THE 1948 ZANZIBAR GENERAL STRIKE

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FOREWORD

This paper reflects the limitations imposed on historians of colonial Zanzibar at the present time, when very severe difficulties face anyone who would like to base his research on archives and field-work interviews. They appear to have deterred all historians in Britain, the U.S.A. and East Africa. Since Professor Michael Lofchie's work on the background to the Zanzibar Revolution, based as it was on his research prior to the events of 1964, no further research on Zanzibari topics has appeared.

This writer, in attempting what so many regard as the impossible, hopes that at least he may perhaps have initiated a revival of interest in Zanzibar - particularly in respect of the twentieth century - and that he may have added to kvowledge by using sources which unfortunately in a few years time may no longer be with us. If as an interim report, this paper does serve to preserve this material and to enlighten students until fuller facilities are available for a more complete narrative to be written, a useful purpose will have been achieved.

The writer's heavy debt to the numerous former members of Zanzibar's British community will be obvious from the most casual glance at the footnotes; without their help this paper could never have been written. One particularly valuable correspondent was a business man with interests in several fields including the East-African press; he has asked that his name be withheld and is referred to in the footnotes as A.B. The author would also like to thank Mr. A.Y. Lodhi of the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies for reading this paper and making a number of interesting comments.

The author's final and greatest debt is that to his wife Judith who could tolerate Zanzibari preoccupations - and could type the manuscript in the Zanzibari heat of Britain's 1975 summer - while preparing to produce something very much more exciting.

R.M.A. Sandhurst
September 1975

Anthony Clayton

"You know, the trouble is that we
British have been found out"

Sir Vincent Glenday,
British Resident,
Zanzibar Protectorate to
a colonial official, 1951.

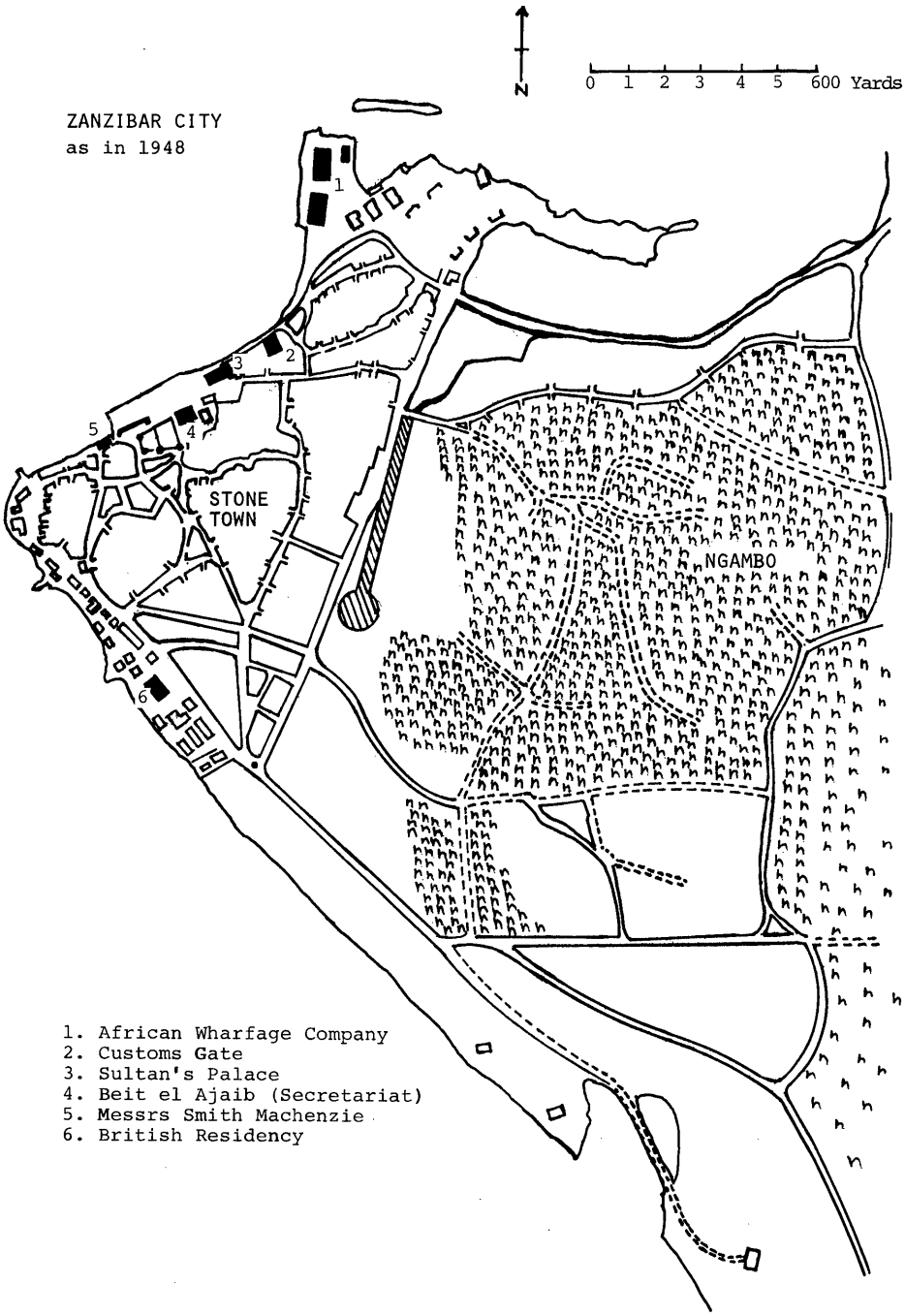
INTRODUCTION

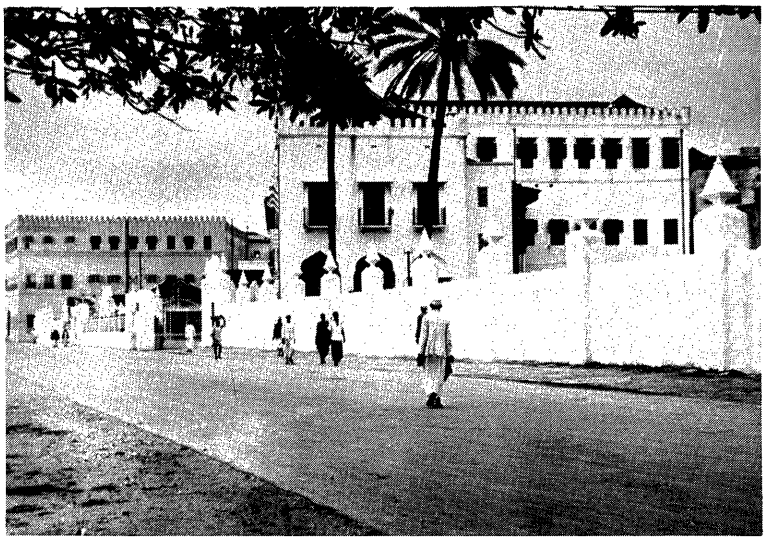
This paper sets out to examine a little known event in the history of Zanzibar - a general strike in August and September 1948 affecting Zanzibar City and its docks. The gravity of the event, after a long period of calm, disturbed the colonial administration at the time but its real significance, and its portent for the future, were however not understood. Further the event has remained generally neglected by writers, neither Ayany's A History of Zanzibar nor Lofchie's Zanzibar, Background to Revolution make any mention of the strike at all and the Oxford History of East Africa only offers a three sentence note.[1]

The strike represented, however, the first and dramatic irruption on to the political stage of Zanzibar of a third component of the Protectorate's economic structure, recently or relatively recently arrived mainland African labourers. Prior to 1948 politics had included some challenge, both political and economic, to the Arab oligarchy from indigenous African groups. But the 1948 strike represented the first militant African challenge coming from a fresh direction, the labourers' houses, huts and shacks in the suburbs of Zanzibar City, where the mainlanders formed the largest proportion of wage-earners in regular employment. This challenge was addressed to the British dominated economic structure as much as to the Arabs.The mainlanders came to play a critically important part in Zanzibar's politics in the late 1950s, it was the confluence of interest of the mainlanders and the indigenous inhabitants of Zanzibar Island (but not those of Pemba Island, the other main island forming the protectorate) that formed the dynamic of the 1964 Revolution, in which mainlanders themselves played prominent individual roles.

I

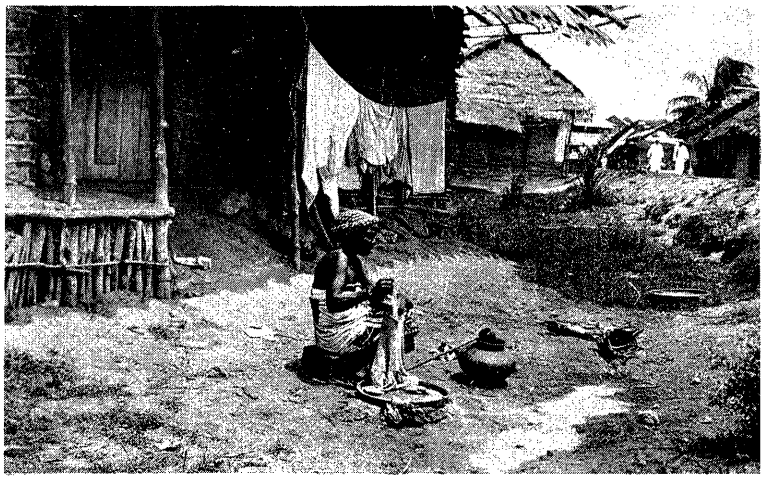
In 1948 the Zanzibar Protectorate was ruled by Britain on a local version of the colonial 'indirect rule' concept. The Sultan was the Head of the State, but government was carried on in his name by a British colonial administration headed by a British Resident, at the time Sir Vincent Glenday, a Colonial Service official ending a career spent in Kenya, Somaliland and Aden. The constitu-


ZANZIBAR CITY
as in 1948
N
0 1 2 3 4 5 600 Yards
STONE TOWN
NGAMBO
1
2
3
4
5
6
1. African Wharfage Company
2. Customs Gate
3. Sultan's Palace
4. Beit el Ajaib (Secretariat)
5. Messrs Smith Machenzie
6. British Residency



Above: The Sultan's Palace, Zanzibar Stone Town
(Photo: M.Clayton).

Below: The Ngambo
(Photo: Gomez).



tion provided for an Executive Council, over which the Sultan presided and which was composed of the Heir Apparent and four senior British officials - the Resident, the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney-General - and a Legislative Council of sixteen members. Of these sixteen members four *exofficio* were the senior British official members of the Executive Council, four more were further senior British officials; the remaining eight were called Unofficial Members. The Council's Unofficial membership, reconstituted in 1947, provided for one European, three Arabs, two Indians and two indigenous Africans. These latter two were Ameri Tajo, an indigenous Hadimu from Zanzibar Island, and Ali Sharif Musa an inhabitant of the other main island, Pemba. The instrument of statutory legislation was the Decree which, despite its name and issue under the Sultan's signature, was an act or ordinance debated and passed by the legislature.

The Sultan, Seyyid (Sir) Khalifa bin Harub had succeeded to the throne in 1911, his long reign and kindly paternal nature had papered over the violence by which his House and the Arab oligarchy had taken over Zanzibar in the previous century. In the evenings a scarlet Rolls-Royce with a red flag on the bonnet carried the Sultan and his Sultana for a leisurely fifteen m.p.h. drive around the island,[2] most of the Sultan's subjects bowed, touched their forehead or laid their hands upon their breasts in respect; the British saw what they liked to see, a venerated ruler and a reign of peace,[3] with little need for any change, least of all any radical social re-structuring. With more justification the British felt too, that the Moslem religion provided a unifying faith for the landowners and rural labourers, and even for some of the mainland labourers. These optimistic views, and the relatively small scale of the economy and administration as a whole were perhaps the reasons why no seperate Labour Department, or Labour Inspectorate Section of the administration existed in Zanzibar at the time; the various District Commissioners and District Officers were supposed to be Labour Officers for their respective areas. None were trained for this work and some had only a vague idea that it fell within their duties. The British administration as a whole was unimaginative, few of the ablest colonial officials selected so small a territory for their service. The junior officials

of the government particularly in the provincial administration were almost all Arab with Asians in some technical departments; the Moslem law court kadhis were also all Arab.[4]

The year 1948 saw the commissioning of a most careful economic and social survey of the Protectorate by Professor E. Batson of the University of Cape Town at the request of the Protectorate government to facilitate development planning.[5] The information contained in the survey's twenty-one volume report, supplemented by the government's own 1948 census[6] provides a clear picture of the structure of Zanzibar society in late 1948 and early 1949, a time prior to subsequent refusals to reveal origins and identities, the consequence of newly aroused political loyalties and allegiances in the late 1950s.[7]

The structure differed somewhat in each of the main islands. Overall however it can be simplified to a total African population of just under 200,000 of wich some 51,000, just over one quarter, considered themselves as 'mainlanders'. Of this 51,000, 37,404 lived on Zanzibar Island, almost one third of the island's African inhabitants. The Arab population numbered 44,560[8] (of which 13,977 were on Zanzibar Island), the Asian population numbered 15,892 (of which 13,705 were on Zanzibar Island), and there were small numbers of Comorians, Europeans and other groups making a total population of 264,162.

