibar, to those who led the revolution of 1964, it was an “Arab party” that represented “Arab dominance.” In this case, what the ZNP represented in the rhetoric of the opposition Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), the party that forced itself into power in January 1964, was far more important to revolutionaries than the actual ethnic make-up or beliefs of the party’s supporters.

Many of these authors have also ignored the actions taken by the revolutionary government of Abeid Karume after 1964, limiting themselves in their analysis of the January 1964 violence as racial or class based. A recent exception is G. Thomas Burgess’ new book *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar*, which features Burgess’ analysis as a supplement to the memoirs of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad, both prominent men in Zanzibari politics after the revolution. The memoirs offer recollections of revolutionary Zanzibar from two contrasting views and insights into the formation of Zanzibar’s public and private sectors. Several other works also provide accounts of Karume’s regime that, combined with original archival research, I intend to bring together to display the continuation of racial policy from pre- to post-revolutionary Zanzibar.⁷

⁷ These works include Deborah Amory, “The politics of identity on Zanzibar,” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1994), who examines Karume’s attacks on Shirazi identity and forced marriages; George W. Triplett, “Zanzibar: The Politics of Revolutionary Inequality,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, no. 4 (Dec., 1971): 612-617, who examines the differences in opportunity and luxury between government officials and regular Zanzibaris; Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001) and “‘It’s Just no Fun Anymore:’ Women’s Experiences of Taarab before and after the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no.1 (2002): 61-81, who examines Zanzibari culture and society before and after the revolution; Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987) and Ibrahim Shao, *The Political Economy of Land Reform in Zanzibar*, who examine Zanzibar’s land use and ownership; Don Petterson, *Revolution in Zanzibar: An American’s Cold War Tale* (Cambridge, MA:

Finally, arguments that ignore race entirely in favor of a Marxist approach do not withstand simple scrutiny when it comes to the Zanzibari Revolution. The author of one such argument is B.D. Bowles, who says one should think of Zanzibari “workers as they actually were, that is, workers, rather than mainlanders or Africans... To do otherwise is to write the history of images.”⁸ Yet Zanzibari Africans as they “actually were” were Africans; this was a distinct identity in the islands, and is how they were viewed by themselves and by other Zanzibaris within the society in which they lived. In addition, we are able to look at actual Zanzibari opinion on the issue, rather than relying on political theory. When Babu – to many Zanzibar’s leading Marxist – was asked if the revolution was a “class struggle,” he responded emphatically, “No, it was not. It took a racial form.”⁹ To ignore or discredit the thoughts and realities of actual Zanzibaris as Bowles has done is to write fiction, not history, distorting our basic understanding of the revolution.

Thesis

While the issues of class versus race as inspiration for the Zanzibari Revolution have been heavily debated, less has been done to discover the extent to which race

Westview Press, 2002), who looks at the early years of Karume’s rule, Issa Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?* and Aboud Jumbe, *The Partnership: Tanganyika Zanzibar Union 30 Turbulent Years* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Amana Publishers, 1994), who concentrate on issues of the Union; and Burgess’ articles on varying aspects of Zanzibari society. I hope to combine these into a holistic view of Karume’s racial policy.

⁸ B.D. Bowles, “The Struggle for Independence, 1946-1963,” in *Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule*, edited by Abdul Sheriff and Ed Ferguson (London: James Currey Ltd., 1991), 93. Bowles’ chapter is also addressed in Thomas Burgess, “An Imagined Generation: Umma Youth in Nationalist Zanzibar,” in *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence from Tanzania: Essays in Honor of I.M. Kimambo*, edited by Gregory Maddox, James Giblin, and Y.Q. Lawi (London: James Currey, 2005), 219-220, and Glassman, “Sorting,” 404, who states, “Such interpretations beg the question of why ‘skin-deep’ attitudes would prompt behavior as visceral as a pogrom.” Bowles and other Marxists reached their heyday during the 1970s and 1980s, but have now been largely discredited in their interpretations of East African revolution.

⁹ Babu, “I Was the First Third World Minister to Recognize GDR,” in Othman, *Babu*, 52.

influenced the new regime's post-revolution policy. Thus, my paper will not only explore the racial politicization that led to the events of January 12, 1964, but also how this politicization reappeared in the policies of the Karume era (1964-1972). I intend to show that racially-based politics under the British Protectorate led to a political divide along ethnic lines of rhetoric, which accelerated during the *zama za siasa* (period of politics).¹⁰ Racial rhetoric then turned into official government policy after the 1964 revolution. While multiple identities, including class, generation, and gender, certainly contributed to revolutionary developments in Zanzibar, race/ethnicity became primary to both the causes of the revolution and policies of the Karume regime once in power.

Race and Ethnicity in Colonial Zanzibar

To understand the Zanzibari Revolution, one must first understand Zanzibari history, something that is highly contested on the islands.¹¹ The strategic location of Zanzibar, consisting of the islands of Unguja and Pemba, in the Indian Ocean helped to create a historically diverse, cosmopolitan society. Trade from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East converged on the islands, bringing with it a multitude of influences. Intermarriage between various ethnic groups complicated demographic identities, highlighted by the fact that the “indigenous” people of the islands adopted the name

¹⁰ This term “period of politics” encompasses an acceleration in political activity in Zanzibar and the push for independence. The period is often defined as 1957 – January 12, 1964 (the Revolution), although some more broadly define it as the post-WWII era. *Wakati wa siasa* has also been used with the same meaning. For a detailed look at this period, written shortly before the revolution, see Michael Lofchie, “Party Conflict in Zanzibar.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (Jun., 1963): 185-207.

¹¹ The revision and rewriting of Zanzibari history was not only central to the development of racial animosity in pre-revolutionary Zanzibar, it has also reemerged as a major part of political discourse in contemporary Zanzibar as well. How people “remember” Zanzibar before the revolution is key to whether they view it as a great success or complete failure. Politicians have sought to manipulate memory for the advance of their party, sometimes at the expense of peace and stability.

Shirazi, which is actually derived from the Persian city of Shiraz.¹² The islands' African and Arab populations were said to have lived in "peaceful co-existence,"¹³ that is until the introduction of Omani Arab rule, which helped turn Zanzibar into an epicenter of the East African slave trade. With the prosperity of Zanzibar Island (Unguja) and its central location in the establishment of an East African commercial empire, Sultan Seyyid Said moved the Omani capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1832.¹⁴ The new system of Arab rule and African slavery left a lasting legacy on Zanzibari perception and identity, described here by Babu:

Although not everybody in Zanzibar is an ex-slave or a slave-owner, collectively those who classify themselves as "Arabs" or associates of Arabs, rightly or wrongly (mostly wrongly), are categorized as the *mabwana* (privileged masters); and those who classify themselves as "Africans" identify themselves as victims of the old slave society. Consequently, loyalties to political parties are similarly identified, that is to say, you either affiliate with masters or with their victims.¹⁵

When Zanzibar became a British protectorate in 1890, British rule "accentuated" the state's "major ethnic division[s]," often unintentionally.¹⁶ When it was an Arab state, "Any strain towards solidarity and harmony in Zanzibar politics was along racial prejudice." The British administration maintained and sometimes worsened this prejudice by grouping people into solely "ethnic compartments," preserving a societal

¹² For a discussion on the origin of this name and more recent debates over its authenticity, see Amory, "The politics of identity." Also see Michael F. Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 24-26.

¹³ Lawrence E.Y. Mbogoni, "Censoring the Press in Colonial Zanzibar: An Account of the Seditious Case against Al-Falaq," in *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence from Tanzania: Essays in Honor of I.M. Kimambo*, edited by Gregory Maddox, James Giblin, and Y.Q. Lawi (London: James Currey, 2005), 198.

¹⁴ See Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, 30-33, and Petterson, *Revolution*, 5-8.

¹⁵ Babu, "Wanted: A Third Force in Zanzibar," in Othman, *Babu*, 60.

¹⁶ Glassman, "Slower," 735.

structure that favored Omani Arabs over Africans.¹⁷ Many authors have blamed British divide-and-rule tactics as being responsible for the increase in racial animosity on the islands. Ibrahim Shao goes as far as to say:

The British colonial government instituted a racial ideology which made the struggle appear not as one of labour against capital, but as one of Africans against Arabs. This resulted in the formation of political parties and trade unions on racial lines...¹⁸ It is obvious that it was the colonial government that orchestrated racial tensions and conflicts by enacting laws that tended to favour one race (Arabs and Asians) against another (Africans). This was the subjective approach of driving a wedge among races with a view to playing one race against another or others so that at no time would the classes come together for purposes of driving out colonialism. This was the usual divide and rule method used by the British all over the colonies.¹⁹

However, the British system of governance in Zanzibar lacked the characteristics of true divide-and-rule policy. Locals never threatened the British position of power and British officials felt secure all the way up until Zanzibari independence.²⁰ Instead, the British increased racial tensions by simply maintaining a system that provided real and perceived benefits to those of non-African ethnicity.

Perhaps the best example of British policy unintentionally accentuating a racial divide can be traced to the abolition of the slave trade in Zanzibar in 1873, followed by a full ban on slavery as an institution on the islands in 1897. While this may appear to have been a step towards equality, in actuality, Arabs and Indians on Zanzibar's islands were seen by the British government as higher peoples than the African slaves, to whom they showed caution in emancipating over fear that violence, looting, and dissidence

¹⁷ Ibid., and Amir A. Mohammed, *A Guide to a History of Zanzibar* (Zanzibar: Good Luck Publishers, 1991 (Third Ed 2006)), 7-8.

¹⁸ Shao, *The Political Economy*, vii. Shao actually argues that the revolution developed along class lines that formed from 1945-1964, but also acknowledges the importance of racial identity and divisions in Zanzibar. The evidence he uses also describes ethnically based rhetoric and policy as part of the ASP mantra and Karume regime.

¹⁹ Ibid., 25.

²⁰ Burgess, verbal and e-mail communication.

would follow.²¹ Even after emancipation, many Africans remained in a subservient role to their Arab “masters,” managing a squatter economy on the islands.²² Racial tensions on the islands worsened when there was a worldwide drop in clove prices, Zanzibar’s chief export, during the 1930’s. Having lost control of their African labor force, Arab landowners reluctantly became indebted to South Asian lenders and soon came to resent the “Indian commercial bourgeoisie.” Thus, the implementation of a “free” society had an unintended and unforeseen destabilizing effect on the land-tenure system that decreased the power of the Sultan and Arab landowners.²³ Not only did the Arab-African racial divide continue after abolition, but the Zanzibari Asian population was also thrust into the islands’ ethnic tensions by unfortunate circumstance.

With this change under the British protectorate came the increasing need for Zanzibar’s 264,162 people to define themselves ethnically.²⁴ One’s ethnic categorization was believed to have had a direct impact on educational, economic, and civil service opportunities, with Arabs and Indians benefiting the most. As a result, there was a “scramble for an Arab identity” as many sought to maintain their previous positions of power, or gain new rewards in Zanzibar’s administration, resulting in the formation of the

²¹ For a larger discussion on this and the British abolition of slavery in her African colonies, see Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*.