The Arab population included clove plantation owners possessing estates of varying sizes; a number of Asians also owned clove plantations, as did a large number of the indigenous African population many of whom were beginning to style themselves 'Shirazi'. The significant feature of plantation ownership was however that of the 810 bigger plantations - 1,000 trees or more - only 215 were in African (almost entirely indigenous) ownership, and of the 2,765 of medium size - 250 to 999 trees - only 1,690 were African owned. Further, the large majority of the African owned plantations, both of the medium and the smaller 1 to 249 tree sizes - were on Pemba Island, giving Zanzibar Island a more apparent race/class division.[9]

The African population - indigenous and 'mainlander' - were in various measures underprivileged. The indigenous Africans can to so-

me extent conveniently be divided into their three ethnic groups - the Pemba, of the northern island, and the Tumbatu and the Hadimu of the Zanzibar Island, the former in the north and the latter in the centre and south.[10] Of these, best placed were the Pemba where for a variety of reasons Arab economic control was less marked. The nature of the terrain, with more hills and valleys and a very much smaller east coast coral area, and the nature of the nineteenth century arrival of the Arabs had created a different structure.[11] The Arabs had farmed Pemba not by slaves but by dividing the land, keeping part for themselves and giving the rest to the local inhabitants in return for their labour; the rice valleys were also shared. Intermarriage and concubinage was much more common, and despite their large numbers, freed slaves and their descendants together with indigenous inhabitants from the poorer areas of the island who moved, all became integrated as small growers with little difficulty.

The Tumbatu and the Hadimu were originally evenly spread over all of their respective areas on Zanzibar island; the Arab settlement and forcible occupation of the hills and valleys of the western side of the island had forced many of them if they wished to remain free, to move northwards, eastwards and southwards on to the coral. There numbers lived in close-knit small trading centre communities; they were engaged in agriculture, part subsistence and part commercial, the latter based on copra in the scattered areas where coconuts grew but including other fruits, and also fishing. The other principal indigenous life-style was that of the small plantation owners in the centre of the island, between the Arab-owned large plantations to the west and the coral to the east. These too lived lives centred round small trading centres supplementing their home grown food and clove sale incomes by part-time work either in the plantations or the rice valleys and plains; some of the plain dwellers were fairly recent settlers or were the descendants of formers slaves, and owned no clove trees. Indigenous young men from both regions drifted to Zanzibar City attracted by its size and amenities, and there engaged in casual labour or petty trading.

All three indigenous ethnic groups tended at this time to regard the mainlanders as inferiors (the term 'washenzi', i.e. the uncouth, was used in contempt), the indigenous peoples' post-1945 preference for the title 'Shirazi' as opposed to 'Swahili' was significant, the latter being too closely identifiable with recent immigrants from the mainland littoral. All three groups too were Moslems, while many of the mainlanders were not.[12]

This introduction is necessary to place the mainlanders (referred to as the 'wabara' at the time) into their economic and social context. They fell into two broad categories, post-1900 immigrants and ex-slaves or their descendants. No figures dividing them into these categories exist, but Professor Batson's Survey makes a division in the population tables between those born on the mainland and those born in the protectorate; this is useful subject to the reservation that many of the children of earlier immigrants would have been recorded as Zanzibar-born mainlanders. The majority group were a variant of the colonial migrant labour system, recent or other 20th century immigrants who had come to Zanzibar to earn money to pay tax, purchase some preferred consumer goods or to enlarge their families. This migration had begun in the early years of the century, the Zanzibar and E.A.P. authorities engaging in specific recruiting until the E.A.P.s own labour difficulties ended this procedure, but maintained nevertheless by a steady stream of labour which arrived voluntarily.[13] The need for the labour was made greater, in the first three decades of the century, by the developing indigenous African involvement with copra on the eastern coast and the consequently increased unwillingness to work as labour for the Arab dominated established order of society. The system was facilitated by the fact that Swahili was spoken by the mainland peoples of the Kenya and Tanganyika coast and migrant labourers from peoples further inland and in Nyasaland often had sufficient knowledge of the language to find unskilled work. And also despite its past reputation a certain prestige was, paradoxically, held by Zanzibar as the centre of Swahili cultural life.

The ex-slave category of mainlander did not in general possess the physique or strength necessary for sustained hard manual labour, which with the indigenous' reluctance to undertake the work pre-

vented any reduction of immigration by means of a new young generation of Zanzibar-born labourers.

The position and process of recruitment in the 1920s was interestingly described in the 1924 Agriculture Department Report in the context of government and Arab plantation owners attempting to co-ordinate piece-work rates of pay: "The Headmen of the Wanyamwezi were brought to my office (Director of Agriculture) and it was explained to them that the work they had to do in Zanzibar was very much less than they had been accustomed to do in their own country whereas the pay they received was very much higher.... the intention was that they should be better off here than at home because we wanted them to come here..." The report later observed: "It is remarkable that the population of the Island Dominions of His Highness the Sultan amounts to about two hundred per square mile, and yet in spite of the fact that there is practically no industry outside agriculture, the country is to a large extent dependent upon imported labour." [14] The District Administration Reports note the following immigration figures:

	Mainlanders Entering	Leaving
1923	4,334	2,478
1924	4,233	1,740
1925	3,820	3,943
1926	5,392	2,813
1927 1928	No figures published	
1929	448	1,025
1930	790	1,071
1931	2,368	965

Note: The issue of movement passes was stopped as an economy measure in 1932,

It seems reasonable to assume that this process had from the turn of the century on an average increased the mainland population of Zanzibar by some 1,500 to 2,000 a year, perhaps more in the earlier years. Initially their work was limited to P.W.D. road gang work and plantation weeding, sometimes also cultivating work only the indigenous peoples retaining the interest in profiting from

seasonal clove-picking. Later the mainlanders were able to participate in this also. Many mainlanders from coastal ethnic groups became boat crewmen. They generally arrived to work on contracts of one to three months, sometimes these were renewed, sometimes the labourer moved on to a new employer or became a squatter, the status of which is examined later. The government viewed them, in the words of reports of the time as "temporarily settled"; many stayed for long periods, others for a year or two. The increase tapered off at the end of the 1920s and stopped in the 1930s.

A large number of these mainlanders were animist or Christian, though some from the Kenya and Tanganyika Coast areas were Moslem. Exact proportions are hard to estimate, one reason being that the mainlanders sometimes temporarily professed a conversion (evident in a wearing of cloth caps by the men and bui bui by their wives) for their own advantage while at work on the islands.[15]

The 1948 census suggests the origins of the mainlanders (both categories) as follows: [16]

Tribe	Zanzibar Island	Pemba Island	Total
Tanganyika:			
Nyamwezi	5 845	2 408	8 253
Zaramo	3 847	1 563	5 410
Makonde (incl. some (from P.E.A.)	2 356	269	2 625
Dengereko	1 943	195	2 138
Maniema (incl. some from Congo)	1 899	303	2 202
Other	1 595	361	1 956
Nyasaland:			
Nyasa	3 372	1 866	5 238
Yao	2 759	1 100	3 859
Mozambique:			
Zigua	1 120	559	1 679
Kenya:	173	134	307
Uganda:	411	55	466
Other mainland tribes	12 084	5 060	17 134
	37 404	13 873	51 277

The reference to other mainland tribes included some of the second, and minority variety of mainlanders,[17] ex-slaves or descendants from ex-slaves, these were often reluctant to admit slave ancestry. In general most of the ex-slaves or their descendants had become accepted (or were, in any case, and knew that they were) members of one of the indigenous groups, but some nevertheless continued to see themselves as mainlanders. All born after 1st January 1890 were free and the remaining slaves were liberated from 1897 onwards, just under 10,000 being freed in ten years by the courts, with a further 2-3,000 freed directly by their masters.[18] On their liberation they were landless; the close-knit indigenous communities (ukoo)[19] prevented all but a handful of the freed slaves settling in the coral areas. Some tried out their fortunes as settlers on plots in the central area; these had found integration easier. The remainder, the majority of the ex-slaves, had remained with their masters in domestic service or on various forms of tenancy arrangements on the estates on the west side of the island; a few had gone to Zanzibar City. Those on the estates usually worked for a few days per week on their masters' land and clove trees in return for a small cash wage and a plot of their own, or the right to grow their own cash crops under their masters' trees for their own use and for sale in Zanzibar City and elsewhere. This relationship was known as 'squatting' but the term remained loose and never defined as was 'resident labourer' in Kenya; it covered a very wide variety of arrangements. Sometimes squatters were allowed to own fruit trees, the usual practice being the sharing of produce between farmer and squatter, but they were not allowed to grow cloves or coconut. These ex-slave squatters had passed on, with the permission generally given by the plantation owners, their rights to their descendants; and the number of squatters had further been increased by the newer arrivals from the mainlanders who preferred agriculture to work in the city. The 1924 census, for example notes a higher proportion of the Nyamwezi group of peoples at work in weeding than in general labour of the road gang type, in contrast to the Zaramu, Nyasa and Yao, where the proportions were reversed. Many Mocambique Makonde became nightwatchmen on remote estates. Custom at the time permitted squatting, including hut-building and subsistence crop-growing on the land if there was room and the owner not unwilling; it further did not countenance

evictions. One can therefore discern different types of squatter emerging, these have some relationship to their community of origin - though numerous exceptions must warn against too precise categorization.[20] Many of the longer established ex-slaves and their descendants saw themselves by the 1940s as Hadimu Shirazi either through beliefs about their ancestry or through marriage, but some of the ex-slaves and almost all of the 20th century immigrants saw themselves as mainlanders. No statistical information is available but one can advance the argument that the degree of economic integration of the ex-slave, and mainlander also, is likely to have depended on length of stay, physical health and energy, and adherence to Islam, the religion of most estate owners who might be more generous to co-religionists. Many of the exslave squatters were a depressed community with little social cohesion and little energy, they squatted on old estates, lived in poorly built huts and engaged in casual work while growing subsistence crops such as cassava, sweet potato and banana, with perhaps some rice; additionally both men and women harvested cloves. The 20th century immigrants had begun, and were still beginning, simply as weeders on one of the better estates with a small plot for subsistence food-growing to supplement their meagre wages for the duration of their stay.[21] A number returned to the mainland after eighteen months but those that decided to remain used the asset of their superior physique, which made them popular with employers, to advance to improved terms which might provide rights to grow crops for sale but no rights to grow trees; in this category were also some of the more fortunate ex-slave mainlanders and a very few indigenous squatters. The best-placed squatters were those with rights to grow both fruit trees (orange, lime, mango, lemons, bread-fruit and pawpaw) and cash crops; some mainlanders had advanced to this status, as again had a very small number of indigenous.[22] Some mainlanders had been so successful in advancing themselves over the years that with the profits from their work they had purchased small plots of land of their own. Such men, however, who had advanced by hard work from the rough makuti shelter of a squatter weeder remote from anywhere on an estate managed by an agent on behalf of an impoverished absentee owner, to seeing themselves as permanent farmer residents could and did feel mounting resentment against Arab and indigenous exclusiveness, at times overt contempt.[23]

The whole plantation agricultural scene, Arab, Asian or indigenous owned, needs to be set in its correct perspective of a most indifferent system, poor management, virtually no investment in improvement, poor husbandry standards, owners often absent and agents of varying levels of incompetence, crops leased to moneylenders, and employing untrained labour which could by malice or ignorance damage trees at harvest and which was paid low wages and housed in poor housing.[24] From the mainlanders point of view there were limited avenues of advancement on the western side of the island where Moslem law modified by an admixture of British freehold concepts prevailed; these avenues might enable the most successful to purchase a plot, though the price for one of commercial value was high and the purchase did not lead to identification with or acceptance by the local community. On the eastern side of the island the indigenous communal systems virtually excluded all mainlanders.

There was then, overall, no great scope for mainlanders' progress on the land either to support (by means of being a profitable alternative) demands for improved conditions in the city, or as a means of escape from it. In fact in the city conditions were becoming more difficult for a variety of long-term and medium-term reasons. In the broadest long-term view, Zanzibar had been a major entrepot in the first decades of the century and still remained so in the 1920s: by the 1930s decline had begun, and the war years had seen increased use and development of Dar-es-Salaam and Tanga. Conditions of work could and did improve on the mainland but they had not so improved in Zanzibar. And it is for this major reason that the advantages enjoyed by mainland labour working on Zanzibar Island (advantages over their kinsmen who remained at home) began to decline in the 1930s. From being a form of labour aristocracy many mainlanders, particularly in Zanzibar City, found themselves undergoing a slow process of reduction to a proletariat, the total mainlander numbers in consequence declining, and declining also in proportion to the indigenous as the following table shows:[25]

Zanzibar Islands

	1924	1931	1948
Indigenous	68,385	no figure available	81,150
Mainlander	38,590	44,492	37,404

The decline in Zanzibar's overall position was reflected in the wage rates which mainlanders had been able to earn in Zanzibar City; these fell in relation to the opportunities on the mainland or in their home areas:

Unskilled Labour, P.W.D. Signing on Rates

		1930	1935	1938	1948 (1 Jan)
Zanzibar City	Per month	Shs. 30	Shs. 22.50 to	Shs. 27	Shs. 32.50
	Per day	Shs. 1.25	85 cts.	85 cts.	Shs. 1.30 (increased from 85 cts in 1945)
Dar es Salaam (rates include value of rations or allowance and housing allowance)	Per month	Shs. 22	Shs. 15-18	Shs.20-25	Shs. 30-32
	Per day		50 cts.	50 cts.	Shs.1.50-2

(Source: Zanzibar and Tanganyika Annual Colony Reports)

Notes

1. Mainland labour - except for a very brief spell in the 1930s when it was taxed at a low rate - enjoyed Zanzibar's freedom from direct taxation. On return to Tanganyika, practice appeared to vary. In some areas men who had been away could claim exemption from tax on the grounds of nine months absence and be given an exemption certificate by a District Officer. Provided men knew of this concession and equally important their chiefs knew of it and respected it also, it was an added incentive to work in Zanzibar. No doubt this was so in the majority of cases even though a minority must have had to pay the mainland tax which varied by district but was supposed to equate with one month's wage earnings (unskilled labour) either as poll, hut or house tax, varying arrangements

being used over the years. In other areas of Tanganyika it appears such concessions were not granted, and in Nyasaland an exemption would have been less likely, the taxing of migrant labour being an important source of revenue.

2. Until the middle 1930s Zanzibar labour was in fact still being paid in Rupees, the exchange being Rl=Sh. 1.50cts (£0-1-6d).

3. It is the relationship to the mainland that is significant. In real terms, as the table showed, wages and conditions of living rose slightly in standards.

Other medium-term reasons for this reversal of fortune will be considered later, but certain parallel features of the process at work can be discerned.There was some decline in the ratio of mainlander men and women. On Zanzibar Island approximate figures were:[26]

	1924	1948
Men	18,405	15,990
Women	14,678	12,360
Children	3,307	8,656

Professor Batson's Survey, drawing its distinction between those mainlanders born on the mainland and those born on Zanzibar or on Pemba, noted a masculinity ratio of 2.2 for the whole protectorate in respect of the former category.[27] Somewhat longer lengths of time became necessary for a migrant labourer to spend at work in Zanzibar (in comparison with say Dar-es-Salaam or Mombasa) to make the work profitable against the costs of the distances and sea journey involved. These factors also served to reduce the support, or subsidy, a labourer's own stake in his community's peasant economy could provide for him, small parcels of food or cheap rate fuel or charcoal supplied by a kinsman which helped many urban labourers in the Kenyan or Tanganyikan cities must have been much less common in Zanzibar.[28] Not only was the attraction of Zanzibar waning, but there were fewer domestic reasons for leaving home. In several areas of Tanganyika, notably the Lake Province, the Depression had had the effect of leading

peasant societies into a greater appreciation and use of their own agriculture resources to their own profit.Groundnut growing and cotton both expanded in the 1930s, and in the labour shortages of the war years a number of other more rewarding options were open to peasants and labourers alike.

One finds then the mainlander falling to the bottom of the Zanzibar Island social scale. In occupations such as manual labourers, domestic servants and squatters owning no land, the mainlanders formed the largest proportion. In Appendix II, taken from Professor Batson's surwey, are a number of indicators all confirming this position. In addition, mainlanders were not directly represented in the Legislative Council. Certain evidence suggests that some mainlanders felt themselves estranged to a point of total alienation. Ommaney, for example notes the sanitary cart work force (almost entirely mainlander) disguising themselves with palm leaves and daubed faces to avoid recognition by friends, and a peculiar rhythmic grunting understandable only to themselves of the city's commercial cart drivers and pushers.[29] And it is against this overall background in which urban unrest, when it came, was bound to be dominated by mainlanders, that we may proceed to consider the more direct causes of the 1948 strike.

II

In human terms nearly 25,000 of the mainlanders lived and worked in or near Zanzibar City. Within Zanzibar City itself just under one third of the total population of 9,850 was a mainland African born outside the protectorate.[30] They worked in domestic service, in the port and in the go-downs, in the P.W.D. road gangs, in the Public Health Department and a variety of other urban activities. In general they constituted, within the city, the 'working poor' of employed labour at bare subsistence wage levels, in contrast to the 'informal sector' of indigenous petty traders, hoteli owners and other minor independant and more lucrative - and less physically exhausting - activities; although there were some indigenous Africans in manual labour the numbers were not great.[31]

Just under 15,000 lived in the "Ngambo" (trans: 'the other side'

of a former creek used for drainage), the African township of Zanzibar City (in contrast to the European, Asian, and Arab "Stone Town"), with a further 10,000 in the Maghrib mudiria, the administrative sub-division next inland from the capital, in particular the very full suburban 'commuter' settlements of Bububu, Kimara, Mbweni and Mombasa. Here, mixed up with - and also in some measure of economic rivalry with - those indigenous at work and in residence,[32] the mainlanders formed a large element, hostile to the Arab oligarchy, and also increasingly to British and Asian commercial domination, on the western side of the island.

They lived for the most part in small square or rectangular shaped mud houses with roofs of flattened kerosene tins or thatch made from coconut palms; size and pattern varied considerably, but most possessed two to four rooms. The few better houses had cement floors and plastered walls with a privy and cess pit, the very large majority were much rougher, doubtfully rain proof and with no sanitary arrangements. The 1948 Annual Report admitted that Ngambo contained "some of the worst features of native slums" with "serious congestion and lack of adequate sewerage, drainage and ventilation".[33] Such huts could be built easily and cheaply (£50-60) and many were owned by both mainlanders and indigenous Africans. They did not however own the site, usually the property of an Arab or Indian to whom rent had to be paid; this latter was controlled by the Ground Rents Restriction Decree.[34] For an African who did not own a house the average rent for one small room was Shs.4/50-5/- per month, a charge which led inevitably to many men, usually from the same ethnic group, sharing rooms in overcrowded conditions.

Their only slight advantage over the indigenous Africans was that by reason of their concentration near the capital they enjoyed a slightly more favourable access to schools for their children. All Africans - indigenous and by this time also mainlanders - contributed to the annual migration, some 20,000 for stays of varying duration in a good year, to Pemba for clove picking at either the smaller vuli (December - February) or the main mwaka (later in the year, August - October) seasons, a move analagous to the former hop-picking of London's East End population. A government steamer provided free transport. Of these internal mi-

grants the large majority by 1948 had become mainlanders, the P.W.D. and Public Health Department labour force being severely depleted. A number apparently caught venereal disease during this move.

The mainlanders had little aptitude for formal organization; in 1934 an "African Association for Immigrant Workers", later shortened to 'African Association' was formed but it does not appear to have achieved anything noteworthy. It corresponded with its own off-shoot, the Tanganyika African Association but to little effect and its existence owed as much to the British preference for tame racial associations as to any African initiative. The distribution of mainlanders, partly on the land and partly in Zanzibar City, and their many different original ethnic groups and languages also mitigated against effective formal organization; there were no Zanzibar counterparts of the ethnic group associations to be found in Mombasa or Nairobi. Overall, though, despite their different origins, in some cases one or two generations distant by 1948, an awareness that they were strangers in a society where they could not feel at home was growing, to be given a unity - at least in Zanzibar City - by the strike. Informal organizations may have perhaps played some part in preserving this awareness: it seems the ex-slave mainlanders linked together in dance (ngoma) groups[35] while the immigrants were linked ethnically by loosely organized savings clubs, centred round a respected figure of long residence who would also supervise minor welfare matters in cases of sickness or death, each member of the club paying in a small sum per month and taking the club's balance when he wished to go home and his turn came round.[36] Some of these immigrants were also linked in ngoma groups but these did not mix much with those of the ex-slave mainlanders.

The British administration's concern for African advancement at this time is debatable, particularly in the case of the mainlanders towards whom the Protectorate's Chief Secretary in the years immediately prior to 1948, Major E.A.T. Dutton, had been particularly unsympathetic.[37] Certain steps were taken, but frequently these were taken half-heartedly and certainly never enacted in any way likely to diminish the position of the Arab oligarchy. At the time many British officials still believed a return to the

pre-1939 imperial hey-day conditions was possible in Eastern Africa; British thinking saw threats to this, on the world stage, in the form of the Cold War (Czechoslovakia had fallen to communist control and the Berlin airlift crisis was at its height), the Chinese revolution and the Malayan emergency. The significance of the Accra riots and militant Zikism in Nigeria was not appreciated, and at local level there was no conception of the degree of frustration felt by the high proportion of Zanzibar's population that were mainlanders. British policy - such as it was[38] - for Zanzibar remained racially hierarchic: Africans were labourers or peasants and mainlanders had a right to a living wage but no real right to comment on or participate in the political life of the protectorate.[39] British colonial administrations, too often found the problems and personalities of African urban protest to be distasteful. Law and order then, was to be the Sultan's Arab law and order under British protection.

Within these parameters however, there had been some attempts at improving the position of the African town dweller, in particular in respect of housing. A grant of £100,000 had been secured from the British Government, under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act provisions for the progressive redevelopment of Ngambo and parts of the adjoining 'commuter' suburbs. Work commenced in 1943. By the end of 1948 some two hundred houses had been built or rebuilt, a number serving as transit houses for dispossessed householders whose houses were to be rebuilt to a higher standard. Standard houses of different sizes had been designed and displayed, pre-cast pillars of reinforced concrete for more durable new houses were available for purchase at subsidised prices and a Civic Centre (Raha Leo) consisting of a coffee shop, post office, women and children's clinic, hall for meetings and dances, reading rooms, committee room and children's playground had been completed, and a welfare staff appointed. Other Colonial Development and Welfare Act money was granted for improvements in the protectorate's medical services. All this however, represented only a start, and the majority of the inhabitants of the area benefited only marginally.

The immediate post-war years saw the general arousal of nationalist anti-colonial movements, in Zanzibar this was heightened

by Arab resentment over British Middle Eastern policies: unwillingness to withdraw from Egypt - where a number of young Zanzibari Arabs completed their education - and above all the Palestine situation. A Moslem day of shop-closure and protest strike took place on 12 December 1947;[40] as a reflex to the emergence of Zionism an "unfamiliar Arab arrogance" was discernible in Zanzibar City.[41] Other forms of racial expression were bound to follow in a territory which was structured in so racial a hierarchy. For example, many Zanzibar inhabitants including both indigenous Africans and permanently domiciled Arabs were beginning to feel, from different points of view, that such wealth as the country had was being steadily drawn off either British or Indian commercial interests, to Arabia by the dhow trade or to the mainland through migrant labourers' wage packets. Some claimed that the presence of mainlanders worsened urban overcrowding, lowered the rates of wages which otherwise the indigenous might have been tempted to earn and, more justifiably, that the mainlanders used Zanzibar services but paid no tax. The growing use of the term Shirazi - an assertion by indigenous Africans of their particularity - was an indication of this sentiment. This climate of opinion on the one hand led to indifference to the economic, political or social situation of the mainlander, and in reply on the other hand to the comment made in the territory's 1946 Annual Report:[42]

> "In African circles there was a tendency amongst town dwelling elements of more recent mainland origin to assert that the Washirazi (who form the indigenous African group of the Wapemba, Watumbatu and Wahadimu) were of Asiatic origin. The Towndwelling African elements, who formed the African Association, claimed that they alone were capable of representing true African thought and opinion, and not the Shirazi."

A further factor contributing to this growing racial consciousness in the early post-war years was the Zanzibar government's attempts - in accordance with overall British colonial policy at the time - to develop local government bodies. It often seemed to the protectorate officials that the most suitable persons to be chairman for these local councils were, by virtue of their supe-

rior education, Arab landowners. This was very unpopular with Africans, particularly mainlanders, who frequently voiced their disapproval to British district commissioners.[43]

A situation that was therefore difficult enough in itself was made worse by very poor clove harvests in 1947 and the severe attack of "sudden death" disease upon the clove bushes for which no cure was then known. The position was summarised by the administration report for 1948 which opened: "The predominant theme in 1948 was without doubt economic: a general demand to make good the cumulative shortfall over the years in every walk of life.."[44]

There were in addition other specific local reasons for unrest in Zanzibar City in 1947 and 1948. The cost-of-living for Africans had continued to rise slowly, but wages had remained generally at the 1945 level. Although the government operated a number of price control regulations the scarcity of some goods, particularly imported foodstuffs had led to blackmarketeering[45]: in particular the prices of sweet potatoes, sheat flour and bambara nuts, and also soap and sugar, had continued to rise in 1948.[46] A further factor contributing to the general atmosphere of discontent was the report of a civil service salaries commission appointed by the Colonial Office to consider civil service salaries in all four British East African territories. This commission, known after its chairman as the Holmes Commission, argued in favour of the continuance of racial salary scales, the report writing of the necessity to "...bring home to the African the fact that the discrimination of which he complains rests not on racial but other more fundamental grounds, and to show him why we are unable to accept his plea for 'equal pay for equal work'..."[47] Some employers, but not all, commented on increasing surliness among their labour force at the time.[48]

More important, however, were spectacular gains made by dockworkers' strikes in Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam. Taking their cue, perhaps, from the Durban dock strike of 1946 and for the first time under an effective leadership, Mombasa's dockworkers went on strike from 13-25 January 1947, being quickly joined by almost all African labour in the area. The Kenya government appointed an arbitration tribunal which made a substantial increase of wages in its

awards. Dock wages at Mombasa prior to the strike had been Shs. 2/50 per day for stevedores (compared with Shs. 2/- in 1938), and Shs.2/- per day for shore labour (compared with Shs. 1/50 in 1938) with no food: these represented increases from the 1938 figures of 33% and 25% respectively. One of the strikers' claims had been that the the cost-of-living had increased very much more than wage levels, and a social survey enquiry committee brought out from Britain to investigate conditions in Mombasa estimated that the overall cost-of-living increase for African workers in Mombasa from 1939 to 1947 had been over 100%, with in more specific detail food prices increasing between 60-100%, rents by 100%, clothing by 300%.[49]

This conclusion confirmed the view of an earlier enquiry, following unrest in Mombasa in 1945, that had noted a permanent urban proletariat was being created in Mombasa (which had formerly enjoyed higher cash wage rates than elsewhere in Kenya and still in pure cash terms continued to do so), and that Africans could see some chiefs, traders and inhabitants of certain African ethnic group traditional areas prospering while their real wages were declining; conditions which were parallel to those in Zanzibar.[50] At the time of the 1947 strike the Kenya government proclaimed a monthly minimum wage of Shs. 40/-, (less permissible deductions of Shs. 5/- when housing and Shs. 12/- when food were supplied), for the Mombasa area. The final award recommended the creation of a permanent pool of registered casual labour for the port of Mombasa, with wage awards of Shs. 2/75 for an eight hour day for casual labourers and Shs 3/25 for stevedores (to rise to Shs. 3/75 if a pool was formed).