²² *Ibid.*, provides the most detailed account of the development and implementation of this system and its impact on Zanzibari society. Cooper also states that official British documents referred to Arabs as being of a higher class than Africans. The concept of “African” equaling “slave” and “Arab” equaling “master” remained present in the writings of Zanzibari intelligentsia from both the ASP and the ZNP during the *zama za siasa*. See Glassman, “Sorting,” 424.

²³ Shao, *The Political Economy*, 10-11. Glassman, “Slower,” 746, explains that this tension led to boycotts of Indian merchants during the 1930’s and lasted through independence.

²⁴ This population figure is based on official census taken in 1948. According to the census, 75.7% of Zanzibaris were identified as African, 16.9% Arab, 5.8% Asian, 1.1% Comorian, and 0.5% Goan, European, or other. While the 1958 census figures list Zanzibar’s population at 299,111 people, it does not provide for an accurate ethnic breakdown. Data available in Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, 70-72.

Arab Association.²⁵ While there was a marked decrease from the 1924 to 1931 census in those that claimed mainland heritage, and near disappearance of the Swahili ethnic label, the number of Zanzibaris claiming Arab identity rose from 18,884 to 33,401, a 77% increase.²⁶ The number rose to 44,560 by 1948, the increase coming not from immigration but from “within” Zanzibari society, as islanders sought to reap the benefits of improved colonial “social status.”²⁷ Some have even argued that “Zanzibari Arabs chose to remain Arab rather than become African.”²⁸ The importance of ethnic identity resulted first in the formation of ethnic associations, and then later became “institutionalized in the realm of colonial politics” with the formation of the Legislative Council in 1926 and food rationing along racial lines during World War II.²⁹ In Zanzibar the period is not remembered as World War II, or even the Italian War as in other parts of East Africa, but rather as *wakati wa mchele wa kadi*, “the era of getting rice by ration cards,” cards that were distributed based solely on racial classification. Zanzibaris identified by the rationing cards as Arab received a higher quantity and quality of food than those identified as African.³⁰ Ali Sultan Issa claims that political discrimination by

²⁵ Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, 99-100, and Amory, “The politics of identity,” 58.

²⁶ Cooper, *From Slaves*, 164. Also see Amory, “The politics of identity,” 29-39, and 268, which states “When [Zanzibaris] saw or heard that the colonial administration was attempting to restrict certain rights... to members of particular ethnic communities, they pragmatically claimed membership with such communities as one means of laying claim to those rights.”

²⁷ Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, 74-75. Fair, *Pastimes*, 44-45.

²⁸ Mbogoni, “Censoring,” 203, citing the views of Wole Soyinka, “Response to Ali’s Millennial ‘Conclusion’,” *West African Review* (2000), available at <http://www.westafricanreview.com/war/vol1.2/soyinka2.html>.

²⁹ Fair, *Pastimes*, 42. Pages 46-53 in the same work provide a detailed account of the cultural and political impact of the food rationing system. Mohammed Ali Bakari, *The Democratisation Process in Zanzibar: A Retarded Transition* (Hamburg, Germany: Institute of African Affairs, 2001), 54-55, emphasizes that the Council’s first African representative was not appointed until 1946.

³⁰ Fair, *Pastimes*, 46-53.

race was cemented during the war and that because of this, “the British were responsible to a great extent for racial prejudice in Zanzibar.”³¹

The claims of Shirazi identity expanded during and after the war as well, and were often made because of the “privileged” racial position of Shirazis seemingly “imposed by colonial rule.”³² Shirazis were sometimes afforded the benefits of Arab ancestry, or at minimum were considered above Africans from the mainland because of the popular belief they were un-enslaved indigenous islanders. “Socially, the ‘thing to be’ [was] non-African;” choosing Shirazi or Arab identity instead of African identity brought a Zanzibari increased social status.³³ The material benefits of being Arab also included increased educational and civil-service opportunities. In 1958, for example, 126 Zanzibaris were studying in Britain, but only one of these students was African.³⁴ Burgess explains that throughout the 1950’s, “Arabs and South Asians, aside from a few hundred British expatriates, dominated the civil service” and the increasing “sphere of Western education.”³⁵ Indians and Comorians, too, were “differentiated economically and ethically,”³⁶ falling somewhere between the Arab aristocracy and African peasantry.

The British system of keeping ethnicities distinct “gave rise to a racial paradigm during the colonial period that tended to label population by race, and race denoted function: thus Arabs were landowners, Indians were merchants, and the Africans as the

³¹ Burgess, *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar: The Memoirs of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), 37.

³² C.S.L. Chachage, *Environment, Aid and Politics in Zanzibar* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: DUP, 2000), 28.

³³ Jane Campbell, “Multiracialism and Politics in Zanzibar,” *Political Science Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (Mar., 1962), 75, and Bakari, *The Democratisation Process*, 64.

³⁴ Bakari, *The Democratisation Process*, 93.

³⁵ Burgess, *Race*, 17.

³⁶ Chachage, *Environment*, 29.

downtrodden.”³⁷ While some have attempted to counter this argument by stating that race was not a key issue because only a small number of the Arab population were of “elite” status,³⁸ Lofchie explains, “In a society as small as Zanzibar, however, a racially differentiated elite, even if it was composed of only a few hundred families, was highly visible.”³⁹ As a result of this exposure, Arabs as a whole became labeled as Zanzibar’s exploitative race, a race that needed to be opposed by African nationalists. In Zanzibar, one’s actual race or ethnicity also became less important than their perceived identity because of the development of a “racism without races... a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but insurmountability of cultural differences,” based on how people grouped themselves and those around them.⁴⁰ Even “the ‘Africans’ who came to struggle with ‘Arabs’ were not born into such a neat category; they made themselves into Africans.”⁴¹ While ethnicity was sometimes “inherited at birth,” it was just as often claimed out of social necessity and a desire for “belonging.” Organizations like the African Sports and African Association provided men with tangible reasons to be “African” and soon became agents through which they attempted to increase their access to Zanzibari politics.⁴² Thus, an African political movement was created not to assist all

³⁷ Abdul Sheriff, “Race and Class in the Politics of Zanzibar,” *Afrika Spectrum* 36, no. 3 (2001), 301. Also see Lofchie, *Zanzibar*.

³⁸ Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?*, 10-11, places only 165 Arabs (1%) in the “Upper” class, with 12,470 (76%) in the “Lower.” This argument is also made by Sheriff, “Race.”

³⁹ Lofchie, “Was Okello’s Revolution a Conspiracy?” *Transition*, no. 33 (Oct.-Nov., 1967), 39. Leo Kuper also makes this assertion in “Theories of Revolution and Race Relations.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13, no. 1 (Jan., 1971): 87-107, stating that because many Mainland Africans “perceived Arabs collectively as racial oppressors,” it was irrelevant that the vast majority of Arabs did not “share in the enjoyment or in the exercise of wealth and power.”

⁴⁰ Glassman, “Slower,” 724, quoting Etienne Balibar, “Racism and Nationalism,” in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, edited by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, 37-67 (New York: Verso, 1991).

⁴¹ Cooper, *From Slaves*, 288.

⁴² Fair, *Pastimes*, 28-29, 249-252.

lower-class Zanzibaris, but rather to raise the status and representation of those who were considered downtrodden Africans.⁴³

The formation of ethnic identity on Pemba Island evolved in a slightly different manner. Because fertile land was more evenly distributed and less large plantations existed on Pemba than on Unguja, fewer tensions arose between squatters and landowners.⁴⁴ Greater intermarriage between Africans and Arabs and a common acceptance of Shirazi identity also decreased racial tensions on Pemba. Many Pembans found themselves closer politically and ethnically to Arabs whose families had lived in Zanzibar for decades longer than to migrant laborers from the mainland. “Fears of mainlander domination would contribute to Pemba’s emergence as a stronghold of the ZNP and its electoral ally, the Zanzibar and Pemba People’s Party (ZPPP).”⁴⁵ Despite this, Zanzibaris living in Pemba would still find themselves caught in the middle of Zanzibar’s racial and political struggle during British rule.

This struggle became characterized by racial rhetoric and politicking between the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) and Zanzibar National Party (ZNP), who fought for representation while Zanzibar as a whole simultaneously sought to gain independence. As its name implied, the ASP was born out of a union between the African and Shirazi Associations on the islands, and was highly racialized. The ZNP drew heavy support from the Arab Association and, while espousing multi-racialism, supported the continuation of the Sultanate and was viewed by many as an “Arab party.” In its

⁴³ For Karume and many Africans, Arabs were not even viewed as Zanzibaris, but rather as foreign occupiers. There was also a divide between a section of the indigenous Shirazis and the mainlander Africans, the group to which Karume belonged.

⁴⁴ M. Catherine Newbury, “Colonialism, Ethnicity, and Rural Protest: Rwanda and Zanzibar in Comparative Perspective,” *Comparative Politics* 15, no. 3 (Apr., 1983), 262.

⁴⁵ Glassman, “Sorting,” 405.

discourse, “the ASU [turned ASP] identified itself as the party of the deprived and impoverished Africans,”⁴⁶ which implied the ZNP was a party of non-Africans against African advancement. Although some Zanzibaris attempted to minimize this racialism by describing the struggle for independence in Marxist terms, the use of class-centric language was “problematic” for those trying to bring socialism to Zanzibar in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Burgess explains, “Relatively few in Zanzibar sought to explain human behavior by assigning certain class positions to political actors. For the less ‘exposed,’ race, ethnicity, and religion remained far more compelling identifiers.”⁴⁷ Because Zanzibaris defined themselves and their struggles in terms of ethnicity, it is wrong to retrospectively place class labels on the revolution.⁴⁸

The political importance of the ASP and ZNP began in 1957, as they battled to win election to six newly created Zanzibari seats in Zanzibar’s Legislative Council. The political parties introduced a modified history of Zanzibar that attacked not only the opposing party, but the opposing race as a whole. Much of this rhetoric began not with the desperate or illiterate, but with the islands’ most educated inhabitants, and later disseminated to all levels of society. This ensured that race would remain the center-point of pre-revolution Zanzibari political debate. Jonathon Glassman explains:

⁴⁶ Mohammed, *A Guide*, 43. Fair, *Pastimes*, 241-242, explains that the colonial administration’s “refusal” to allow Africans to decisively participate in government helped fuel the African Association’s claims that Africans were being denied representation in all levels of Zanzibari society, from the Sports Control Board to the Legislative Council.

⁴⁷ Burgess, “Mao in Zanzibar: Nationalism, Discipline, and the (De)construction of Afro-Asian Solidarities,” in *Bandung and Beyond*, edited by Christopher Lee (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, forthcoming), 20. Issa’s memoirs in Burgess, *Race*, describe the effort of some Zanzibaris (most notably those who followed in the footsteps of Babu) to bring socialist ideals, obtained on their travels to Russia, China, Cuba, and elsewhere, back to the islands, but these classifications remained secondary to ethnic identities.

⁴⁸ As will be shown below, this problem in part stems from the language used by Zanzibari officials, including Karume, after the revolution, when “peasant” became a convenient substitute for African, and “elite” for Arab. This shift became a convenient cover-up, or justification, for the racial violence and genocidal policies that occurred in the immediate aftermath of January 12, 1964.

To the intelligentsia's invocation of an Arab-driven history of civilization, African Association propagandists responded with historical narratives of Arab conquest and enslavement, and with an alternative definition of national identity based on race rather than civilization. By the late 1950s, ASP charges of racial blood guilt were routinely met by ZNP charges of innate barbarism. The resulting rancor spiraled into every corner of society, contributing directly to racial violence.⁴⁹

The ZNP and associated newspapers often avoided explicit racialism, but espoused concepts of ethnic nationalism that racialized political debate as both the ZNP and ASP sought to outmaneuver “the other” for control of Shirazi support.⁵⁰ This spiraling debate characterized politics during the *zama za siasa*; it also characterized every-day life and identity. Even Arab and Asian schoolteachers were found to have incited racial hatred, calling Africans and their traditions “foolish,” “pagan,” and “ignorant.”⁵¹ As Zanzibar strove for independence, nationalism was not unifying, but rather divisive. However, “Given the colonial state's emphasis on ethnic/racial categories, it is not surprising that nationalism [developed] in distinctly ethnic and outright racial terms on Zanzibar.”⁵²

The ASP's overwhelming victory in the 1957 elections, taking five of six seats, with the other going to an independent candidate, did little to ease ethnic tension. The eviction of numerous African squatters from Arab owned plantations in both Unguja and Pemba, beginning in 1957, intensified the development of a racial struggle on the islands.⁵³ Like they had done during the 1948 general strikes in Zanzibar Town, after the evictions of the African squatters, the African population boycotted Arab and Indian stores in 1958, resulting in “sporadic outbreaks of violence.”⁵⁴ For years after the

⁴⁹ Glassman, “Slower,” 733.

⁵⁰ Glassman, “Sorting,” 399, 405.

⁵¹ Glassman, “Slower,” 720, 744-745.

⁵² Amory, “The politics of identity,” 111.

⁵³ Shao, *The Political Economy*, 35.

⁵⁴ Cooper, *From Slaves*, 284.

elections, “the people of Zanzibar [were] subjected almost continuously to inflammatory speeches which have led to ‘racial feelings.’”⁵⁵ Race became both a political tool and a political identity.

The next round of ethnic division came during the 1961 elections. Designed to help prepare Zanzibar for independence, voting laws started to move toward universal suffrage, but this created new problems:

Citizenship emerged as a primary issue, as the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP), to which nearly all Arabs belonged, argued for the exclusion from the electoral rolls of the most recent African migrants from the mainland. The Afro-Shirazi Party, on the other hand, defended the voting rights of ‘mainlanders,’ and described the ZNP as merely a vehicle for the preservation of Arab economic and political domination. ASP politicians repeatedly reminded audiences that such domination originated in the 19th century from the enslavement of Africans by Arab merchants and plantation owners.⁵⁶

The Arab Association, the precursor to the ZNP, had previously “vehemently objected to the enfranchisement of Indians” on the grounds that they were not Zanzibari nationals,⁵⁷ and the argument was simply rehashed in 1961. “The two parties contested the very identity of Zanzibar. ASP nationalists imagined Zanzibar as an African nation,” and even pushed a pan-African agenda, “while the ZNP wanted Zanzibar to become a multiracial Muslim state with its strongest cultural and political ties with the Arab Middle East.”⁵⁸

Political discourse within Zanzibar became increasingly racial and inflammatory in nature. Burgess describes the actions of both parties:

⁵⁵ Frederick Picard, American Consul Zanzibar, to Department of State, Apr. 25, 1963; POL ZAN; Subject-Numeric File, Feb. 1963-Dec. 1963; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁵⁶ Burgess, “Remembering Youth: Generation in Revolutionary Zanzibar,” *Africa Today* 46, no. 2 (1999), 32.

⁵⁷ Mbogoni, “Censoring,” 202.

⁵⁸ Burgess, “Remembering,” 32, citing Lofchie.

Nationalists of the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) cast Zanzibari political contests primarily as an African struggle for justice and freedom from Arab political, economic and cultural hegemony... They claimed Africans needed to unify on the basis of race, not religion.⁵⁹

While the [ZNP] party consistently deplored the use of racial categories, and even blamed such divisions in local society on reputed British divide-and-rule strategies, ZNP propagandists undermined their own appeals for unity and solidarity by basing them on an exclusive notion of the essence of Zanzibari culture that denigrated peoples and influences from the African interior as less civilized.⁶⁰

Despite the fact that many leaders claimed to deplore ethnic division, both the ASP and ZNP increasingly politicized race in official party rhetoric, widening an already deep societal separation. “In terms of their dehumanizing impact, it is difficult to discern between these two lines of rhetoric. And, no matter who was most to blame for the rising intensity of racial politics, it is clear that the discourses of civilization and race informed and fed off one another.”⁶¹ This rhetoric seemed to disgust some, like Babu, who, while reflecting on the revolution over thirty years later, explained, “The [ethnic] division that has bedeviled Zanzibar politics is to a large extent not based on concrete reality. It is based on irrational fear, and the exploitation of fear has everywhere been the last resort of political scoundrels.”⁶² Yet tensions only mounted as the elections ended in a tie; ASP had gained 10 seats and ZNP nine, but a third party, the Zanzibar Pemba Peoples Party (ZPPP), took three seats, with two of its winners allying with the ZNP and one with the ASP.⁶³ A new round of elections was scheduled for June 1961 with a 23rd seat added.

After the June 1961 elections, violence broke out as “many groups of Africans ambushed the areas inhabited by Arabs in Zanzibar island” in an “orgy of killing and

⁵⁹ Burgess, “Mao in Zanzibar,” 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶¹ Glassman, “Slower,” 752.

⁶² Babu, “Wanted: A Third Force in Zanzibar,” in Othman, *Babu*, 61.

⁶³ The ZPPP developed predominantly in Pemba among Shirazi who opposed the ASP’s inherently racial stance. After the election, Mohammed Shamte and Bakari Mohammed sided with the ZNP, while Ali Sharif rejoined the ASP.

bloodletting.”⁶⁴ Frederick Cooper describes the violence as an ethnic dispute related to the islands’ history of slave and squatter labor:

Violence that began in an election riot in town in 1961 [soon] spread the next day to rural Zanzibar, engulfing the plantation areas for several days and leaving 68 dead and 381 injured. Arabs and Africans attacked each other at polling places, and Ngambo and rural areas were soon involved. Gangs went around the town “composed of Africans of many tribes from squatter labour on the surrounding farms.” Groups “consisting mainly of indigenous Africans” looted and assaulted Arabs.⁶⁵

The ASP press increased fears when it repeatedly warned of a recreation of Arab-run slavery on the islands and spread rumors of Arabs killing unborn African babies.⁶⁶ As British officials had feared, common roll elections “accentuate[d] rather than diminish[ed] communal differences.”⁶⁷ In the election itself the ASP won 50.6% of the national vote, but the ZNP-ZPPP alliance won 13 of the 23 legislative seats.⁶⁸ This created a feeling among many ASP members that the election had been stolen by the “Arabs” with British backing. They had only one more chance to gain what they viewed as the rightful representation of Africans in Zanzibar before independence: the 1963 elections.

Before the election, the ZNP split when Babu left over claims the party was “too racialist”⁶⁹ after it failed to nominate Shirazi candidates to represent heavily Arab/Asian constituencies.⁷⁰ A substantial portion of the ZNP’s educated youth followed Babu when he formed a new political party, Umma, whose members were referred to as comrades,

⁶⁴ Mohammed, *A Guide*, 56. Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?*, 2.

⁶⁵ Cooper, *From Slaves*, 285.

⁶⁶ Mohammed, *A Guide*, 58. Men like John Okello and Omar Mapuri continued to push these claims long after the ZNP was overthrown as a means of justifying revolutionary violence.

⁶⁷ Glassman, “Sorting,” 401, footnote.

⁶⁸ Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, 201, 239.

⁶⁹ Burgess, “Mao in Zanzibar,” 20.

⁷⁰ Burgess, “An Imagined,” 234.

shortly before the 1963 elections.⁷¹ They hoped to create unity among the ethnic communities behind the “principles of socialist development.”⁷²

[Ali Sultan Issa] charged that, because of Muhsin’s continuing belief that ‘Africans in Zanzibar would come to appreciate how many benefits the Arabs had brought them and in the end would prefer enlightened Arab guidance’, he was a ‘racialist and [yet] posing as a leader of a non-racial organization – ZNP.’⁷³

The comrades struggled to create a large following that ignored traditional racial and ethnic identities in favor of a socialist ethos that would provide “a ‘cure’ for racism.”⁷⁴

In a way, though, racialism became a part of Umma politics as well, as the party sought to “define itself... as the friend of the poor *African* majority,”⁷⁵ [emphasis added] to gain support. According to American Consul Frederick Picard, opportunism further encouraged politicians to “exploit religious and racial sentiments for political ends.”⁷⁶

The 1963 elections ended in much the same way the June 1961 elections had, with the ASP receiving a majority of the vote (54.2%) but the ZNP-ZPPP taking the most seats (18 of 31).⁷⁷ Afterwards, though, as the ASP began to unravel, the government took steps that, instead of unifying the country, fostered African feelings of desperation. The new government banned Umma and then fired mainlander Africans from Zanzibar’s

⁷¹ The Umma party was formed too close to the elections to actively contest parliamentary seats. Instead, its impact was ideological, spreading ideas of socialism. The party aligned itself with the ASP during the elections.

⁷² Burgess, “An Imagined,” 218. On 238, Burgess argues that this group saw themselves as “neither wholly African nor Arab, neither poor nor rich, but they were young,” preaching an ideology that “crossed racial, political and neighborhood frontiers.” Also see Burgess, “Imagined generations: Constructing youth in revolutionary Zanzibar,” In *Vanguards or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa*, edited by Jon Abbink and Ineke van Kessel (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), 64-65.

⁷³ Burgess, “An Imagined,” 232.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁷⁶ Frederick Picard, American Consul Zanzibar, to Department of State, Aug. 20, 1963; XR POL 12-12 ZAN; Subject-Numeric File, Feb. 1963-Dec. 1963; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁷⁷ Lofchie, *Zanzibar*, 239.

police force,⁷⁸ replacing them with inexperienced Arabs, thought to be more loyal to the government. Chachage described the “new monarchical government” as “racist and exclusivist;” African immigrants feared they would be unable to find employment in the new system, or worse, be sent back to the mainland.⁷⁹ For many, the situation seemed hopeless, and as the British prepared to leave, racial politicization in Zanzibar had nearly reached its tipping point.

The Revolution

Although Zanzibar received formal independence from Britain on December 10, 1963, the event was met with tension and only limited celebration. Seif Sharif Hamad remembers sensing that half of Zanzibar’s population “did not regard it as a significant day;” rather the island sat ripe for revolt.⁸⁰ “By making it evident that Africans could not expect social progress while political power was in Arab hands, the ZNP created an atmosphere of bitterness and desperation within the African community.”⁸¹ On January 12, 1964, Zanzibari youth turned this desperation into a revolution. One of the revolutionaries, Salum Mohamed Abdallah, explains, “The aim of the uprising was to make sure that the helm of power was vested into the hands of the people of Zanzibar themselves,” and not in the hands of a foreign Arab dynasty.⁸² The early days of the revolution played out as “the culmination of years of racial bitterness” between

⁷⁸ John Okello describes this event in detail and lists it as a critical factor in the success of the revolution in *Revolution in Zanzibar* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishing House, 1967).