From Mombasa action spread to Dar-es-Salaam, where in July 1947 casual labour in the port was earning Shs. 2/30 per day (compared with Shs. 1/80 in 1940).[51] A strike began early in September and quickly spread not only to other labour in Dar-es-Salaam but to other towns in Tanganyika. The colonial government followed the Kenya pattern in appointing a tribunal which made an even more generous award noting that increases in cost-of-living for Africans had been a major cause of the strike and again recommending the creation of a permanent port casual labour pool.[52] The award (known as the Hatchell award) provided for wages as follows:

Registered casual labourers: 40cts. per hour for the first five hours of work reinforced by a minimum payment of Shs. 2/- requirement, plus 35cts. per hour for six to nine hours of work (with 45cts. per hour for hours in excess of nine), plus a cost-of-living allowance of 50cts. per day (75cts. if the day was over nine hours) plus a midday meal or 10cts. in lieu (or an evening meal or 30cts. in lieu in the case of evening shifts), plus a good attendance bonus of Shs. 5/- if a man worked for 20 or more days out of 25; a remuneration amounting to some Shs. 3/80 per day for a good worker.

Non-registered casual labourers: 35cts. per hour for the first five hours with a minimum payment requirement of Shs. 1/50, 30cts. per hour for the next three hours and 40cts. for hours beyond nine, and other minor variations less favourable than the terms provided for registered men.

Permanently employed labour: A monthly wage of Shs. 45/- rising by annual increments of Shs. 1/- to Shs. 55/-, with a cost-of-living allowance of Shs. 20/- per month, overtime at 35cts. per hour and a minimum standby rate of 50cts. per day.

These wage rates were by the standards of the time major increases with which the Dar-es-Salaam dockworkers were justly pleased, and also proud in that they had been secured by their own action, an example that could hardly fail to be noticed so short a distance away as Zanzibar.

In the first months of 1948 it appeared, or must certainly have so appeared to workers in the port, that Zanzibar's economic circumstances were improving. Clove exports began to rise again following India's ending of a quota system and new markets in Java and Singapore being opened up.[53] Copra was in much demand, following a greatly improved price offer from the British government's Ministry of Food. The port was also busier both for general trade and as it was being used as an unloading station for the British government's Overseas Food Corporation's ill-fated Tanganyika ground-nuts project; heavy equipment was unloaded at Zanzibar from ocean freighters which had transported it from Britain, it was then reloaded into coastal steamers suitable for the small

south Tanganyikan harbours.[54] Further duties on the mainland had recently been increased and many consumer goods were unloaded for sale in Zanzibar but found their way quickly to the mainland.[55] This slight sign of apparent improvement may well have percipitated the action which followed: a curtain raiser for this had perhaps been a small strike in March 1947 at the protectorate government's agricultural experimental station at Kizimbani. Kizimbani could focus rural discontent with particular clarity, as it was the only estate on the island with a large resident labour force, some 200 mainlanders, mainly Tanganyikan Nyamwezi. These lived in a 'model village' of 32 semi-detached houses and five blocks of eight single rooms, some single cottages and village facilities such as dispensary, shop and coffee house.[56] Small Protestant and Catholic churches and a mosque were also under construction. The labour was paid at daily rates. The strike began among the field labourers who threatened violence against other labourers, chiefly those responsible for livestock which could not be neglected, if they did not join in. The agricultural officer in charge of the station called on the Zanzibar Island district commissioner who came to a meeting of the strikers. He pointed out that as the labourers were on daily terms they had technically ceased to be in employment by striking and said that he had arrived to talk without police support, but if threats of intimidation continued he might have to take stronger action.[57] Wage negotiations then began and a few days later work was resumed, but the intimidation, the first occasion in Zanzibar, was significant.

III

An outline of the general employment scene in Zanzibar in 1948 is perhaps useful before proceeding to the events of the strike. Three government departments were the largest employers, the Public Works Department employing some 1,400, the Agriculture Department some 1,100, and the Public Health Department some 350, - of these sizeable percentages of the P.W.D. and Public Health worked near Zanzibar City, where in addition other totals were as follows:[58]

Development Department	250
Shell Company	50

Beach Porters	50
Market Porters	50
Market assistant drivers	100
Produce packers and baggers	200
Hamali cartmen	800
African Wharfage Company	335

At the port the African Wharfage Company (Zanzibar) held a total monopoly of cargo-handling. This Company was wholly owned by a parent African Wharfage Company whose head offices were in Mombasa and whose capital was that of the two largest British steamship companies, the British-India and Union-Castle lines. Both the African Wharfage Companies used the staff of Messrs. Smith Mackenzie, a large British export-import trading firm, as managers and officials for work in ports. The Company had made an effort, largely unsuccessful, to engage and retain ex-servicemen of World War II; the majority of these however left for other work. The movement of goods either for export or import to or from the quayside to the go-downs and warehouses of merchants was in the hands of porters: some had very short distances to move goods, others - the hamali cart men - pulled hand carts often at high speed through the narrow streets of the city. The hamali men considered themselves the élite of the work force,[59] they had commanded high wage rates in the war and were still on piece-work rates (based on the number of journeys made), earning very much more than the quayside workers. From 1945 onwards and under the paternal tutelage of the district commissioner and the Magharib mudir they had organized themselves into a loose Association[60] which owned some carts, and which from 1946 onwards formed the employees side of a committee which determined rates of remuneration.

As has been noted, labour matters were seen as the responsibility of the district administrative officer. Under the 1946 Labour Decree the duties of Labour Commissioner were discharged by the Senior Commissioner, district commissioners and assistant district officers were Labour Officers and mudirs were Welfare Officers. An employment bureau (referred to as the Labour Office) existed in Zanzibar City but appears to have been little used. The government was advised by a Labour Advisory Board on which mainland labour was not represented.[61] The Labour Adviser to the Secretary of

State for the Colonies, Major G.St.J. Orde-Browne, had visited Zanzibar in 1945 and an assistant, Miss S.A. Ogilvie, was on her way to Zanzibar at the end of a long East African tour in 1948; she arrived in fact only after the strike was over. But at no time prior to the strike was there any feeling in the Colonial Office or the local secretariat that the labour scene required any particular attention, or that any special danger lay in a heavy dependence on labour from the mainland, (though in fact the year 1948 saw some falling off of the numbers who arrived seasonally, due, it was thought, to improving opportunities on the mainland). A further factor disguising the real situation was that Zanzibar had not experienced the industrial unrest of the war years that had beset both Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam. Nevertheless the African Wharfage Company, taking its cue from the 1947 Dar-es-Salaam award began negotiations in its works council with representatives of its work force.[62] As a result of these negotiations the stevedores and quay workers entered into monthly terms of service on six month contracts (designed as in Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam to create a professional permanent labour force) which provided for a monthly wage (to be paid in half-monthly instalments) of Shs.45/- rising by annual increments of Shs.1/- to Shs.55/-, one free meal per day, overtime payment of 25cts. per hour for more than nine hours work and other benefits.[63] These terms were comparable to those of Dar-es-Salaam except that these did not include the important Shs 20/- cost-of-living allowance.

One immediate cause of the strike which followed so quickly and so surprised both the government and the company was, no doubt, a suspicious reflection of this paternal coercive approach. There were however other immediate waterfront causes, Zanzibar had acquired a reputation by unloading ships diverted from Dar-es-Salaam during the strike there[64] and behind the events that ensued it is possible to detect a measure of organisation with some roots on the mainland and probably connected with the Dar-es-Salaam strike.[65] The principal figure behind the Zanzibar strike appears to have been a Dengereko named Abbas Othman, a Moslem from Tanganyika, who some three weeks prior to the strike had engaged himself as a labourer with the African Wharfage Company under the name of Jomo Kenyatta.[66] It is probable that Abbas Othman had been active in

Dar-es-Salaam during the strike there[67] and it may be conjectured that he travelled to Zanzibar with the organization of a strike as his aim. But the strike, like other African strikes was characterised far more by a sudden clear demonstration of unity, albeit inarticulate in its written or verbal expressions, rather than any charismatic strike leadership.

Rumours of a proposed strike began to circulate in mid-August. The Port Superintendant, Capt. J.G. Robertson, asked to see the instigatiors. A number of men, which included none of the Company's longer serving labourers, were brought before him but all refused to answer any questions.

On Wednesday 18 August 1948, after the half-month pay day, the Wharfage Company received a demand, in the form of an unsigned letter not very clearly written, apparently claiming a monthly wage of Shs.60/- plus a free daily meal and free medical attention, and an increase in overtime rates from 25cts. to 75cts. per hour with the normal daily hours of work reduced from nine hours to eight.[68] This claim was not unreasonable in the light of the Dar-es-Salaam settlement, but the manner of its submission - so soon after the July agreement, in the form of a demand not presented through the Works Council and backed by threats of a strike within 48 hours if the demands were not met, was unacceptable to the Company, which had been willing to consider an increase following the government's own increases in July but refused to concede any increase under duress. McQueen, the manager, had further been enformed that the strike had been planned with a view to similar action in Mombasa and Tanga.[69]

Two days following the ultimatum were spent in efforts to avoid a strike, the government's administration officials being used to try and argue for an abandonment of the strike after which negotiations might commence. These efforts failed and on Friday 20 August the strike began. As on the mainland the strike was at first orderly, though pickets carried sticks and there were reports never in fact substantiated that some other members of the Company's staff had been intimidated. The first attempts to involve other labour, the Shell Company, P.W.D. and Clove Growers Association were also made at a meeting arranged by the Wharfage Company employees, but such

attempts coming at the end of a month with pay day approaching lacked appeal. By 22 August three ships had already sailed away without unloading, further attempts to persuade men to return to work had already failed and both Glenday and the company's chairman in Mombasa were advising concessions, Glenday also warning that the recruitment of replacement labour would be seen by the strikers as a provocation.

On the 25 August the government, becoming more alarmed by the treats of intimidation and the fact that strikers were walking about the city carrying sticks (though still not at this stage openly contravening the law), issued a warning that intimidation might be used to spread the strike and stated that it would meet threats of violence with force if necessary; throughout the period loudspeaker vans toured the dock area and Ngambo urging strikers to return. At this juncture matters were greatly complicated by the government's decision - in the light of the findings of its own cost-of-living enquiry - to increase the wages of its labour force, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, retroactively to 27 July: in respect of casual daily paid unskilled labour the increase was to be one from Shs.1/30 to 1/40 per day (including cost-of-living allowance) to Shs.2/80. It seems the government did not decide to do this under pressure of any direct threat that it took seriously at the time (though it received a number which it ignored), but as a recognition of a real need which should not be delayed because a similar category of employees in the private sector was on strike and in the belief that if the increase were delayed there would certainly be a general strike.

The situation however continued to deteriorate. The Indian National Association of Zanzibar pleaded on behalf of the strikers.[70] On the 26 August the Italian liner Toscana arrived at Zanzibar with a crew of 201 and some 700 passengers amongst whom together were 32 suspect typhoid cases. Striking dockworkers tried to prevent urgently needed water supplies reaching the ship, which then had to move on after landing, with the help of voluntary organisations, only a handful of the most seriously ill patients.[71] The Company made two unsuccessful initiatives; the previous and very popular port manager James Burgess, who had been promoted to an appointment in Mombasa, was flown over, but he found that even

workers he had known and respected for a long time were unwilling to talk to him,[72] and on Saturday 28 August the strikers were made a new offer of an increased rate for overtime, the government's casual labour rates per day and a promise of further discussions. The government hoped that this latter initiative would end the strike and, to ease matters, ceased preparations, which had in fact commenced, for the recruitment of fresh labour in the north of Zanzibar Island to break the strike. An indication of the increasingly tense and hostile atmosphere occurred on the evening of the 28 August. When the alarm siren at the Ziwani police barracks sounded for a routine practice, a large crowd poured out of Ngambo and parts of Stone Town rushing towards the Dock gates. Many carried heavy sticks or other weapons and repeated shouting a rumour of clashes with the police, but they returned home peacefully when they found no clash had occurred. The payment of the August wage packet to monthly paid labour in the city also heightened the likelihood of the strike spreading.