⁷⁹ Chachage, *Environment*, 37-38. The newly established government had threatened to resend the fired policemen to the mainland shortly before the revolution took place.

⁸⁰ Burgess, *Race*, 187.

⁸¹ Lofchie, “Was Okello’s Revolution,” 41.

⁸² Lucas Lukumbo, “Zanzibar revolution saluted, but the poor seek better deal,” *Sunday Observer*, Jan. 13, 2008. <http://kurayangu.com/cgi-bin/ipp/print.pl?id=106184> (accessed March 8, 2009).

Zanzibar's African and Arab population,⁸³ and has been termed by Jonathon Glassman as a purely "racial revolution" to empower the African majority.⁸⁴ "It was a unique manifestation of racial violence between self-identified Africans and Arabs in post-colonial Africa, in that Arabs and not Africans were the primary victims."⁸⁵

Prior to independence, an issue of *Afrika Kwetu* stated, "anything short of an African state [in Zanzibar] will never be accepted,"⁸⁶ a view repeated by many African nationalists. The ASP promised that if it did not "win [the] election with votes, [it would] win control of government later with blood."⁸⁷ The revolution was the fruition of these promises. The belief by many African Zanzibaris that revolution was necessary places it within larger patterns of violence throughout Africa following colonial rule. Bernard A. Nkemdirim explains that when groups feel a "wide discrepancy between what they get and what they think they deserve," or when a government makes it "progressively more difficult" to participate politically, political violence is likely.⁸⁸ In the eyes of revolutionaries, not only had the ZNP stolen the government that the ASP deserved, it was also systematically outlawing opposition, a move that made revolution necessary. Nkemdirim also stresses that constructing an ethnic identity gives political violence or rebellion a "shape" that appeals to the masses, something the ASP took full advantage

⁸³ Robert Conley, "African Revolt Overturns Arab Regime in Zanzibar," *New York Times*, Jan. 13, 1964, 1.

⁸⁴ Glassman, "Slower," 720.

⁸⁵ Burgess, "Memories, Myths, and Meanings of the Zanzibari Revolution," in *War and Peace in Africa: History, Nationalism and the State*, edited by Toyin Falola and Raphael Chijioke Njoku (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, forthcoming), 1.

⁸⁶ Newspaper quoted in Mbogoni, "Censoring," 203.

⁸⁷ Frederick Picard, American Consul Zanzibar, to Secretary of State, Mar. 25, 1963; XR POL 25 ZAN; Subject-Numeric File, Feb. 1963-Dec. 1964; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁸⁸ Bernard A. Nkemdirim, "Reflections on Political Conflict, Rebellion, and Revolution in Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 15, no. 1 (Mar., 1977), 77-78.

of.⁸⁹ Similarly, Henry Bienen asserts that, “the Zanzibar Revolution introduced violence as a means of changing a constituted independent government [throughout] East Africa.”⁹⁰

“What might have been a relatively bloodless regime change – accomplished in a matter of a couple days – quickly turned into an ethnic bloodbath, as Arabs and to a lesser extent South Asians were plundered, raped, massacred, detained, and forced into exile.”⁹¹ Western reporters told “tales of mass slaughter of Asians and Arabs,” whose “bodies [were] thrown into communal graves and quickly covered.”⁹² Spontaneous violence spread through Unguja and continued even after ASP supporters and Umma comrades seized control of the government, an achievement that took mere hours. Amory describes the events that followed:

Arabs were dragged out of their houses, *walichinjwa*, “they had their throats slit” (a characteristic gesture that evokes the revolution for many Arabs today), stores and homes were looted, women raped. Asians were also targets of the violence as armed revolutionaries roamed the streets.⁹³

The most severe punishments were reserved for those that the revolutionaries believed had abused or disenfranchised Africans.⁹⁴ Laura Fair described the events of the Zanzibari Revolution as an “ethnic cleansing” conducted by the African population.⁹⁵ This fact supports an official British inquiry that “found that the cause of the disorders

⁸⁹ Nkemdirim, “Reflections,” 84.

⁹⁰ Henry Bienen, *Tanzania: Party Transformation and Economic Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 365.

⁹¹ Burgess, “Mao in Zanzibar,” 21.

⁹² “Slaughter in Zanzibar of Asians, Arabs Told,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 20, 1964, 4.

⁹³ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 114.

⁹⁴ Burgess, “An Imagined,” 239.

⁹⁵ Fair, *Pastimes*, 55.

had been *racial animosity* between African and Arab groups” [emphasis added].⁹⁶

Distributing revenge and punishment along racial lines only proved to deepen ethnic schisms within Zanzibari society.⁹⁷

The violence and racial animosity was made worse by John Okello, a mainlander who proclaimed himself Field Marshal and leader of the revolution. Western media, authors, and for a short time, government officials were quick to label the Zanzibari Revolution as Okello’s revolution (this inaccuracy persists to this day). U.S. intelligence and CIA reports, however, rightly understood Okello was not the revolution’s leader, but rather his spontaneous rise to temporary prominence was representative of the “spontaneous action by the Africans at this affair... to put Africans in control of the government.”⁹⁸ After amassing a band of supporters, Okello and his “death machine” worked their way through the islands of Zanzibar, raping, murdering and plundering the country’s Arab and Asian population, adding weight to his broadcasted threats of publicly executing any opposition, which included a promise to burn ZNP supporters alive.⁹⁹

The justification given by Okello for his actions highlights the extent to which racial politicization in Zanzibar had warped reality. He listed a nine-part Arab plan that supposedly would have begun if not for the revolution:

⁹⁶ “Zanzibar Long Divided by Arab-African Rivalry,” *New York Times* (Jan. 13, 1964), 9.

⁹⁷ Burgess, “Remembering,” 35.

⁹⁸ Helen-Louise Hunter, “Zanzibar Revisited,” *CIA Intelligence Report* 11 (Spring, 1967), http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp (accessed March 12, 2009). Authors including Anthony Clayton, *The Zanzibar Revolution and Its Aftermath* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1981), Esmond Martin, *Zanzibar: Tradition and Revolution* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), and Mapuri have recounted part or all of Okello’s story with little skepticism, and he is commonly referred to as the “leader of the revolution” in contemporary Western accounts.

⁹⁹ “Threat of Hanging made to Zanzibar Ex-Ministers,” *The Times*, London (Jan. 15, 1964), 12.

1. All Africans of non-Zanzibari origin were to be expelled and their wealth confiscated;
2. Those Africans remaining would be ruled as slaves and not permitted to own valuable property or possess wealth; nor would they receive education which would free them from their slave mentality;
3. Arab culture would be imposed on the Africans;
4. Africans would be prevented from holding responsible positions in the civil service, etc;
5. All male African babies would be killed, and African girls would be forced to marry or submit to Arabs so that within a few years there would be no pure black skin on the Island, and there would be no Africans to remember the vile treatment of their ancestors by the Arab colonialists; in addition, Arabs from Oman were to be invited to settle on the Island;
6. The Island of Zanzibar would be cut off from East Africa and indeed from Africa itself, and proclaimed a land of Asians and Arabs;
7. All African political and workers organizations would be banned;
8. Retribution would be taken against Africans to match the number of Arabs killed in the June 1961 election, at a rate of 60 Africans for each of the 65 Arabs who died at that time;
9. A plan would be made to fight to regain control of Mombasa.¹⁰⁰

While most observers can see the fantastical nature of Okello's claims, Zanzibaris of the revolution, and even some today, bought in to his rhetoric. In *The 1964 Revolution: Achievements and Prospects*, Omar Mapuri has repeated Okello's accusations as fact, focusing on the claims of Arab violence toward and re-enslavement of Africans, and has listed Arab casualties in the revolution as "minimal."¹⁰¹ While exact casualty figures vary and will likely never be known, estimates topping 13,000 people dead, 26,000 imprisoned, and 100,000 exiled, as claimed by ZNP leader Ali Muhsin,¹⁰² are far from the minimal nature Mapuri has asserted.

In the first week of the revolution alone, over 2,000 "political suspects," most of Arab or Asian ethnicity, died in a "hellish massacre."¹⁰³ Letters reaching America from the islands told of revolutionaries who had "killed enough Arabs to terrify the town," as

¹⁰⁰ Okello, *Revolution*, 119.

¹⁰¹ Mapuri, *The 1964 Revolution*, 56-57.

¹⁰² Sheriff, "Race," 314. Although 100,000 exiles is a gross exaggeration, the number of Zanzibaris killed range anywhere from 2,000-20,000 depending on the source. Seif Sharif Hamad places the Arab dead at 13,000 on Unguja alone; Burgess, *Race*, 187.

¹⁰³ Conley, "Nationalism Is Viewed as Camouflage for Reds – Toll 2,000 to 4,000." *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1964, 1.

“the dead were left lying in the street” for all Zanzibaris to see.¹⁰⁴ William Leonhart, the American ambassador in Dar es Salaam, described walking outside Zanzibar Town in early February and seeing almost all Arab dwellings burnt to the ground with casualties approaching 5,000.¹⁰⁵ By this time, control of the government had long been secured by the ASP and the newly established Revolutionary Council, headed by Abeid Karume who was named President.¹⁰⁶ Okello then moved his “gang” off of Unguja and on to Pemba in order “to punish, plunder, and humiliate the Arabs and South Asians” of the island.¹⁰⁷

Abdul Sheriff explains how the process differed from the initial days of the revolution:

Because of the different class structure and race relations in Pemba, there was no local potential for spontaneous bloodletting there. Revolutionary violence was exported there from Unguja. Regional Commissioners like Rashid Abdalla and his lieutenants unleashed a reign of terror there that is still remembered with horror. A Zanzibar Radio reporter who witnessed this said that not many people were killed in Pemba, but the kind of brutality that was perpetrated there did not occur in Unguja.¹⁰⁸

In all, Okello claimed to have killed 11,995 “enemy soldiers and persons.”¹⁰⁹ The impact, however, went well beyond those killed.

As violence spread throughout Zanzibar, thousands of Arabs and Asians fled the islands, many sneaking off in dhows under the cover of darkness. Babu stated that, “one of the most unfortunate outcome[s] of the 1964 Zanzibar revolution, [was] that the country has lost a large number of its best brains and much of its skilled work-force.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ “Visitor Describes Zanzibar Revolt,” *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1964, 3.

¹⁰⁵ William Leonhart to Secretary of State, Feb. 4, 1964; SP 15 US-ZAN; Subject-Numeric File, Feb. 1963-Dec. 1963; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁰⁶ For a more detailed look at the structure of the Zanzibari government see Clayton, *The Zanzibar Revolution*, Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?*, and Petterson, *Revolution*.

¹⁰⁷ Burgess, “Memories, Myths,” 17.

¹⁰⁸ Sheriff, “Race,” 314.

¹⁰⁹ Okello, *Revolution*, 160.

¹¹⁰ Babu, “Wanted: A Third Force in Zanzibar,” in Othman, *Babu*, 73.

Mohammed Bakari has written that many of the later failures in the development of revolutionary Zanzibar were due to the exodus of intellectuals, professionals, and experts that occurred during the revolution.¹¹¹ Many of these professionals included specialists in fields such as medicine. For example, of the pre-revolution staff at the Karimjee Jivanjee Hospital, only two doctors stayed in Zanzibar past May 1964, many citing the government's treatment of Arabs as their reason for leaving.¹¹² Similar problems occurred in the educational and technical sectors of Zanzibari society, as the government allowed racial resentment to jeopardize the social and functional stability of the country.

The fact that revolution occurred in Zanzibar was not by itself unique. "Conflicts have always been rife among nationalist ideologues over who, precisely, belongs to the national community... [and] in terms of who does *not* belong" [emphasis included].¹¹³ To revolutionaries, if Zanzibar was to be an African nation, then the Arab community, as well as the Asians, did not belong in the new Zanzibari society. The resulting policy, though, of brutal ethnic murder and forced exodus that lasted throughout the early months of 1964, was extraordinary. In all, "Roughly one-third of all Arabs on Unguja Island were either killed or forced into immediate exile; those who remained were systematically stripped of most of their lands, their urban properties, their government employment, even their children's access to secondary education."¹¹⁴ What is perhaps

¹¹¹ Bakari, *The Democratisation Process*, 127. Babu, "Zanzibar and the Future," in Othman, *Babu*, 28, states that "There was a mass exodus of trained, able bodied and enterprising young men and women who historically have always been a vital asset of Zanzibar."

¹¹² Donald Petterson for Frank C. Carlucci, Charge d'Affaires, to Department of State, Mar. 25, 1964; HLTH 14-6 ZAN; Subject-Numeric File, Feb. 1963-Dec. 1963; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹¹³ Glassman, "Slower," 728.

¹¹⁴ Burgess, "Memories, Myths," 1.

most interesting about these genocidal killings and further proof of the racial motives driving revolutionary actors is that those killed:

were not large Arab landowners most of whom were absentees living in Zanzibar town, but whole families of poor Manga Arab shopkeepers in rural areas where they were wiped out, some of them burnt alive in their copra ovens where they tried to hide.¹¹⁵

The victims were in many cases not the administrators or elite said to have perpetuated the “Arab master and African slave mentality,”¹¹⁶ but rather innocents who were unfortunate enough to be born on the wrong racial side of the revolution. Despite the violence and racism, many Arabs and Asians still chose to remain on the islands, only to become further victims of racialized policy, as will be discussed in the next section.

Before ending my section on the revolution, I must first touch on a divisive issue that some say ended Zanzibar’s chance at true revolutionary progress – the Union with mainland Tanganyika, forming Tanzania on April 26, 1964. While the Union was primarily a pragmatic decision¹¹⁷ – offering Karume security and stability from counter-revolutionaries and easing Western pressure on Nyerere to do something about what they viewed as his “Zanzibar problem” – it also fit into pan-African views espoused by some within the islands. These pan-Africanists had stressed “emphasis on skin color and ‘blood purity’” within the African nation before the revolution¹¹⁸ and the Union helped to solidify that concept. Karume told American officials that he had taken the necessary

¹¹⁵ Sheriff, “Race,” 314.

¹¹⁶ *Guardian*, “Zanzibar Revolution revisited,” Jan. 12, 2008. <http://kurayangu.com/cgi-bin/ipp/print.pl?id=106128> (accessed March 8, 2009).

¹¹⁷ For a detailed discussion on the development and legality of the Articles of Union, see Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?*

¹¹⁸ Glassman, “Slower,” 751.

steps to secure his country when his “friends [the US government] let him down,”¹¹⁹ and union with Tanganyika would prove the beginning of an East African Federation.¹²⁰

Mahmood Mamdani described the Union as Karume’s neutralization of Babu and Umma in order to cast Zanzibar and the revolution in “an Africanist mould,” and likened the president’s ways to Hutu ethnic policies in Rwanda.¹²¹ Babu expressed strong opposition to the Union stating, “Pushing Zanzibar into Tanzania meant poverty for the people and almost permanent stagnation.”¹²² Whatever the case may be, the Union ended the “100 Days Revolution,” as the Zanzibari Revolution is sometimes called, and began a new era of history.

The Karume Regime

The establishment of the Union with Tanganyika firmly cemented Karume’s power as President of Zanzibar, allowing him to carry out new revolutionary policy without serious internal threats. Despite the fact that the Articles of Union officially limited the power of the Zanzibari government by placing eleven items – including defense, immigration, taxes, and citizenship – in Union hands,¹²³ Karume was virtually

¹¹⁹ Frank C. Carlucci, Charge d’Affaires, to Department of State, Apr. 28, 1964; SP 15 US-ZAN; Subject-Numeric File, Feb. 1963-Dec. 1963; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. In government documents, Karume often expressed a desire to work with the US government, but resented the slow recognition the ASP government received from Washington. Petterson, in *Revolution in Zanzibar*, expressed the belief that if Washington was quicker with recognition and aid, Zanzibar would have been U.S. friendly and much of the communist influence that was to enter the country could have been countered.

¹²⁰ Aboud Jumbe, who became the President of Zanzibar after Karume, stated that the Union was part of a larger goal to establish a “continent-wide union” throughout Africa. Jumbe, *The Partnership*, 6.

¹²¹ Mahmood Mamdani, “Babu: A Personal Tribute,” in Othman, *Babu*, 130. For a more detailed comparison of the Zanzibari Revolution to Rwandan ethnic violence see Newbury, “Colonialism,” and Kuper, “Theories of Revolution.”

¹²² Babu, “A.M. Babu: Memoirs: An Outline,” in Othman, *Babu*, 18.

¹²³ See Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?*

free to run the islands as he envisioned.¹²⁴ George Triplett described this “vision” of the Zanzibari government:

The goals of the revolution at that time were, summarily stated: (i) African majority rule, to be implemented through a one-party system; (ii) the nationalization of land and the abolition of what were deemed to be the capitalist, exploitative class; and (iii) an end to racial discrimination and favoritism, which, in practice, was to mean easier African access to jobs, schools, medical treatment, and land ownership.¹²⁵

American Ambassador Leonhart took a bleaker view of Karume’s intentions, saying, “Left to himself [Karume] would merely replace Arabs with Africans in the same feudal structure.”¹²⁶ Karume, though, did not simply implement this policy under the same terms Leonhart described. Rather, the Zanzibari Revolutionary Council carried out policy under the socialist language the Umma comrades had preached. “Socialist vocabulary expressed old ideas in new words; new terms gave old antagonisms – and the revolution itself – a new legitimacy by including them in a global conflict against imperialism and injustice.”¹²⁷

New foreign relationships and ethnic solidarity could only be created after the “deconstruction of much of Zanzibar’s mixed African-Arab-South Asian cultural heritage.”¹²⁸ Karume, in short-order, began this deconstruction, redefining what it meant to be Zanzibari and espousing equality. At the time of the revolution, “Umma youth had

¹²⁴ Karume is known to have said “The Union is like a coat, if it’s too tight, you can take it off.” Burgess, verbal communication, 7 Sep 2009. Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?*, 104, and Seif Sharif Hamad in Burgess, *Race*, 211, all cite Karume uttering a similar analogy.

¹²⁵ Triplett, “Zanzibar,” 612.

¹²⁶ Telegram, Leonhart to Secretary of State, 1/20/64, #6, National Security File, Country File, Africa – Zanzibar, Box 103, Zanzibar Cables and Memos, Vol. 1, 1/64, LBJ Library, cited in Burgess, “An Imagined,” 241. Ali Sultan Issa explained that this was the result of widespread belief that, “Most Arabs enslaved us, so let’s make them second-class citizens,” forgetting, “that Zanzibar is a cosmopolitan place.” Burgess, *Race*, 189

¹²⁷ Burgess, *Race*, 23.

¹²⁸ Burgess, “Mao in Zanzibar,” 4.

come to associate class oppression with racial inequalities in Zanzibar.”¹²⁹ While official Revolutionary Council discourse picked up on the socialist language of the Umma comrades, policy remained distinctively racial:

Issa and other comrades either downplayed or distanced themselves from the violence of the revolution, and employed class categories in their speeches and writings that became ubiquitous in nationalist discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, yet which served in popular usage as general references to Africans, Arabs, and Asians. While Karume’s regime espoused revolutionary socialism, its understanding of nation building was very much based on the notion of racial uplift, which justified a decade-long assault on wealth, exclusivity, and social status of formerly privileged non-African minority communities.¹³⁰

“Given the correspondence – however incomplete – between racial/ethnic and class labels in Zanzibar before the revolution, it required no great effort in the 1960s to reinvent Arabs and South Asians as feudalists and capitalists, and Africans as workers and peasants.”¹³¹ As this discourse spread and aid entered the islands from the Soviet Union, China, and East Germany in the months following the revolution, Zanzibar gained the popular title of the “Cuba of East Africa,”¹³² although Zanzibari intellectuals preferred to view their island as a potentially prosperous Hong Kong.¹³³ Karume even went as far as to claim socialism itself was an “African concept” born out of ideas of

¹²⁹ Burgess, “An Imagined,” 236.

¹³⁰ Burgess, “Mao in Zanzibar,” 24.

¹³¹ Burgess, “Memories, Myths,” 21. This language took much greater hold within the ASP and amongst Africans after the revolution. As previously stated, prior to 1964, those who classified the struggle in socialist terms were mainly limited to those who had received advanced education abroad. I believe, therefore, that it is wrong to project these titles backwards in retrospect. One should rather seek to understand Zanzibaris as they saw themselves; or as I have done in this paper, as the ASP government saw them.

¹³² This terminology appeared in American newspapers and government correspondence soon after the revolution. Stories of revolutionaries dressed in Cuban clothing further popularized the label.

¹³³ Babu, 27, believed that Zanzibar’s economic and administratively capacity would allow it to be a successful example of socialism and communism in East Africa.

community and family.¹³⁴ Despite this attempt to re-label society under socialist terms, in field research, Deborah Amory discovered that “it was racial characteristics that people repeatedly cited as evidence of identity.”¹³⁵ Amory’s work helps further Glassman’s assertion that local memory and agency are primary to racial thought; in Zanzibar, official government rhetoric could not replace the memory of racial distinction, nor was it truly intended to.

Along with the Zanzibari government’s introduction of new political language came an attempt to rewrite some of Zanzibar’s racial history. Official ASP publications “glorified the power of African unity epitomized by a winning sports team” to the point of exaggeration and credited Karume with the grand vision of bringing Africans together through the African Sports and the Afro-Shirazi Party.¹³⁶ Karume told an interviewer from the *Tanzania Standard* that “During the past on this island no Africans had owned land,” but the Revolutionary Council’s policy changed this.¹³⁷ This claim was supplemented by stories of how the “Arab master” had controlled the “African slave” throughout Zanzibari history, and how it was now the “African’s” turn in power. Africans were portrayed as pure, free of the desire to exploit others through Arab or European systems like slavery and capitalism, and therefore deserving of the benefits brought about from seizing power. All these stories, while espousing African nationalism, perpetuated racial division through their very language.

¹³⁴ Thomas Pickering, American Consul Zanzibar, to Department of State, Feb. 14, 1967; XR POL 15-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹³⁵ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 126.