All these events together, however, led the Resident to decide the strike could no longer be left alone for time to heal, the economy of the territory and the movement of goods to Pemba and other parts of the Protectorate were too severely affected - food shortages becoming acute in some areas, and with the police siren incident revealing latent unruliness. Under the Peace Preservation Decree, the Resident issued a proclamation on 31 August applying the provisions of the decree to the African areas of Zanzibar City, the dock area and certain immediate suburbs; in particular these provisions directed that all weapons, defined in wide terms to include clubs, bludgeons and bows and arrows as well as all firearms, cutlesses and swords should be delivered to the Central Police Station, a measure which posed difficulties of interpretation as many East African coastal peoples often carried light walking sticks. He followed this by issuing rules on 1 September which forbade all meetings without permission of the Chief of Police and gave police officers powers to break up gatherings of more than four.[73]

Glenday also decided that fresh labour must be found to handle ships and supplies of foodstuffs, in particular a cargo that had just arrived in S.S. Kilwa. The mudir of Mkokotoni was directed

to recruit Tumbatu men, who were to be brought to the Customs Gate in lorries just before 7 a.m. on the morning of Thursday 2 September.[74] The labour so recruited, however, absconded in fear of what their reception might be. But the administration and police in the City were not informed of this desertion, and a substantial force of police was sent to the Customs Gate to escort them in. There they were greeted by a very hostile crowd of strikers, early risers having noticed the arrival of police guards on duty in place of customs guards. The buses were attacked with sticks and stones, the police however secured their entry to the dock through the Customs Gate and arrested two men for carrying sticks in contravention of the proclamation. The word spread around like lightening however, and the crowd outside the Customs Gate grew in numbers very rapidly indeed to about 1,500, the police being quite unable to disarm them, although reinforcements were sent. At the same time throughout the city the large majority of Africans working for government or for other employers joined the strike either in sympathy or under threats of violence to themselves or their families.[75] In particular Africans working for white employers, in government, commerce or domestic service were expected to strike, and with indigenous striking as well as mainlanders the strike became an all-African urban protest.

While the strike was spreading through the town the situation at the Customs Gate worsened, the crowd becoming even larger and more abusive. The district commissioner, Shaikh Salim Barwani, and the town mudir, Shaikh Seyyid Saud Busaidi, were asked to go to the Customs Gate and tell the crowd to disperse after appointing spokesmen to discuss grievances with the government, which they did with difficulty but after thirty minutes of parley gave up in face of the militancy of the crowd. The Town Magistrate, Stiven, was then summoned to read the Riot Proclamation ordering the strikers to disperse which again had no effect, the crowd, armed with bludgeons, crow-bars and pangas, throwing stones, shouting, and demanding the release of the men arrested. Stiven did however manage to ascertain that the crowd would not resort to violence if the two arrested men were released, which message he reported in person, in an excited state to Colonel Bell, the Commissioner of Police, adding that the senior police officer at the gate wished to open fire on the crowd. He told the Commissioner that he thought

that this would be totally unjustified and that he would state that this had been his opinion at any subsequent enquiry. Bell decided to visit the scene in person where he formed the opinion that the arrest of the two men had been unjustified as the sticks they were carrying had been light walking-sticks, and that their arrest had created a situation even more tense than that which might have arisen if the Tumbatu labour had arrived. While he was so engaged the mood of the crowd now nearly 5,000 became so ugly that the police at the Gate dicided that they were in danger of being rushed and fired a tear gas bomb. This proved almost totally ineffective as some members of the crowd, very probably the remaining ex-service Wharfage Company employees who were ex-servicemen, immediately covered the bomb with sand which in turn further encouraged the crowd to attack.[76] The police position was worsened by the desertion of their transport drivers, P.W.D. lorry men. Bell decided that there was only one course of action open to him which would avoid bloodshed, to release the two men: he accordingly recommended this action by telephone to the Chief Secretary and the Resident. Glenday at first disapproved but then gave way. Bell then took the men back to the crowd and amid cheers released them; the crisis passed. The crowd then broke up into smaller groups and paraded through the streets of the town calling for all Africans to cease work. Traders kept their stores closed and shuttered.

The government was now thoroughly alarmed, and accepted with alacrity the Tanganyika government's offer of police reinforcements. These arrived almost immediately from the mainland. An emergency meeting of the Legislative Council was called for Monday 6 September, the Sultan issued a personal message appealing for a return to work and law and order, and the Senior Commissioner and the Information Officer toured the area using loudspeakers fitted on to a vehicle trying to induce workers to be less militant. A "Labour Conciliation Committee" was appointed under the chairmanship of the Chief Justice[77] and representations were made to it in the course of the next few days from people who appeared on behalf of the town's working population, both in the public and private sectors, whether on strike or not. Two trade unions gave evidence - the *hamali's* Association and the European Servants Union.[78] Welfare officers urged men on strike to go and see the committee. The 1948

Labour Report commented that the Conciliation Committee noted that the contentions of the workers' spokesmen were made "mostly in a reasonable and conciliatory way" and the union representatives spoke well and clearly.[79]

The strikers in their turn began attempts to divert food supplies from the main markets of the city and on Friday 3 September a rowdy demonstration against the police took place outside their Ziwani barracks. This was dispersed without difficulty after police reinforcements arrived but the effect of this militancy, together with a report that a further attempt on Ziwani, to raid the police armoury, was being planned decided the Resident "in order to ensure protection in the Sultanate, to call for military aid from the Mainland". On 4 September a platoon (some 40-50 men) of soldiers from the 6th Battalion Kings African Rifles arrived from Dar-es-Salaam. They were billeted in a city school whose teachers were on strike. On 6 September the Legislative Council met, Glenday used his powers, under a special order, as President of the Council to introduce an Emergency Powers Decree,[80] and in his speech set out a narrative of the strike to that date. Standing Orders were suspended and the bill was given three readings and passed in forty minutes. There were no critics of the measure though F.N. Mawji regretted no Asian was included on the Conciliation Committee and added that he thought the government should have used its good offices more effectively when the strike was confined to the Wharfage Company. In reply the Chief Secretary said that the Senior Commissioner and the district commissioner had attempted to mediate from the moment the strike began, and that the Chief Justice had wanted a very small committee. The Decree, and the proclamation of a state of emergency made under it on the same day and the Regulations made under its powers on the next day, gave the government very wide powers indeed over requisition, food supplies, movement, direction of labour, essential services, improper interference and control of weapons.[81] Armed with these powers and backed by its small security force of police reinforcements and soldiers the government then posted notices saying that intimidation would end and men could feel free to return to work. The uniforms in the streets were evidence of the return of superior strength to the government, which felt strong enough to arrest nine men for threatening intimidation, a measure

which produced no African reaction. The Resident also appointed a Price Control Committee on 7 September on which various government and other interests were represented[82] to see if prices of commodities already controlled, especially food and clothing, could be reduced; to see if any further goods needed to be covered and to consider enforcement measures. Glenday attached great importance to this committee but he warned the Legislative Council that many of the prices of imported foodstuffs and textiles were beyond local control.

Despite all these efforts however, the strike continued until 10 September, a few Africans returning to work but not the majority. Persuasion - militant and peaceful - of work-people either to remain in or join in the strike continued. One victim was Glenday himself who when playing a round of golf with one of his senior secretariat officials and two other Europeans on 6 September lost the services of their caddies; these were approached by a group of strikers and persuaded to join in, jeering at the Resident and leaving him and his partners to carry their own clubs.[83] More serious though was the deteriorating situation in Zanzibar City, with food shortages and garbage remaining uncollected.[84]

Various organizations intervened, primarily to protect their own interests in the situation. The Arab Association appointed an unofficial committee to comment and help if it could, following the example of the Indian National Congress; the president Shaikh Abdulla Suleiman hoped to try and make his committee the nucleus of an allrace body.[85] At a formal level the Conciliation Committee continued its hearings, though it was not to complete its work until after the strike was over. At a more direct level secret negotiations were taking place in which Herbert Barnabas[86] a Christian Tanganyika mainlander who was a civil servant, a sanitary inspector, in the Public Health Department acted as the link man. He was also a member of Glenday's price control committee. Barnabas was in touch with the strike leaders through the Health Department sweepers who were on strike, and also with Pakenham, the British Senior Commissioner. Busaidi was used, at some risk to himself, by Pakenham to carry messages by night to Barnabas's house at Kidongo Chekundu near the public cemetry on the Chwaka road. The strike leaders were either unwilling to see Pakenham in his office or

afraid to be seen doing so.[87] At the Wharfage Company the fine detail of events is equally obscure, but their employees had had no pay since mid-August and many were short of money. Their men returned to work on Saturday 11 September following an offer made to them by the Company of new terms - a reversion to casual labour terms with a rate of 25cts. per hour for a nine hour day (i.e. some 2/25 per day or Shs.56/- for a 25 day month), one free meal per day and overtime at a rate of 30cts. per hour.[88] These new terms were offered to representatives of the Company's work force in writing on Friday 10 September, but it seems a number may have returned for a quite different reason - that 'Jomo Kenyatta' had called a meeting of strikers and read to them a letter purporting to come from the Company promising the original increase if they reported for work on the Saturday morning.[89] 'Jomo Kenyatta' did not remain in the Company's service; it appears that early on the morning of the Wharfage Company employees' return to work he was seen on the deck of a launch bound for Dar-es-Salaam. The returning workers shouted after him, this narrative of events adds that he had collected a 'strike fund' allegedly to assist workers while on strike and had departed with it. The Wharfage Company telephoned Dar-es-Salaam where, again according to this narrative, he was arrested.[90] The other city workers, who had been drifting back to work in increasing numbers as the week progressed and intimidation was no longer to be feared, were also all back at work by Monday 13 September.

A few features of the strike scene merit mention at this point. Suggestions of its background organization and that the issue was not simply one of wages can be seen in several details. A British business man found a middle-aged Swahili on the beach painfully writing down with a stubby pencil on a piece of paper the names of the ships passing through the Zanzibar channel; the Swahili asked the business man which ships were in transit and which were continuing because the strike made it pointless for them to anchor.[91] He said that he had been told to keep this record but would not say by whom nor for what particular purpose. An attempt was made to spread the strike to Pemba where a delegation of strikers from Zanzibar arrived, and were ordered off the island by the district commissioner.[92] There was also a certain selectivity in the calling out of the domestic servants employed in houses. Almost all Euro-

peans, including the Resident, lost their servants. The Sultan's staff were specifically not called out, nor did the servants of a few leading Arab families participate in the strike; these latter however may have faced counter-threats from their Arab employers. European employers of domestic servants met at the English Club and decided that there could be no domestic wage increases until all had returned to work; this may have played some part in the ending of the strike.[93] One British business man newly posted from Mombasa to Zanzibar brought his Kenyan house staff with him; these did not wish to join the strike and argued that they had 'done their bit' in Mombasa during the strike there, though one locally recruited servant did join in, to return later. This argument was apparently entirely accepted by the Zanzibar strikers, and the business man's Kenyan servants were neither molested nor threatened.[94] Several administrators have felt with the hindsight of events since 1948 that an atmosphere of political conspiracy did exist behind the strike at the time.[95] Another noteworthy event which occurred at the same time as the strike, caused in this case exclusively though by rising prices, was a mass meeting of African women, both indigenous and mainlander and several thousand strong, which decided not to purchase imported Khangas (cloths which formed dresses) for three months as a protest against the prices charged in Asian dukas, or stores. The protest seems to have been effective at least at the outset, it was reinforced by pickets and at least one case of a woman who purchased a khanga being persuaded to hand it back was noted.[96]

A particularly interesting and significant feature of the whole strike period was the ways in which news of it were conveyed to the world at large both by the British Resident and by the press. In his speech to the emergency session of the Legislative Council Glenday meticulously avoided any mention of leaders by name or of the significance behind the fact that the majority of the strikers were mainlanders but that these had been supported by urban indigenous Africans, evidently afraid of the further arousal of sectarian feeling. This fear had some justification: in the brief debate on the text of the decree Ameri Tajo, the Zanzibar Island Hadimu Member, specifically blamed the mainlanders for the unrest, and his resentment at the consequential difficulties and food shortages in the rural areal of the island was clear in the full

support he gave to the proposed measures. The press, and by this is meant the Tanganyika Standard, the most important local paper and part of the Nairobi East African Standard group of newspapers, deliberately played down the strike.[97] Despite the length and seriousness of the strike, the disruption caused to shipping and the Customs Gate riot, the strike never appeared on a major news page and no reference to the role of the mainlanders appeared at any time; Abbas Othman's (nor anyone else's) name was again not mentioned nor was there any reference to Othman's subsequent arrest in Dar-es-Salaam. All this served to confuse any appreciation of the issues.[98]

With the return of the labour force to work various improvements in the city's working conditions were made. With effect from 1 December the Wharfage Company increased labourers' rates to Shs.1/- in respect of the first two hours of work and 25cts. per hour for the remainder of a nine hour day, giving a total earning for a normal full day of Shs.2/75; Company labour on monthly terms was earning Shs.60/-. Through the mediation of the Labour Conciliation Committee wage increases and other improvements in terms of service were achieved by negotiations between employer and worker representatives in the packing of produce for export,[99] the bakery trade, all processes in soap and oil factories, and coconut husking and breaking. In December a special Advisory Board was set up to fix minimum wages for hamali carters,[100] new rates based on the weights of loads carried and the distances involved were fixed in May 1949. The State of Emergency was ended on 23 September. The Price Control Committee made a number of adjustments and new orders on maximum prices, and a price inspector was employed for seven months to enforce the orders. Government employees in skilled and semi-skilled categories were given a pay increase in May 1949, and in August daily paid labour in government departments were given slightly greater security by directives requiring that any daily paid labourer with over five years "effective service" could only be discharged with the approval of his head of department, and after having been given 26 days pay or one months' notice. Work on the rebuilding of Ngambo was accelerated.