¹³⁶ Fair, *Pastimes*, 250-251.

¹³⁷ *Tanzania Standard*, “The First Vice-President Talks about the Future,” 25 Apr 1968, found in “Karume’s Press Interviews for Union Day,” enclosed in American Consul Zanzibar to Department of State, Apr. 26, 1968; XR POL 2 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Karume's racially based politics also went well beyond rhetoric and language and became engrained in official policy, beginning with land reform and redistribution. Prior to the revolution, Arabs owned 70% of clove trees on Zanzibar (Unguja) Island, with 177 Arabs and eight non-Arabs controlling all large-estates.¹³⁸ Beginning with the 1957 elections, Karume and the ASP began to question Arab land ownership, claiming "land was natural property for the whole community... [that] belonged to the African peasants."¹³⁹ This issue, argues Garth Myers, resulted from the failure of both British and Arab leadership to improve the African situation, and was at the forefront of the revolution:

The 'finicking path of conduct and action,' as the Zanzibar Gazette described it in 1928 (Zanzibar Protectorate) that bound the Zanzibar islands' African and Swahili majority to servility and poverty eventually exploded in the 1964 revolution, in which the Afro-Shirazi Party seized power from the month-old ZNP government. Both the ZNP and the colonial state had either misrepresented or misunderstood the aims, values, and motivations of Zanzibar's majority, and this majority ultimately imposed violent retribution on many of their dominators.¹⁴⁰

Retribution also spread through the islands in the form of the government's seizure of Arab and Asian property. In his 1967 study of Tanzanian politics and economics, Henry Bienen described this action not as redistribution of land to the poor, but rather the "appropriation of Arab-owned land and enterprises" to Africans.¹⁴¹ Africans who were landowners before the revolution were allowed to maintain properties of up to 20 acres, while many African peasants received three acres of previously Arab-owned property to

¹³⁸ Cooper, *From Slaves*, 169.

¹³⁹ Mohammed, *A Guide*, 46.

¹⁴⁰ Garth A. Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Spice in Urban Africa* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 104. Myers' book provides an in-depth analysis of both colonial and revolutionary Zanzibar's urban development policy. His colonial work focuses primarily on British policy in and around Zanzibar Town and the reaction to said policy.

¹⁴¹ Bienen, *Tanzania*, 303.

cultivate.¹⁴² Official records listed seventy two large landholders, predominately Arabs, owning 745 *shambas* in Unguja and Pemba. Only one African landlord was listed, even though many more owned over three acres.¹⁴³ As these landowners lost their plantations, a total of 71,145 acres was redistributed to 23,715 predominately African families over the next eight years.¹⁴⁴ Land was also used for government projects, including schools, housing, and communal farms. The system first punished Arabs and Asians by taking their property, and then benefited Africans through redistribution.

Policies of land redistribution and development in urban areas also contained racial underpinnings. In and around Zanzibar Town, the effects of ethnically driven policy was visible in the construction, or lack thereof, in the juxtaposing communities of Stone Town and Ng'ambo. Before the revolution, Stone Town was primarily inhabited by well-off Arabs and Asians, while Africans in Ng'ambo were more likely to face slum-like conditions. To the Karume regime, Stone Town was a "visible reminder of colonial inequalities" and racial disparities and thus became the victim of "official neglect and visible decay."¹⁴⁵ Conversely, Ng'ambo became the epicenter of socialist development to raise the status of the African in Zanzibar. The master plan developed in 1968 and 1969 was not "explicitly segmented by race, but it performed the functions of containerizing in a number of other ways."¹⁴⁶ Myers explains the confiscation patterns:

The state confiscated 611 homes in the town [Zanzibar City] and its suburbs, with Arabs and especially Asians being the primary targets of nationalization. Of these, 371 took place in Stone Town. More than 100 took place in older Asian stone house commercial

¹⁴² Chachage, *Environment*, 44.

¹⁴³ Shao, *The Political Economy*, 50.

¹⁴⁴ Clayton, *Zanzibar*, 137-139.

¹⁴⁵ Burgess, "Cinema, Bell Bottoms, and Miniskirts: Struggles over Youth and Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 2 (2002), 292.

¹⁴⁶ Myers, *Verandahs*, 111. Also see Myers, "Making the Socialist City of Zanzibar." *Geographical Review* 84, no. 4 (Oct., 1994): 451-464.

areas of northern Ng'ambo (Mchangani, Mbuyuni, Mlandege). More than 50 beachfront and suburban villas to the south of town became government property, as did 35 Asian homes in the middle-class planned suburb of Saateni. Only thirty-one homes in predominately African neighborhoods were confiscated, and most of these were Arab- or Indian-owned.¹⁴⁷

Under Karume's direction, the population of Zanzibar Town exploded, despite a decrease in Stone Town residence. While only 49,502 claimed residence in the capital city in 1958, that number reached 68,490 ten years later, and an astounding 115,131 by 1978, the vast majority being Africans.¹⁴⁸ The discriminatory nature of Karume's land redistribution policy is clearly evidenced by the fact that almost all beneficiaries were Africans, while those expropriated were primarily of Arab ethnicity.¹⁴⁹

Along with the Zanzibari government's discriminatory land redistribution came attacks on Arab and Asian businesses, lifestyle, and citizenship. Burgess explains how government action resulted in a continual decrease in both ethnicities' Zanzibari population:

In the later 1960s, revolutionary policies that nationalized land and businesses, and which assigned African wealth, status, and opportunity formerly possessed by Arabs and South Asians, resulted in the exodus of most minorities who could afford to do so and who had survived the initial bloodletting.¹⁵⁰

Ali Sultan Issa states that the nationalization of industry and retail trade was Karume's way of getting rid of Indians in Zanzibar.¹⁵¹ Besides strict nationalization, Karume also declared that the government had the authority to decide who was hired for "any job" to

¹⁴⁷ Myers, *Verandahs*, 130. Ali Sultan Issa provides details on the government's confiscation of land, houses, and other personal property in Burgess, *Race*.

¹⁴⁸ Myers, *Verandahs*, 109.

¹⁴⁹ Shao, *The Political Economy*, 94.

¹⁵⁰ Burgess, "Memories of the Zanzibari Revolution," Presentation at the Zanzibar International Film Festival. Tanzania, 2007. <http://www.ziff.or.tz/docs/Burgess-Revo.pdf> (accessed January 12, 2009), 11.

¹⁵¹ Burgess, *Race*, 124.

“insure that racialism was not practiced” and guarantee that “Africans... are now on top and must be respected.”¹⁵² Along these lines, Asian merchants that survived the government’s nationalization projects were told to accept African business partners, even if the partners were unable to “put up a share of the capital” invested by the merchants.¹⁵³ The Revolutionary Council worked to exile people they considered “non-indigenous;” Asians were often the focal point of these attacks, which included classifying 1,500 residents as “stateless persons.”¹⁵⁴ Claims of the government flogging and executing both men and women of Arab and Shirazi ethnicity were sent to President Lyndon Johnson by Zanzibari exiles seeking American assistance years after the “violence” was said to have ended in Zanzibar,¹⁵⁵ and stealing from the Indian and Arab merchants was accepted practice.¹⁵⁶

Movement out of Zanzibar soon became both monitored and restricted, even to mainland Tanzania. Travel documents could only be obtained by those willing to pay the government fee of 56,000 shillings (\$8,000); the implementation of this law was largely viewed as a way to both limit and profit from the departure of the islands’ Asian

¹⁵² Jack Matlock to Department of State, Dec. 15, 1967; POL 12 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. These statements come from a speech Karume made to members of the East African Fisheries Organization.

¹⁵³ Thomas Pickering, American Consul Zanzibar, to Department of State, Jan. 25, 1966; LAB 15 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1964-1966; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁵⁴ American Consul Zanzibar to Secretary of State, May 24, 1966; POL 15-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1964-1966; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, and File B-1, 10 Nov 1964.

¹⁵⁵ Benjamin H. Read, Executive Secretary, Memorandum For Mr. Walt W. Rostow, White House, May 2, 1967; POL TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, and Piers, American Embassy London, to Department of State, Mar. 28, 1969; POL 30-2 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁵⁶ Burgess, *Race*, 106.

population.¹⁵⁷ Those wishing to emigrate from the islands were forced to hand over their possessions to the Zanzibari government. Despite this, hundreds of Asian families left the islands,¹⁵⁸ and in 1971, George Triplett observed, “If allowed to take their assets, practically all members of the Asian community would leave immediately, for the nation being built by the revolutionary leadership offers no role for non-Africans to fill.”¹⁵⁹ With the Presidential Decree No. 9 of 1969 - making it unlawful for Zanzibaris to leave either of the islands without an official visa - Karume attempted to reduce the exodus of Zanzibar’s educated population.¹⁶⁰ What Karume failed to realize, however, was that it was the government’s racial policies that were driving Zanzibaris to flee and increased restrictions pushed many to get out while they still could with whatever possessions the government had not taken.

Racial policy took obvious form in Zanzibar’s educational sector as well, with mixed results. In 1959, under colonial instruction, some 35% of Zanzibari boys and 22% girls were enrolled in primary schools,¹⁶¹ but few were of African ethnicity and it became a Revolutionary Council goal to change this. In the first five years after the revolution, primary school enrollment increased from 19,106 to 46,000 students, and

¹⁵⁷ Triplett, “Zanzibar,” 613, states that this regulation began to limit the amount of Zanzibari women departing the islands as brides and was later expanded. While the policy technically regulated all races, he states that in application, it specifically targeted the Asian population. This assertion is also made in Donald Haught to Department of State, Jan. 5, 1970; SOC 15 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. For information on the confiscation of Asian property in Pemba, see Burgess, *Race*, 100-102.

¹⁵⁸ Thomas Pickering, American Consul Zanzibar, to Department of State, Jul. 14, 1966; INCO FOOD 17 INDIA-TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1964-1966; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁵⁹ Triplett, “Zanzibar,” 614.

¹⁶⁰ Donald Haught to Department of State, Oct. 3, 1969; POL 23-10 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. One fear was that the government would enforce the provision stating “it shall be unlawful for any person to leave the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba” without qualification.

¹⁶¹ Burgess, “The Young Pioneers and the Rituals of Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar,” *Africa Today* 51, no. 3 (Apr., 2005), 7.

secondary schools saw an increase from 743 to 3,200.¹⁶² By 1971, 4,600 students were in the secondary education program, with 7,000 waiting to enroll.¹⁶³ Educational placement became based on ethnicity, with spots in higher education proportional to Zanzibar's "various racial communities." Each race received seats based on its population on the islands, which translated to 80% African, 15% Arab, 4% Asian, and 1% Comorian. Members of the American consulate in Zanzibar observed that the policy increased African representation, but also denied opportunities to qualified students of other races.¹⁶⁴ Arabs applying for scholarship were often denied because it was said the "GOZ cannot permit people who are not true Zanzibaris [to] receive training."¹⁶⁵ This led some to abandon or at least denounce their true heritage. One Zanzibari explained that when asked for his identity in school, "We knew that if we said we were Arabs, we wouldn't pass the examination. So we said we were Africans. Like our president said: there are no more tribes (*kabila*). No Riu, no Bahtash, all Africans."¹⁶⁶ In 1970, Karume withdrew Zanzibar from "participation in the examinations for the East African Certificate of Education," denying islanders the opportunity to pursue opportunities in

¹⁶² Donald Haught to Department of State, Sep. 26, 1969; EDU 2 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁶³ Thor Kuniholm to Department of State, Sep. 8, 1971; EDU 2 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁶⁴ Donald Petterson, American Vice Consul Zanzibar, to Department of State, Mar. 6, 1965; EDU 9 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1964-1966; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, and Frank C. Carlucci, American Consul Zanzibar, to Department of State, Oct. 8, 1964; EDU 9 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1964-1966; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. In Burgess, *Race*, 108-109, Ali Sultan Issa likened the system to American affirmative action.

¹⁶⁵ This statement was made by Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Permanent Secretary Ministry Education, in reference to the Asian community and five Arabs denied scholarship in 1964. Frank C. Carlucci to Secretary of State, May 16, 1964; EDU 9-4 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1964-1966; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted in Amory, "The politics of identity," 117.

advanced education.¹⁶⁷ Those with a Standard X education seeking state employment were forced to live in labor camps, a project that brought Zanzibar little financial return for its investment.¹⁶⁸ Many were also forced to be teachers in rural schools, despite having no formal education, to counter the shortage of teachers, a side effect of Karume's attacks on the Arab and Asian communities.¹⁶⁹ A 1970 U.S. assessment of the Zanzibari educational system praised the fact that more African children than ever were in school, but was highly critical of declining standards in higher education and of what was described as "a blatant system of discrimination" against "non-Africans" and those born to the wrong family.¹⁷⁰ Reverse racism within the school systems created a bottleneck in higher education and reduced the number of qualified individuals to fill important jobs throughout society.

Karume's other vision, one of a "respectable society," was founded on "an interest in conserving African cultural integrity."¹⁷¹ "Discipline, along with nation building and the promotion of the economic interests of the African majority in the islands, was paramount."¹⁷² Swahili quickly replaced English as Zanzibar's official

¹⁶⁷ Triplett, "Zanzibar," 614.

¹⁶⁸ Burgess, "To differentiate rice from grass: youth labour camps in revolutionary Zanzibar," in *Generations Past: History of Youth in East Africa*, edited by Andrew Burton and Helene Charton (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, forthcoming), 248-249.

¹⁶⁹ Donald Petterson, American Consul Zanzibar, to Department of State, Oct. 12, 1965; EDU 9 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1964-1966; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Archival research also revealed that the Zanzibari government often called on students to teach Standards (equivalent to grade level) that they had just completed. Seif Sharif Hamad stated, "A student might complete Form 3 and earn poor grades and still be recruited as a teacher." Burgess, *Race*, 195.

¹⁷⁰ Donald Haught to Department of State, Jun. 8, 1970; EDU 9 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁷¹ Burgess, "Remembering Youth," 38.

¹⁷² Burgess, "To differentiate," 251.

language.¹⁷³ The Zanzibari government sought to ban, or at least censor, cinema, dress, hairstyle, dance, and even sport (including soccer for times under Karume and Jumbe) that was considered to be of “imperialist” influence or non-African value.¹⁷⁴ “Along with Islam, local understandings of what constituted African cultural purity also dictated revolutionary standards.”¹⁷⁵ Taarab, a style of Swahili music that became a particularly popular pastime among Zanzibari women’s clubs before the revolution, was temporarily banned by the Karume regime for being “un-African.”¹⁷⁶ Although the ban was later lifted, the revolutionary government kept strict control over taarab groups; everything from group names, uniforms, song lyrics, and performances were altered to “support” the revolution. As a result of their lost autonomy, many women stopped participating in taarab, finding it “meaningless” and lacking the “fun” it once represented.¹⁷⁷

Women were also criticized for using cosmetics, which were seen as a denial of one’s African identity and a “recall [of] the ‘slavish’ mentality of the colonial period of darkness.”¹⁷⁸ The reasoning is explained by revolutionary Profesa Bambuti, who emphasized “the racialization of official culture” and “maintained that cultural groups were ranked according to ‘face’ and ‘physical characteristics,’ clear markers of African versus Arab status on Zanzibar.”¹⁷⁹ The preservation of “African cultural integrity became a national priority, helping set standards for the filtering of foreign cultural

¹⁷³ Chachage, *Environment*, 59.

¹⁷⁴ Burgess, “The Young Pioneers,” 14.

¹⁷⁵ Burgess, “Cinema,” 302.

¹⁷⁶ Laura Fair, “It’s Just no Fun.” Those in the regime supporting the ban argued taarab had its “origins among the Arab ruling class in Zanzibar, and because the aim of the revolution was to overthrow them, ‘Arab’ culture should be overthrown too” (77-78).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. Some women even called the government’s actions “anti-revolutionary.”

¹⁷⁸ Burgess, “Cinema,” 302.

¹⁷⁹ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 217.

imports.”¹⁸⁰ Non-African dress and styling became unacceptable in Karume’s new Zanzibar:

“The restrictions multiplied after 1968 so that by the mid-1970s they included, for women, cosmetics, skin creams, long nails, wigs, miniskirts, slacks, shorts, and all transparent blouses. Prohibited for men were slim fitting shirts, *mabuga* or bell bottom pants (‘as if they have elephantiasis’), shorts, big-Afros, high-heeled boots, T-shirts printed with ‘disrespectful words’ (such as ‘Kiss me’), and a list of clothing styles difficult now to trace: crazy pants, cat pants, elephant pants, Jackson 5 caps, *bandeke* caps, and *kokobela*.”¹⁸¹

Punishments for violating the code started with “strokes” and increased to mandatory “reform school” with subsequent violations.¹⁸² In Zanzibar, as well as the rest of Tanzania, the government sought to institute socialist ideals by establishing an “official African culture.”¹⁸³

Youth were called on to enforce this new African standard through government sanctioned organizations. The Young Pioneers were one of the official government organizations created to replace outlawed associations, of which the Boy Scouts was one because it was considered “racially exclusive” to Arabs and Asians.¹⁸⁴ Karume even banned all ethnic associations – an overt attack on exclusivism. The goal of the Pioneers was “to create a new kind of citizen” that valued work and African advancement.¹⁸⁵ The ASP Youth League became the chief enforcer of policy and “taught young people to

¹⁸⁰ Burgess, “Cinema,” 312.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 307. Although most of these restrictions were more anti-Western than anti-Arab or anti-Asian, they represented Karume’s attempts to establish a truly “African” culture.

¹⁸² Thor Kuniholm to Department of State, Feb. 27, 1973; SOC 4 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1971-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁸³ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 212.

¹⁸⁴ Burgess, “The Young Pioneers,” 11, explains that the Boy Scouts disproportionate representation and colonial roots earned it the reputation of being “non-African,” despite the fact that the group was in reality inclusive.

¹⁸⁵ Burgess, “Introduction to Youth and Citizenship in East Africa,” *Africa Today* 51, no. 3 (Apr., 2005), xvii.

avoid tourists as capitalist exploiters, spies, or agents of Arab powers.”¹⁸⁶ Members of the Youth League were even armed and given a role as the government’s unofficial police force,¹⁸⁷ a role of increasing importance with growing restrictions and a move toward rationing in 1968.

As Karume increased restrictions on “non-African” goods, he also intensified his direct attacks on ethnic labels, a move which he claimed was designed to bring about racial harmony. His attacks focused on the islands’ Comorian and Shirazi communities, although other minorities were also marginalized. Karume began publicly criticizing Comorians for having “renounced their African heritage” by maintaining dual citizenship.¹⁸⁸ He then had many Comorian sheikhs arrested, and in November, announced those that did not fully renounce their French citizenship would cease to be Tanzanian citizens.¹⁸⁹ In order to further “humiliate” the community, Karume forced Comorians to publically “renounce their identity” as they were marched through Zanzibar Town.¹⁹⁰ These attacks on Comorian identity were carried out despite that fact that under the Articles of Union, issues of citizenship should have been under Union control and not the Revolutionary Council’s. Then in 1969 Karume began a “wholesale purge of

¹⁸⁶ Burgess, “Cinema,” 306.

¹⁸⁷ American Consul Zanzibar to Secretary of State, Feb. 7, 1967; XR POL 13-2 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁸⁸ Burns to Department of State, Aug. 14, 1968; POL 2 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁸⁹ American Consul Zanzibar to Secretary of State, Nov. 19, 1968; SOC 14 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁹⁰ Burgess, *Race*, 125.

Comorians from civil service” while simultaneously encouraging Zanzibari businesses to terminate Comorian employment.¹⁹¹

That same year, Karume furthered efforts that he claimed would end racialism, or *ukabila*. His first move was to denounce, and later attempt to ban, the use of “Shirazi” as an ethnic designation “based on both social and political considerations” and insisted only “African” would be the term of use.¹⁹² In a speech title “*Ushirazi Sio Asili ya Watu wa Zanzibar – Shirazi Identity is not the Heritage of the People of Zanzibar*,” Karume declared that Shirazi as an ethnicity was not indigenous to Zanzibar, but rather a colonial “fabrication.”¹⁹³ Later that year, Karume had some 18,000 Zanzibaris sign documents stating, “I am not Shirazi, and I don’t even know the meaning of Shirazi identity.”¹⁹⁴ Most who signed were either illiterate, feared retaliation from the Karume regime if they refused, or viewed the renouncement as just part of “the revolutionary era’s emphasis on racial politics.”¹⁹⁵ Although Karume got his signatures, his effort to destroy Shirazi identity failed and was later replaced by an effort to redefine what it meant historically to be Shirazi within an Africanist mold. Deborah Amory explains that this effort included attempts by African nationalists to abandon the oral tradition of Shirazi Persian origin (the story itself has been discredited as an actual historical account) and replace it with an

¹⁹¹ American Consul Zanzibar to Secretary of State, Dec. 11, 1968; SOC 14 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁹² Jack Matlock to Department of State, May 2, 1969; POL 15-8 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Also see Burgess, *Race*, 125.

¹⁹³ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 115.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 116, and Bakari, *The Democratisation Process*, 71. It is of note that Karume never attempt to change the name of the “Afro-Shirazi Party.”

¹⁹⁵ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 116-123.

African one. New “tradition” holds that south Mombasa is the actual “Shirazi heartland,” therefore making indigenous Zanzibaris of African and not Arab or Asian descent.¹⁹⁶

Other communities faced not only a repeal of their ethnic identity, but also the threat of being removed from the islands of Zanzibar entirely. Threats to expel Asians and Comorians were substantiated when Karume began the deportation of “virtually [the] entire adult male Persian community” with “no reason given for expulsion.”¹⁹⁷ “The revolutionary government’s own census in 1967 recorded the number of Zanzibaris living on Unguja who claimed Arab identity as having declined to 8 per cent, half the pre-revolutionary figure.”¹⁹⁸ With Arab decline, attacks on the other communities increased. Karume’s program of racial expulsion came to include 234 Asian heads of families who were declared illegal immigrants in 1971 and forced to leave Zanzibar within a year.¹⁹⁹ It was even reported that the Government of Zanzibar planned to force all Asian families to leave the islands by 1972,²⁰⁰ although this was not fully implemented. Persians, Goans, and other minorities were also imprisoned at various times in Karume’s latter years after being declared unwanted persons to be expelled from Zanzibar. Even Pemba “had to

¹⁹⁶ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 105-107.