At the end of 1948 two bills were introduced into the legislature, to become the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) No.2 and Penal (Amend-

ment) (No.2) Decrees respectively: these were said by Glenday to be a consequence of the September unrest, they provided the police with powers to arrest without warrant people carrying offensive weapons at public meetings and processions and people engaged in offensive conduct at public meetings. In 1949 a Port Labour Advisory Committee, under the chairmanship of the Senior Commissioner, was appointed to advise the government on labour conditions in the port; by this means the government's former laissez faire attitude to port employment was ended and some degree of supervision of the Wharfage Company established.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies in London sent a telegram to Glenday congratulating him on the careful handling of a tense situation, a congratulation that would have been more correctly addressed to Bell. But behind the formal message we can see one of the major principles of British rule in Africa; the British Parliament, particularly post-1945, did not like bloodshed and had it occurred M.P.s would want to know why. These considerations could weigh with British colonial officials at the most tense of moments; a glance at French policies in nearby Madagascar at this time underlines its significance.

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What then do we see of significance in the events of August-September 1948? At one level we see a general strike caused by industrial grievances at the docks which spread to workers in Zanzibar City. At this level the strike was industrial, an extension of those at Durban in 1946 and Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam in 1947, very similar methods appearing in the three East African strikes; as a very high proportion of the Zanzibar strikers were from ethnic groups normally resident outside the territory they constituted a special feature. But when the strike spread from the docks to all Africans, particularly those in government service or British commercial or private employment in the city, it became more political than industrial. The politics were those of mainland protest, African and anti-foreign – anti-British as much as anti-Arab. At this further level then we may also see Zanzibar's 1905,[101] the first mass demonstration of the Protectorate's urban work force,

led by mainlanders because they formed the majority of that force, protesting against aspects of the existing social and economic order. The colonial government understood the significance of the industrial discontent, but saw the demonstration and the role of the mainlanders, in creating an African solidarity as only an "unfortunate feature" in an industrial fracas of no deep-rooted structural significance.[102] Some measure of reform followed. More attention was paid to labour matters and later a Labour Officer with a small staff was appointed. But imprisoned in its Indirect Rule policy and for wider imperial reasons especially sensitive to Arab nationalism, the colonial government could not however accommodate any 'African dimension' adequately in any wider political restructuring.[103] When in the next decade the peasants of Zanzibar Island, its indigenous Africans, also came to perceive their destiny as Africans, the alliance for change was formed and revolution of labour and peasantry became inevitable.

APPENDIX I

Mainlander Immigration

This table is based upon Report of the Native Census, 1924, Notes on the Census of the Zanzibar Protectorate, 1948 and J.E. Goldthorpe and F.B. Wilson, Tribal Maps of East Africa and Zanzibar, 1960 which provide 1931 census figures. Both sets of figures represent totals collected outside the clove-picking season. In the case of the 1924 census I have added totals collected under the headings of 'Swahili', 'Hadimu', 'Tumbatu', 'Shirazi', 'Pemba' and 'Shihiri' for the heading 'Indigenous', and 'Nyasa', 'Yao', 'Nyamwezi', 'Manyema', 'Zaramu', 'Kikuyu' and 'Other Africans' for the heading Mainlanders. In the case of the 1931 census quoted by Goldthorpe and Wilson the headings were the same except there were no 'Shihiri'. There are certain discrepancies between the figures published at different times, these reflect their rudimentary methods of collection and analysis.

In both tables the Nyasa (8,122 in 1931, 10,570 in 1924) were the largest named group, followed by the Nyamwezi; (6,341 in 1931, 8,303 in 1924), the Yao (5,939 in 1931, 6,623 in 1924), the Zaramu (5,485 in 1931, 6,170 in 1924), and the Manyema (3,704 in 1931, 5,813 in 1924). The large category of Other Africans in both tables (35,752 in 1931 and 16,240 in 1924) explains the overall greater total for 1931 but leads one to accept all the categories with caution.

Notable, however, in the 1924 figures are the very large number of women, 24,381, and children, 7,585, (both islands). In some groups (the Yao, Nyasa and Manyema) women outnumbered the men.

For 1924 the totals were:

	Zanzibar	Pemba
Indigenous	68,385	50,977
Mainlander	38,590	26,238

A peak figure of 44,492 mainlanders on Zanzibar Island in 1931 is suggested in the Notes of 1948, but the real comparison lies with the 1948 figures of:

Indigenous	81,150	67,330
Mainlander	37,404	13,873

These figures suggest that the mainlanders' main loss in proportion to the total African population was in Pemba. This may however be more apparent than real as there were avenues of social mobility open in Pemba which may have led more families to reclassify themselves there by 1948. On this point Prins comments: "As compared with earlier census data the number of immigrants in the island communities is declining - either because their emigration exceeds their immigration plus birth, or, - and this seems more likely - because a large proportion has become identified with the "true" Zanzibar population. I put forward this explanation only hesitantly, however, since none of the census reports gives the impression of being either very accurate or balanced....."
(A.H.J. Prins, The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast, 1961, 19.

APPENDIX II

The status of mainland Africans on Zanzibar Island

Professor Batson's survey used the administrative division of Zanzibar Island into the two districts of Zanzibar Urban (Stonetown and Ngambo) and Zanzibar Rural: this latter unfortunately includes the commuting suburbs with purely agricultural areas. The different surveys were also taken on different days and weeks during the survey period, there are in consequence differing total numbers. The basis of the survey was that of households selected as a series of probability samples designed to yield estimates with a tolerance not greater than 5% of the population. Batson claimed that the accuracy was even greater, to within 2%, and his tables correct to the last two digits at least, but certain discrepancies and anomalies cast doubt on this claim. The tables below are data extracted from the survey, and overall they provide a clear illustration of the social and economic structure.

1. Social class, adult male Africans (Volume IV),

	Zanzibar Urban		Zanzibar Rural	
	Mainlander	Indigenous	Mainlander	Indigenous
1) Upper level occupation	20	30		
2) Upper-middle level occupation	50	200		
3) Middle level occupation	570	400	1,000	2,200
4) Lower-middle level occupation	4,010	1,580	11,000	32,400
5) Lower level occupation	1,570	550	1,000	300

2. Occupations, adult male Africans (Volume V):

	Zanzibar Urban		Zanzibar Rural	
	Mainlander	Indigenous	Mainlander	Indigenous
1) Upper level				
2) Upper-middle	40	40		
3) Middle (non-manual)	160	140	400	700
4) Middle (manual)	180	100	300	-
5) Lower-middle	3,020	1,430	2,300	10,200
6) Lower	2,060	540	3,300	2,900

3. Personal socio-economic rating, adult male africans, Zanzibar Urban, (Volume XII):

	Mainlander	Indigenous
a) Upper level occupation or large plantation owner	-	-
b) Upper-middle level occupation or large plantation owner	40	50
c) Middle-level occupation or medium plantation owner	370	240
d) Lower-middle level occupation or small plantation owner	3,610	1,550
e) Lower level occupation or very small plantation owner	1,710	510

4. Industry: African male salary or wage earners other than peasant agriculturalists or clove pickers, adult males in Zanzibar Urban district, (Volume XIII):

	Mainlander	Indigenous
Agriculture	230	40
Fishing	170	50
Manufacture	1,060	340
Transport	810	410
Commerce	710	280
Public Administration	1,180	230
Professional	150	120
Domestic Service	700	580
Entertainment	130	30
Clerical (general)	10	40
Labourer	280	70
Not at Work	1,260	870

5. International occupational classification (ILO formula), adult male Africans (Volume XIV):

	Zanzibar Urban		Zanzibar Rural	
	Mainlander	Indigenous	Mainlander	Indigenous
Professional/ Technical	50	100	200	400
Managerial	240	190	400	300
Sales Workers	650	260	800	2,800
Farmers/Fishermen	400	90	2,500	5,600
Transport	270	150	-	700
Craftsmen	650	270	1,000	2,606
Labourers	1,120	260	1,000	900
Protective Services	730	60	300	100
Other Workers	1,350	870	100	500
No gainful occupation	1,260	880	700	23,700

6. Employers work places, adult male Africans, Zanzibar City, (Volume XVII):

	Mainlander	Indigenous
Not gainfully employed	550	220
Neither premises nor land	880	400
Work on others' land	290	100
Working at premises of an employer	3,090	1,300
Work based on own dwelling	140	70

7. Nature of employer, adult male African employees, Zanzibar City, (Volume XVII):

	Mainlander	Indigenous
None	550	220
Working on own account	1,530	590
Another member of household	80	140
Salaried by Government	1,730	430
Salaried by other employer	1,730	530
Working for charges	-	10
Labourer, employer not reported	270	60
Clerk, employer not reported	-	40

8. Plantation ownership, adult male Africans, (Volume XV):

	Zanzibar Urban		Zanzibar Rural	
	Mainlander	Indigenous	Mainlander	Indigenous
Very large	-	-	-	-
Large	-	10	-	-
Medium	30	20	100	300
Small	90	30	700	1,200
Very small	140	30	700	4,300
None	6,630	2,220	8,600	1,720

9. Numbers in household of adult male Africans, (Volume VII):

	Zanzibar Urban		Zanzibar Rural	
	Mainlander	Indigenous	Mainlander	Indigenous
1	1,920	610	3,500	4,100
2	1,810	700	2,900	5,300
3	1,260	420	606	8,100
4	820	250	2,800	7,500
5	330	290	1,600	4,600
6	180	260	700	2,700
7	120	240	1,000	3,500
8 or more	240	350	-	1,800

(But see also footnote 27).

FOOTNOTES

1. S.G. Ayany, A History of Zanzibar - a Study of Constitutional Development, 1934-1964, 1970; M. Lofchie, Zanzibar, Background to Revolution, 1965; V. Harlow and others, History of East Africa, II.
2. The Sultan and his family belonged to the Ibadhi section of the Khawarij division of Islam; the Ibadhi are puritanical and generally averse to public display of wealth. The scarlet car was atypical; the simplicity of Khalifa bin Harub's normal life style was one reason for his popularity. There was universal popular rejoicing on the occasion of the Sultan's seventieth birthday in August 1949.
   These standards were not however observed by other members of the Sultan's family, some of whom treated Africans as slaves of old. One member of the family required his servants, male or female, to retire from his presence on their knees. Colonel A.M. Bell, Commissioner of Police, Zanzibar, to the author, 27 September, 1975.
3. A number of British officials wrote about their service and experience of Zanzibar. Their works all reflect a strong historical stance in favour of the legitimacy of the House of Seyyid Said devoting lengthy sections to the various sultans, as did the official Annual Reports. By 1948 these very British perspectives were distortional.
4. Exceptions to this rule were the Police Force, where the N.C.O.'s and policemen were in the large majority mainlanders, and certain very junior executive and minor technical appointments in the P.W.D. and Public Health Departments where mainlanders were well represented.
5. A Social Survey of Zanzibar, 1962. The survey was made in late 1948 and early 1949. Despite imperfections it is a unique survey of a colonial economic structure. Few complete sets of its report appear to exist. one set is available in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library in London.
6. Notes on the Census of Zanzibar Protectorate, 1948.
7. In the 1958 census objection was raised by the Zanzibar Nationalist Party to questions on race and country of origin. The ob-

jection, to conceal the relatively low number of Arabs, prevented any assessment of mainlander totals.

8. This figure for Arabs included a large number of people of partly African origin, a result of intermarriage and concubinage, who nevertheless at this time perceived themselves as Arabs; and were referred to as 'local Arabs' by the colonial authorities; further Zanzibar's resident (as opposed to immigrant dhow crewmen or other work-seekers) Arabs generally spoke Swahili and not Arabic.
9. Batson, XV, quoted Lofchie, 87.
10. One of the difficulties but also one of the attractions of Zanzibar history is its imprecision. The term Shirazi can loosely cover most of the indigenous Africans but a few indigenous Zanzibar communities did not think of themselves as Shirazi. The three major ethnic groups cannot be compared with mainland peoples. Ethnically all three represented a mixture of successive waves of African immigrants to which had been added traits from other non-African immigrant communities they had absorbed, thus making them often lighter in skin colour than recent immigrants from the mainland. A vague sentiment of common ancestry and common arrival existed within each group; the Hadimu had had a polity under a dynasty of rulers which was destroyed by the Arabs in the nineteenth century, the Tumbatu had had a rather less effective quasi-monarchical system. All three peoples seem however really to have formed their identities by a voluntary fusion of local communities rather than long past historical adventures, and in many ways their chief identifying features were, by 1948, life styles and economic activities. Lofchie argues that the imprecision of the various ethnic groups, and in consequence the existence of certain limited avenues of African upward social mobility, served to conceal the rigidity of the British protected Arab dominated social order with its specialised subordinate ethnic structure of economic and social classes.
11. Pemba and Zanzibar represent an interesting example of a measure of geographical determinism. Pemba was created by rift faulting in the late Miocene age, Zanzibar was seperated from the mainland in the later Pliocene or Pleistocene ages probably by slight submergence of the intervening track of land. The waters between the two islands are very much deeper than

the waters between Zanzibar and the mainland. I am grateful to the Hydrographer of the Royal Navy for advice on this point.

12. Integration was reflected in nomenclature. A.Y. Lodhi, research report no. 16, The Institution of Slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba, 1973, 24, notes that Hadimu, plural mahadimu, (slave or after 1911 former slave) was a term which in the latter part of the nineteenth century was used differently from Mhadimu, plural Wahadimu, the ethnic group, though the latter term (for the ethnic group) itself derived from the Arab reference to the original inhabitants as 'serfs'. By 1948 the term mahadimu had fallen out of use, Wahadimu applying equally to both groups in the central and southern areas - though not of course those descendents of ex-slaves who either could not or did not wish to integrate.

13. In 1907-08 16,000 labourers were officially recruited from coastal areas of the East African Protectorate (Kenya), free transport and transit accommodation being provided. The large majority of these, however, returned home after the exceptional clove-picking season was over. There were one or two earlier official recruiting campaigns in the E.A.P. but otherwise in general mainlanders arrived in Zanzibar simply as a result of the attraction of a better wage or life-style than that available at home once enslavement and slavery had been abolished. Some arrived attracted in this way despite harsh experiences at work for Arabs on the mainland; see, for example, J. Okelo, Revolution in Zanzibar, 1967, 61-4. In the 1920's and 1930s the Zanzibar government operated a steamship, sailing weekly to and from Dar-es-Salaam; the deck passenger fare for the five hour journey was Shs. 7.50. Migrant labourers, however, in large numbers used less formal and much cheaper arrangements with dhows from Bagamoyo.

14. Agriculture Department Report, 1924. See also A.G. Church, East Africa, A New Dominion, 1928, 168. Major Church, M.P., a member of the (British) East Africa Parliamentary (Ormsby-Gore) Commission of 1924, observed that the wages paid in Zanzibar to mainland labour were Shs. 30/- p.m., the highest rate in East and North Central Africa. Church also commented on the large numbers of mainlanders proceeding to Zanzibar. The cash element in Kenya resident labourers' wages - for squatters on European farms - was Shs. 12/- to Shs. 14/- at this time.

15. J.A.K. Leslie, writing of the mainland coast in A Survey of Dar-es-Salaam, 1963, 11-12, comments: "... the vast majority of the population are Muslims, but many of theses are really pagans in Muslim clothes (for only a very small minority are prepared to admit to being pagan in town); in any case the observances of Islam are strikingly absent here; this is not confined to town, but is true, to a large extent, of the whole coast ... The attraction of Islam in Dar-es-Salaam is that it is the religion of the majority, and the donning of a Kanzu is a simple but effective membership card enabling the country bumpkin to be accepted as a civilized man; it is also in sympathy with Bantu conservatism and reliance on elders, tradition and continuity, its accent on the community rather than on the individual .... It is undemanding and has no unwelcome organization for the supervision of its adherents' private life." In a further section (211-213) Leslie notes temporary adoption of Moslem names, and gives interesting estimates of the religious beliefs of the various ethnic groups at work in Dar-es-Salaam - the Zaramo almost entirely Moslem, the Nyasa and Nyamwezi about one-third Christian, and less than a tenth of the Manyema, Yao and Matumbi being Christian. Approximately the same figures would no doubt have prevailed in Zanzibar City.
16. 1948 Census, quoted J. Middleton and J. Campbell Zanzibar, Its Society and Politics, London, 1965, 21. The census was not taken at clove-picking time when the totals would have been much greater.
17. Batson, I, notes that one third of the male mainland Africans and one fifth of the female were born outside the protectorate. In Zanzibar City 47% of the mainland population were immigrants, and in the rest of Zanzibar Island 32%. Batson's projections estimated 14,400 immigrant mainlanders on Zanzibar Island out of a total of 18,000 Immigrant mainlanders, and of these some 8,450 in the Zanzibar rural area and 5,960 immigrants in Zanzibar City.
18: The numbers for Zanzibar and Pemba were approximately equal, 5141 being freed by the Courts on Zanzibar Island. The relatively small figure compared with the number of slaves at work in the early 1890s (probably some 75,000) is explained by death, particularly from age and smallpox, and desertions.

19. The ukoo were bilateral kinship fraternities spread all along the eastern coral trading centres; a member of an ukoo could seek help, including a portion of land as a tenant, from members of his ukoo in a town other than his own. The system also operated, though less rigidly, in the central area trading centres. The headmen (masheha) of these trading centres were members of the local indigenous group, in this instance reinforcing with the authority of the central government barriers against new arrivals. The Public Lands Decree gave legislative weight to these arrangements - intended to prevent Arab or Asian purchase or acquisition by its confirmation that only indigenous African tribes could occupy land by customary law, it also excluded the mainlander.
20. I am much indebted to Professor F.B. Wilson, lately Professor of Agriculture at the University of East Africa, and Mr. G.E. Tidbury,Director, Commonwealth Bureau of Horticulture and Plantation Crops,East Malling, England, both former Zanzibar Agriculture Department officers, and the Hon. A.P.H.T. Cumming-Bruce, a former Zanzibar Administration officer, for advice and comments on this section of the paper.
21. Payment was usually on a piece work basis, this was calculated on the number of pengele, a square area of ground between four clove or coconut trees, cleared per day. The mainlander immigrant, particularly the Nyamwezi, with good physique could clear a useful area per day. He was therefore attractive to an employer who, unable to pay a good wage, would loan increasingly large plots of land for use by the squatter.
22. The land-owning and wage arrangements were as complex as the ethnic mixtures. By Moslem law it was possible for one man to be in a position approximating to land ownership, with perhaps two or three other different men having legal rights for cultivation or for fruit; T.C. Colchester, former Zanzibar Administration Officer, to author at an interview, June 1975.
23. Cumming-Bruce to the author, 20 June 1975. The years of World War II had seen a vast increase in locally grown food, particularly after the end of rice imports from the Far East: "African labour instead of cleaning clove shombas (estates) which growers often could not afford turned to cultivating for others and became cash crop growers on every form of tenancy". Signs of the breakdown of the squatter system which followed

in the next decade were already appearing. Some squatters even lived in Zanzibar City, leaving for work on the land each day, such work was increasingly for their own profit ignoring the customary obligations.

24. The longer term reasons for this situation lie outside the scope of this paper, but among them were the psychological consequences of the ending of slavery leading to resignation and indifference among Arab plantation owners, expensive Arab life-styles and the high wages which had to be paid to mainland labour, (one reason for the formation of the Clove Growers Association had been to try to reduce wages). The cycle of debt and borrowing created by these three factors was worsened immeasurably by the Depression; recovery in the World War II years of prosperity was far from complete.
25. See Appendix I.
26. Report of the Native Census, 1924, and Batson, I. Batson's figures do not quite tally with those of the 1948 Census.
27. For Zanzibar Urban District Batson, I, noted that of mainlanders born within the protectorate numbers of men and women were approximately equal, but of those born outside the protectorate 3,620 were men, 1,890 were women and 350 were children. A further confusing factor was that a number of migrant mainlander labourers, particularly those who had been at work in Zanzibar for a while, had secured for themselves a small plot or a wage just adequate for the maintenance of a wife, while young indigenous would come to the City unattached, often preferring to remain so.
    All figures, therefore, can only indicate trends in very general terms.
28. R.H.W. Pakenham, Senior Commissioner Zanzibar Administration at the time, to the author, 1 June 1975, confirms that this was the situation noting all the same that some remittances home were nevertheless sent by many ordinary labourers.
29. F.D. Ommaney, a research scientist at work in Zanzibar at the turn of the decade, Isle of Cloves, 1955, 24-5.
30. Batson, I. For Zanzibar island as a whole, both types of mainlander together formed 27% of the population, within Zanzibar City both types formed 31%, and in the rural areas 23%.
31. See Appendix II.
32. In the late 1920s two parallel systems of headmen were insti-

tuted. Area headmen mainly indigenous looked after all the residents in sixteen different areas. In addition "tribal headmen" were appointed to watch over the interests - particularly in matters of sickness or death - of members of their respective communities. One area headman was reported to have remarked "We look after the living, they look after the dead", Zanzibar Provincial Administration Report, 1931.

33. Annual Report, Zanzibar Protectorate, 1948.
34. In 1928 and early 1929 there had been considerable unrest in the Ngambo and the peri-urban suburbs occasioned by disputes between the Indian, Arab or occasionally indigenous ground landlords and the hut-owners (i.e. those who had built huts) on an increase in rents. An attempt was made to organize a mass refusal to pay. The government introduced a standardised and controlled rent legislation which, after the imprisonment or deportation of 'ringleaders' ended the unrest. The year had seen earlier unrest between Arab communities culminating in a faction fight; it also saw a "fracas" between Digo and Nyamwezi in October 1928. No one was killed.
    These events are chiefly noteworthy as apart from the number of one British colonial official in the 1930s on a clove plantation, they were, by the administration's perceptions, the only incidents of violence since the turn of the century. Nor did the burglary crime rates provide any particular cause for a disquiet on the part of the administration.
35. T.O. Ranger, Dance and Society in Eastern Africa, 1975, 20-22, 102 provides evidence strongly suggesting ex-slave dance groups; Professor Wilson to the author, 12 June 1975 notes the savings clubs.
36. Professor Wilson to the author, 12 June 1975.
37. Bishop W. Baker, Bishop of Zanzibar at the time, to the author, 23 May 1975. Very few of the senior colonial administrators in Zanzibar ever moved elsewhere on promotion, particularly at this time.
38. Sir A. Pim wrote in 1932, in his Report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to consider and report upon the Financial Position of the Zanzibar Government in Relation to its Economic Resources, "... the Zanzibar Government has never developed a consistent policy with reference either to the all important question of land or to any

other question of native development".

39. Lodhi, 30, notes an interesting example of this in the World War II rationing system, in which the sugar ration for 'Shirazi' was greater than that for 'Africans'.
40. The Zanzibar Voice, 14 December 1947.
41. Cumming-Bruce to the author, 20 June 1975: "Just as it did more obviously at independence, this arrogance triggered off 'African' self-consciousness, the term "mwafrika" was a new and unfamiliar one."
42. Annual Report, Zanzibar Protectorate, 1946.
43. D.B. Barber, District Commissioner, Zanzibar Administration 1945-50, to the author, 24 May 1975. An experimental local council was set up in a Pemba rural area in 1946 and the system extended throughout the rural areas of the protectorate in 1947. An Arab district commissioner, the first, was appointed to Zanzibar Urban District in May 1948 which may further have contributed to ill-ease.
44. Annual Report of the Provincial Administration, 1948.
45. The same conditions had been a major cause of the 1947 Dar-es-Salaam dockworkers strike, see J. Iliffe 'History of the Dockworkers of Dar-es-Salaam', Tanzania Notes and Records, 71, (1970);
46. Annual Report, Zanzibar Protectorate, 1948.
47. Report of the Commission on the Civil Service of Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar, 1947-48.
48. Interview with D. McQueen, May 1975, letter from British businessman A.B. to the author, 25 July 1975.
49. For further details of this strike see A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963, 1975, 276-281, and Report on the Economic and Social Background to Mombasa Labour Disputes, 1947, (Booker-Deverell Report). The chairman of the tribunal was Judge Ransley Thacker, who was later to convict Jomo Kenyatta in 1953.
50. The comments of this enquiry, chaired by A. Philips, a Kenya Crown Counsel, were too embarassing for the Kenya government to publish; for further details see Clayton and Savage, 271-2.
51. Zanzibar's dock labour was earning 1-2 rupees (Shs.1/50 to 3/-) a day in 1931, this fell in the Depression period to 14 annas - 1 rupee, but by the end of the decade had returned to Shs. 2/25; these were rates still well ahead of Dar-es-Salaam.

52. For an account of the strike see J. Iliffe, 'History of the Dockworkers of Dar-es-Salaam', and the Annual Report, Tanganyika Territory, 1947.
53. The Zanzibar Voice, 10 October 1948 notes these reasons and gives the following figures:

	Jan-June 1947	Jan-June 1948
Total	95,954 cwt.	155,000
Value	£375,000	£515,000

There are supported by shipping statistics:

	1947	1948
Ships Outward	329	375
Ships Inward	330	377
Tonnages Outward	33,000	38,000
Tonnages Inward	51,000	61,000

(Zanzibar Labour Report, 1949)

54. Cumming-Bruce to the author, 20 June 1975. Cumming-Bruce and others have suggested, in the author's view both reasonably and correctly, that the huge sums of money being spent on a project believed by Africans to be doomed from the start must in itself have spurred on a demand for higher wages - if only by undermining the credibility of employer arguments on inability to find extra money for higher wages; experienced administrators certainly also believed this at the time.
55. Two 'general wisdom' comments of the time were that 'Zanzibar imported in a month more than it could consume in a year' and that 'Zanzibar's fishing boats left the island for a night's fishing off Bagamoyo as low in the water as on their return after a heavy catch,' A.B. to the author, 30 June 1975. The Zanzibar government evidently connived at such tariff-breaking practices, an unusual relationship between two neighbouring British colonies.
56. Zanzibar Labour Report, 1948.
57. K.G.S. Smith, District Commissioner at the time, to the author, 27 April 1975.
58. Zanzibar Labour Report 1948.
59. F.G. Ward, Municipal Affairs Officer, to the author, 26 May 1975 commented that the hamali men remained aloof but with, in his wiew, a sense of alienation from the community as a

whole. They lived mainly in Ngambo grouping together, but a number lived in the Malindi and Funguni areas of town near the port.

60. The Zanzibar Labour Report, 1949 notes the strength of the Labour Association as 380, commenting that it had almost doubled during the year; it described the Association as a "limited fraternity".

61. The 1946 membership of the board was the Provincial (later Senior) Commissioner, E.D.W. Crawshaw (business), S.M. Barwani (an Arab government officer), A.K.N. Lemki (Arab estate owner), Ali bin Said el Kharusi (a large estate owner), A.M. Lakha (Asian trader), Thabit bin Kombo and Masoud Borafia (Shirazi). At the time of writing Thabit bin Kombo is General Secretary of the Afro-Shirazi Party and Director of the State Trading Corporation.