¹⁹⁷ American Consul Zanzibar to Secretary of State, May 1, 1970; SOC 14 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁹⁸ Burgess, “Imagined generations,” 55.

¹⁹⁹ Clayton, *The Zanzibar Revolution*, 123 and Chachage, *Environment*, 74.

²⁰⁰ American Consul Zanzibar to Secretary of State, Oct. 11, 1971; SOC 14-7 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1971-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. From 1970 to 1972, the Ithnashery population, Zanzibar’s second largest Asian community, dropped from approximately 2,000 people to an estimated 125. American Consul Zanzibar to Department of State, Dec. 27, 1971; SOC 13-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

endure decades of exploitation and oppression that is still very vividly remembered,” for having supported what the ASP described as Arab “imperialists.”²⁰¹

Karume’s racial policies grabbed international attention in 1970 when four teenage Persian women were forced to marry ASP big shots.²⁰² The government’s “legal” justification for this was drawn from a 1966 decree that made it a “criminal offense to withhold consent for a marriage.”²⁰³ According to Amory, legislation on “women’s bodies” was a mechanism in establishing a new socio-political discipline to counter colonial issues of race and inequality and create “purity.”²⁰⁴ If the women resisted, male relatives faced punishment; eleven men were arrested in September 8, 1970, two days after the Persian marriages, for protesting, and were then lashed and imprisoned for a month.²⁰⁵ Amory explains the Zanzibari government’s stance:

“The marriages of the girls fell under the general Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) policy of promoting racial harmony and eradicating tribalism. When the Iranian ambassador met with Karume to protest the marriages, Karume explained that ‘Zanzibar will not tolerate tribalism or discrimination based on race, religion or class.’”²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Sheriff, “Race,” 315.

²⁰² This number remains controversial. While Wajiha Yusuf, age 14, Nasreen Hussein, 16, Fawaia Mussa, 17, and Badria Mussa, 20, remain the four cited Persian females taken, rumors of five or six girls being forced into marriage existed. U.S. government documents cite Karume as stating six girls were married in the episode and it was believed two Asian girls and the four Persians were taken. The same report says that Karume may have taken one of the Asian girls as his own bride. Donald Haught to Secretary of State, Sep. 18, 1970; SOC 4-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²⁰³ Thomas Pickering, American Consul, to Department of State; SOC 4-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1964-1966; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²⁰⁴ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 146-147.

²⁰⁵ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 136. Triplett, “Zanzibar,” 616. Donald Haught to Secretary of State, Sep 9, 1970; SOC 4-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, lists eleven men as having been arrested and initially sentenced to 24 lashes and one year imprisonment.

²⁰⁶ Amory, “The politics of identity,” 134.

This could only be accomplished, in Karume's mind, if the races that remained were intermarried and Zanzibar's children became "African."²⁰⁷ American Consul Donald Haught reported that Karume's original intentions included marrying off in excess of seventy young girls of "various ethnic minorities" to African government officials;²⁰⁸ however pressure from outside governments forced him to abandon this plan. Justification for the marriages also took a darker retaliatory tone; Karume argued that during the colonial era, Arab men had forced African daughters into sexual slavery as concubines and Africans now had the right to do the same with Arab daughters.²⁰⁹ The incident renewed many of the fears and reactions surrounding the violence of 1964, including flight by dhow to escape the islands. At least one Punjabi girl, age 16, attempted suicide by swallowing glass to avoid forced marriage and the Iranian government initiated negotiations to arrange the departure of over 900 Persians from Zanzibar.²¹⁰ Karume and the ASP did not create racial harmony; rather they sparked increased racial tension and division throughout Zanzibari society.

Although Karume's racially driven policies would continue for the next two years, it was his failure to understand the needs of the people that led to his downfall. While Zanzibar's foreign reserves increased to over £25,000,000, impoverished islanders were forced to wait long hours for rationed food, and grew increasingly impatient with

²⁰⁷ For an in-depth comparison at intermarriage patterns during the colonial and post-revolutionary periods see Bakari, *The Democratisation Process*, 73-77.

²⁰⁸ Donald Haught to Secretary of State, Sep. 11, 1970; SOC 4-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²⁰⁹ Karume's statements are cited before and after the incident in Donald Haught to Secretary of State, May 2, 1970; SOC 14 TANZN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Chachage, *Environment*, 69; Amory, "The politics of identity;" and Fair, "It's Just No Fun," 71-72.

²¹⁰ Donald Haught to Secretary of State, Sep. 30, 1970; SOC 4-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

the regime.²¹¹ Neither Karume's visions of an ethnically harmonious society nor an economically self-sufficient nation were close to being reached. His rule came to an inglorious end when he was assassinated on April 7th, 1972 in a failed coup attempt.²¹² In the aftermath, Aboud Jumbe, at the time Minister of State, took control of the Zanzibari government.

After Karume

Although the Zanzibari government changed and adapted, Zanzibar's racial tensions and politics did not die with Karume. "In March 1973, almost a year after Karume had been assassinated, three of the four girls escaped from Zanzibar – 'by canoe in the dead of night from a lonely beach.'" The escape could have closed a dark chapter in Zanzibar's dark history of racial tension, but Zanzibari officials instead claimed the event was an attempt to "deform" and discredit "African rule."²¹³ Jumbe also continued Karume's efforts to regulate fashion and appearance. He argued "that an individual's racial heritage and physical appearance were divinely ordained and thus should not be altered."²¹⁴ American "imperialist" imagery and style did not represent "African 'humanity'" or where "Africans have come from."²¹⁵ As government opposition became more boisterous and open, the Arab community in and out of Zanzibar was blamed for

²¹¹ Martin, *Zanzibar*, 140. Burgess, *Race*, 127-129; Ali Sultan Issa lamented, "From 1969 onwards, everything went down, everything deteriorated."

²¹² The government was known to have feared potential counter-revolutionaries and Mapuri, *The 1964 Revolution*, 69, lists Karume's assassination as the 17th coup d'état attempted since the revolution.

²¹³ Amory, "The politics of identity," 157.

²¹⁴ Burgess, "Cinema," 303.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 302-304.

corrupting the Revolutionary Council's authority, and Julius Nyerere went as far as to say, "Arabs would never return to Zanzibar."²¹⁶

While Zanzibar liberalized former restrictions over the next two decades, racial issues remained implanted in Zanzibari culture and came to a head in 1995 and 2000, during the first multi-party elections since the revolution. "Ethnic attacks" and claims that Arab nations planned to reinstitute the Omani Sultanate characterized political discourse and resulted in an outbreak of violence.²¹⁷ Riots and bomb blasts leading up to the 2000 election were met by police brutality that resulted in the death of between thirty and eighty-one Zanzibaris.²¹⁸ Burgess asserted that in 1964, "Racial nationalists looked more towards the past than the future... they sought to right a century of wrongs, and to erase all the humiliations of slavery and inequality."²¹⁹ The same assessment of historical memory could just as easily apply to Zanzibar today. "Many Zanzibaris continue to trace their present fortunes or misfortunes to the revolution," which is viewed as "either the original sin or triumph" of the independence era.²²⁰ In many ways, the revolution is still being fought. Fear of a planned Arab "invasion" and government takeover is used by the "Tanzanian ruling party elites [to] justify rigging elections in

²¹⁶ Electric Telegram, American Embassy Dar es Salaam to Secretary of State, Jan. 28, 1974 (1974DARES00277) [Electronic Records]; State-Archiving System, Jul. 1973-Dec. 1975; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²¹⁷ Despite the fact that a large majority of Zanzibar's Arab population had left the islands or integrated and intermarried after the Revolution, the language and fears expressed were similar to that of 1963. For a detailed look at the elections and violence, see Greg Cameron, "Zanzibar's Turbulent Transition," *Review of African Political Economy* 29, no. 92 (Jun., 2002): 313-330.

²¹⁸ Greg Cameron and Greg Crawford, "The Tanzanian General Elections on Zanzibar," *Review of African Political Economy* 28, no. 88 (Jun., 2001): 282-286. Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?*, 223-224.

²¹⁹ Burgess, "Mao in Zanzibar," 34.

²²⁰ Burgess, "Memories of the Zanzibari Revolution," 1.

Zanzibar as a necessary expedient to preserve the revolution and ensure the islands remain African.”²²¹

Karume’s vision of a Zanzibar where “there are no ‘Indians,’ no ‘Arabs,’ no Swahili,’ but only ‘Zanzibaris’”²²² was never reached, in large part because his policy ensured racial distinctions remained in the minds and memories of Zanzibaris. The hypocrisy of Karume is perhaps best captured in his claim that, “there can be no other people besides black people who can claim that Africa is their home.”²²³ If this was his goal of unity in Zanzibar, it is no wonder that division has persisted to present day.

Conclusion

One cannot ignore the impact that racial identity had on the rhetoric and policies of the Afro-Shirazi Party in Zanzibar. Whether real, imagined, or created, fears of Arab domination and forced servitude created a racialized discourse throughout the *zama za siasa* that deepened the wounds of societal division and cemented racial animosity. This translated into ethnic violence and the forced exodus of thousands of Arabs and Asians from their homes in Zanzibar in the days and months following the African revolution on the islands. The ASP’s ethnic and racial policies did not, however, end with the violence of January 1964 that cut the Arab and Asian population by approximately one-third.

²²¹ Burgess, “Memories, Myths,” 2.

²²² Thor Kuniholm to Department of State, May 10, 1971; SOC 4-1 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²²³ Thor Kuniholm to Department of State, Mar. 8, 1971; SOC 14 TANZAN; Subject-Numeric File, 1970-1973; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. This statement was made by Karume in an attempt to remove Indians from influential positions within Tanzanian society, while at the same time claiming racial equality existed in Zanzibar.

Instead, the party, inspired by Umma comrades and African nationalists, continued to push racial policy under the cover of socialist language. Some of this policy, such as the ethnic quotas placed on educational openings, was openly racial in nature. Other policies, like the neglect of Stone Town and development Ng'ambo, were more subtle, yet the history of Zanzibar and the language of Karume and the Revolutionary Council reveal their racial undertones. "Moreover, the post-colonial state's attempt to eradicate certain differences (i.e. Shirazi ethnicity, or anything other than "African") has reinforced the specifically racial categories of "African" or "Arab" introduced during the colonial era."²²⁴ The revolution was an African revolution, fought to oust Arab and Asian oppressors, replace them with "true" Africans, and create a new Zanzibar. This Zanzibar then, in Karume's vision, was to be African, not Shirazi, not Comorian, not mainlander, and especially not of imperialist nature, but truly and distinctively African.

The revolution was predominantly, although not purely, a racial revolution. Certainly, class dynamics contributed, for if the African majority had been in power and the Arab minority the labor class, it is unlikely a widespread revolt against Arabs and Asians would have occurred. Generational and cultural factors also contributed. Nevertheless, the revolution was a movement to empower the downtrodden *African*, a category of race to which the ASP was sure to make distinct from the Arab or Asian, no matter how long one had resided in Zanzibar.

²²⁴ Amory, "The politics of identity," 129.

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