62. These representatives were selected informally by their fellows but were no doubt subject to Company approval. There was no trade union.

63. These other benefits included full pay during temporary disability arising out of employment and half pay for up to 50 days during other illness.

64. D. McQueen, Branch Manager of Smith Mackenzie Ltd. in Zanzibar at the time, to the author, May 1975.

65. In reconstructing the events of the strike I have used the British Resident's address to the Zanzibar Legislative Council (Proceedings of Zanzibar Legislative Council, 6 September 1948), Bell to the author, 19 September 1975 and the Zanzibar Annual Report, 1948 as a basis for the sequence of events. Where other information is available separate footnotes refer to the sources. Colonel Bell's letter enclosed extracts from a report written by him to the Inspector - General of Colonial Police Forces at the Colonial Office, 31 January 1952, and extracts from his own diary.

66. McQueen to the author, confirmed by Shaikh Yahya Alawi, District Commissioner Zanzibar Urban at the time, to the author, 10 July 1975. The practice of assuming a name to attract attention or increase prestige was not an uncommon one in East Africa at the time. The Port Superintendent, Captain J.G. Robertson, felt however that 'Kenyatta' was a 'front'man being used by other more militant figures anxious to remain anonymous. Captain J.G. Robertson to the author, 10 August 1975.

The Immigration Regulation and Restriction Decree in Force in Zanzibar at the time required no documents from African mainland immigrants (except, technically, those from Nyasaland and Mozambique) other than a small-pox vaccination certificate and, occasionally only, a yellow fever certificate. Mainland Africans were exempt from immigration control, pass regulations on the mainland had largely been repealed or fallen into disuse. Mainland Africans who wished to enter Zanzibar merely presented themselves for vaccination (free) or if time was short borrowed or bought a certificate. No control or identity card system existed therefore to check on an African under any name he wished to select from entering or seeking employment in Zanzibar. W. Wright, formerly of the Zanzibar police, to the author 12 July 1975.

67. Lt. Col. G.P. Murray, Commanding Officer of the 6th (Tanganyika) Battalion, Kings African Rifles, to the author, 21 July 1975 states that he believes this was so. Colonel Murray was in Dar-es-Salaam at the time of the 1947 strike and his battalion provided the detachment sent to Zanzibar.

68. The Zanzibar Voice, 22, 29 August 1947, notes the details of the claim, adding a warning that the Wharfage Company's monopoly position could, and perhaps had, led to its identification with the government. Robertson to the author, 10 August 1975, describes the meeting. The Wharfage Company's labour force did not contain a preponderance of any mainland ethnic group; Robertson however believed that the fact that it represented so great a mixture made it the more militant.

69. McQueen to the author, May 1975. McQueen's informant was an Asian employee of the company who was almost certainly in error: rumours of all types were rife at the time. One inevitably claimed that Robertson, the Port Superintendent, grew a weed in his garden which was mixed with the labourers meal, and was alleged to increase their working ability at the expense of sexual potency. Robertson to the author, 10 August 1975.

70. The Zanzibar Voice, 29 August 1948.

71. Tanganyika Standard, 28 August 1948.
72. A.B. to the author, 30 June 1975.
73. The Zanzibar Official Gazette, 31 August, 1 September 1948. By a further proclamation on 3 September, made under the Police Decree, the number of police officers was increased. The Zanzibar Voice, an Asian newspaper, 5 September 1948 criticized this measure saying that the Arabs, Shirazi, and African Associations and the Indian National Congress should have been consulted first.
74. Bell to the author, 19 and 27 september 1975 and Shaikh Seyyid Saud Ahmed Busaidi, town mudir at the time, to the author, July 1975 added detail in respect of the Tumbatu labour and other points.
75. Ph. Pullincino, a senior colonial officer in the secretariat, to the author, 10 June 1975 wrote "Soon office messengers were called on by the strikers to stop work, and the stoppage rapidly spread to domestic servants... Later a gang or gangs of men went from house to house to ensure that all servants were out and even our most faithful ayah was compelled to leave by threats. I still recall how quick was the response to down tools. The message seemed to flash through the Stone Town of Zanzibar, and I imagine many must have been forewarned before going to work in homes and elsewhere. There is no doubt that they were scared to oppose the strikers' directive." In his speech to the Legislative Council Glenday commented that ".... although it is freely said that Africans were hauled away by the strikers from their place of work, I have not been able to obtain confirmation that anything more than the presence of a crowd with sticks and an invitation to come out was required to induce most men to leave," but he also went on to say that "... many of them (men on strike) I believe only because they feared the consequences to themselves and their families if they ignored the strikers' orders." The Zanzibar Voice, 5 September 1948, argued that according to its information a general strike had not been planned until the arrest of the two weapon carriers, but in view of the meetings of strikers in the preceding days to persuade other workers to join them this does not seem to be the case. The compact area of Ngambo made the rapid passing of the strike call and the summoning of a crowd very easy, a point made in

the Tanganyika Standard, 18 September 1948.

76. Busaidi to the author, July 1975. Busaidi alleges that the police opened fire but this was not the case, Bell to the author, 19 and 27 September. There is no doubt that had the police opened fire the news could not have been suppressed. There were no subsequent accusations against the police, which is inconceivable in the case of a shooting, observed, by 5,000 people. The Secretary of State for the Colonies assurance to the House of Commons that no shooting had taken place was correct, Parliamentary Debates Commons 22 September 1948. Busaidi may have been confused by the general clamour and the probability that a few demonstrators who approached the police lines too closely might well have been temporarily knocked off their feet by a blow, bush or kick.

77. The other members were Moultrie, the city's welfare officer and Shaikh S.M. Barwani, the district commissioner. Its wide terms of reference included a specific invitation to labour dissatisfied with its terms of service to make representations, to invite the views of employers with a view to effecting conciliation, to make recommendations to the government for any minimum wage rates or terms of service for any categories of work people should be laid down and to report as soon as possible (Zanzibar Annual Report, 1948). It became in practice a temporary Minimum Wage Board, operating by recommendations and not producing a formal report.

78. This union had been formed in July 1947, it was some 220 strong by the end of 1949.

79. Zanzibar Labour Report, 1948.

80. A Decree to Make Exceptional Provision for the Protection of the Community in Cases of Emergency, commencing with the attractive preamble of all Zamzibari Statute legislation, "in the Name of the Most Merciful God" and generally shortened to the Emergency Powers Decree. Under this instrument the British Resident, on the authority of the Sultan in Executive Council, could authorise a State of Emergency if person or persons were seeking to deprive the community of the essentials of life, food, water, fuel, transport etc. Proclama-

tions were to last for one month but could be renewed, they had to be communicated to the Legislative Council. The Sultan in Executive Council could make any rules necessary to ensure the essentials of life except in the matter of military service or conscription, the rules also had to be tabled in the Legislative Council. The Decree expressly stated normal strikes and peaceful persuasion remained legal.

81. The powers were set out in the Emergency Powers Regulations 1948 and published as Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1948. In detail they gave the government powers:
    i) to requisition property other than land, in particular food, fuel, vehicles and other essential service needs.
    ii) to restrict entry to premises, particularly those of essential service.
    iii) to close roads where necessary, particularly to protect essential services.
    iv) to order (by means of authorised officers) to order men to work to maintain essential services.
    v) to regulate the sale and safe custody of food, and expressly forbade:
    vi) impediment other than by strike or peaceful persuasion of others to strike any impediment by commission or omission to the operation of any essential service.
    vii) interference, other than by strike or peaceful persuasion of others to strike, with people engaged in essential services.
    viii) the carrying of weapons or anything capable of being used as a missile in public places.
    ix) The obstruction of police or other officials who in matters arising from these regulations could enter premises and/or arrest individuals without a warrant.

    Penalties of fines of £100 or three months imprisonment, or both,could be imposed.
    These very wide powers do not seem to have been used very much in practice.

82. The members were: the Economic Controller (a civil servant), A.B. Shinn, V.S. Patel, Shaikh Abdulla bin Ali-el-Marhubi and Herbert Barnabas.

83. J.J. Adie, the secretariat official, to the author, 28 March and Bell to the author, 19 September 1975. Bell was incensed

that at a time of such unrest the Resident had given the police no warning of this risk to his safety.

84. Busaidi to the author, July 1975.
85. The Zanzibar Voice, 5 September 1948.
86. Barnabas was not a militant figure, he was a quiet and deeply religous man of peace-loving temperament. He remained in Zanzibar until after the revolution, which he soon found discouraging and retired to the mainland where he died in 1965. Bishop Neil Russell to the author, 1 August 1975, Mrs V. Davies to the author, 14 September 1975. Lofchie, 165, notes that he was President of the African Association in the early 1950s.
87. Busaidi to the author, July 1975.
88. Zanzibar Labour Report, 1948. Robertson to the author, 10 August 1975, believes the strikers' major error was not to have arranged that the strike was simultaneous in port and city.
89. McQueen to the author, May 1975.
90. McQueen to the author, May 1975. Robertson to the author, 10 August 1975 states that at the time he also heard of Kenyatta's departure and subsequent arrest. He judged that the fund could not have amounted to more than a few hundred shillings and that the labour force bore him no ill-will. In view of their increased pay such a tolerant view is quite likely. There is nothing inherently improbable in this narrative, but I have been unable to trace further confirmation or rebuttal.
91. A.B., the business man concerned, to the author, 30 June 1975. Many ships were in fact in normal passage between Dar-es-Salaam and Tanga, the Zanzibar channel being a common route at certain times of the year.
92. Smith to the author, 27 April 1975. There were only a few recently arrived mainland labourers in Pemba which accounted for the absence of any spontaneous local action.
93. The Zanzibar Voice, 5 September 1948, notes the Arab domestic scene, Bell to the author, 19 September 1975 notes the Europeans' reaction, Robertson to the author, 10 August 1975 commented the strike was "more political and anti-white than a true labour movement".
94. A.B., again the business man concerned, to the author 30 June 1975.
95. Cumming-Bruce to the author, 20 June 1975. Smith to the aut-

hor, 27 April 1975 and others have commented generally in these terms.

96. The Tanganyika Standard, 25 September 1948. The report noted that the meeting took place and the boycott began while the strike was in progress. Khangas of average quality were controled at a price of Shs. 9/25, some cheaper varieties were available. The Asian traders said that no profit could be made nor new styles had been introduced if prices were controlled in this way.

97. The playing down was quite deliberate, A.B. to the author, 14 July 1975; A.B. was closely connected with the Standard newspaper group. The postponement of a much publicised visit of the Royal Navy's Indian Ocean flagship, H.M.S. Birmingham, in the course of which the Flag Officer and Sultan were to exchange ceremonial visits, was presented as a news item unrelated to the strike. Even the report of the Toscana drama played down the strikers' intervention.

98. The strike attracted very little attention in Britain - it was briefly mentioned in The Times and attracted two somewhat perfunctory parliamentary questions from J. Rankin and J.F. Platts-Mills, two left-wing Labour M.P.s, (Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 22, 24 September 1948), neither of which resulted in any awakened British interest in Zanzibar since there did not seem to be any particular cause for concern, such as shooting or death.

99. The new rates were signed by Glenday on 13 October and published in the Official Gazette. They were as follows:

Type of Work	Day Rate in cts.	Night Rate in cts.
Packing one bale of cloves, under gunny	60	65
Packing one bale of cloves, Indian packing	35	40
Packing one bale of cloves, for shipment to UK or USA	25	30
Bagging cloves for export, 140lb	25	30
Bagging cloves for export, 112lb	20	25
Bulking cloves per bag	06	08
Weighing and bulking any commodity	08	10
Packing one bag copra	20	25
" " mangrove bark	20	25
" " bale chillies	55	60

Type of Work	Day Rate in cts.	Night Rate in cts.
Packing one bag oil cake	20	25
Cutting, cleaning and packing one bag beeswax	50	55
Packing one bag colombo root	20	25

100. Annual Report, Zanzibar Protectorate 1948. On the Protectorate's statute book was a Minimum Wages Decree of 1935, which gave the government power to fix minimum wages. It was enacted as a result of the Colonial Office initiatives in respect of labour legislation in the 1930s but was never implemented and was not in use at the time of the strike. It was first used for the new rates for men in the packing of goods for export. The District Commissioner, Zanzibar Urban, was chairman of the hamalis board, the other members being employer and employee representatives.

101. In 1905 industrial unrest and strikes swept over Imperial Russia, presaging the Revolution to come. The most notable event was a demonstration by a vast crowd of urban workers in St Petersburg (Leningrad) on 22 January. The crowd was fired upon by the Emperor's soldiers, several hundred people being killed or wounded.

102. The Zanzibar Labour Report, 1948 belatedly admitted: "A particularly unfortunate feature of the strike was the clearly evinced inspiration by agitators not normally resident in the Protectorate... it was apparent that a number of African workers came out on strike for no better reason than a mistaken sense of loyalty to their own race...."

103. One colonial official who did however see the precise significance of the strike was Kenya's Labour Commissioner, E.M. Hyde-Clarke, whose advanced views had already placed him in difficulties with both Kenya's settlers and Governor, and were to lead to his premature retirement. Addressing the Mombasa Rotary Club at the end of September 1948, Hyde-Clarke drew a parallel between the Accra riots and the Zanzibar strike, warning "We are experiencing today what is probably the strongest upsurge of nationalism the world has ever known" (Tanganyika Standard, 2 October 1948). This warning was generally unheeded in East Africa.