ZANZIBAR: THE NINE-HOUR REVOLUTION

By

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To Mom and Kwayi, both of whom I love more than I can say.
And to Zanzibaris everywhere, thank you for sharing your history with me.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASP  Afro-Shirazi Party
ASYL  Afro-Shirazi Youth League
BHC  British High Commissioner
BLM  Baraza la Mapinduzi (Revolutionary Council)
HMG  Her Majesty's Government
LegCo  Legislative Council
PM  Prime Minister
PS  Permanent Secretary
SMZ  Serikali ya Mapinduzi ya Zanzibar (Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar)
ZNP  Zanzibar Nationalist Party
ZPPP  Zanzibar and Pemba People’s Party
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By

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Chair: Luise White
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This is an operational history of the government overthrow and its immediate aftermath. The aim is to provide a full, scholarly exploration of this pivotal moment in Zanzibari history. This research employs previously untapped sources in order to address critical moments in the overthrow of the Government of Zanzibar. This revolution has fostered many conflicting accounts that continue to be vehemently debated in blogs and barazas (informal conversation groups), on TV and radio programs, in print and in online magazines. Each narrative entails factual details as well as conspiratorial imaginings. I will deconstruct the narratives using detailed analyses of archival, oral, and contemporary written sources. The main components of my dissertation include the role of the British in the decolonization process; a play by play of key moments and the most widely debated elements of the overthrow; the role of revolutionary leader, John Okello; and lastly, the role of the British during the revolution and the manner in which British foreign policy impacted the fledgling government.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION
“KILA MOJA ANA WAZO LAKE”¹

Remembering the Revolution: 50 Years Later


A show of military might. So many tanks and armored cars, someone could have overthrown the current government: all the important people and weaponry were at Amani Stadium! Every other phrase heard was “Mapinduzi” (revolution), with the expectation of the response “daima” (always). Sometimes the response was rendered, but many times it was not. Some simply said, “Muungano” (Union) as a sort of a cheer. Others praised the Union and remarked about what it got them. Missing was any mention of the story of the revolution itself. There was a remarkable absence of history at the 50th anniversary celebration.

The entire ceremony was a chest-pounding show of military might. There were acrobats and skits, including one of the so-called “barefoot policemen” of early colonial Zanzibar. Other than that, no history of the revolution was given. Ironically, the only person who said anything about the actual revolution was Uganda’s President Museveni, who said, “thank you for overthrowing a bad government”.²

Tanzanian President Ali Mohamed Shein spoke as if the revolution overthrew the British. Several other speakers mentioned “the British and the sultan” as if that was the group whom the revolution toppled. This point will be addressed later, as the revolution was partially an anti-colonial act, even if it was one month after “Uhuru.” (Independence)

¹ Kila moja ana wazo lake (each one has his/her interpretation) – Hassan Nassor Moyo, interview

² Ironic because no Zanzibari said anything, and ironic partly because I argue that one of the main organizers of the coup that led to a revolution was Ugandan John Okello.
This public pretense of celebrating the revolution while in actuality avoiding the history of the revolution has been a hallmark of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (Serikali ya Mapinduzi ya Zanzibar, or SMZ), as we will see below. The story that was propagated during the early era of the SMZ has been challenged in recent years from a number of angles, but the ruling party continues to cling to it. My interpretation is that very little knowledge of the events of the revolution exists, so the Party adheres to the original story. Altering the story would put the SMZ in a precarious position, and so the Party limits research on the revolution. Since the legitimacy of the original Revolutionary Council was based on the revolution, not on elections or other governing principles, any story that challenged the official version of events was tantamount to treason.³

**Overview of Zanzibari Political Parties 1956-1963**

In order to understand the background of this revolution, let us begin by drawing a picture of the political landscape. The Arab Association, African Association, and Shirazi Association had formed organizations similar to trade unions in the 1930s; the former mostly for employers and the latter two to protect workers.⁴ Hizbu l’Watan l’Riaia Sultan (The National Party of the Subjects of the Sultan) (NPSS) formed in 1955 as an anti-colonial group that was against the existing “communal representation” in the Legislative Council (LegCo); they also wanted independence. It was not until 1956 that the Arab Association joined NPSS and renamed it the Zanzibar Nationalist Party

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In 1957 the African Association and the Shirazi Association joined to form the Afro-Shirazi Union, which was later renamed the Afro-Shirazi Party. The Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) won the 1957 elections by a landslide, taking five out of six seats. The ZNP leadership was so disappointed by this result that after these elections, they began an intense political mobilization effort. In 1959, the Zanzibar and Pemba People’s Party (ZPPP) formed as a breakaway group of the ASP. Most of the members of the ZPPP were Shirazis, many of whom were from Pemba. They wanted to escape the anti-Arab sentiment of the ASP, yet they saw themselves as African and indigenous to Pemba and Unguja. Over the next couple of years, the ZPPP served as the swing vote as they split their seats between ZNP and ASP in the January 1961 electoral stalemate. Finally, they formed a coalition with ZNP to win the June 1961 and July 1963 elections. The final political split before independence came in June 1963 when the former Secretary General of the ZNP, Abdulrahman Mohammed Babu (“Babu”), broke away from the ZNP to form the Umma Party. Umma was a small, Marxist party that played no significant role in the July 1963 elections, but that became influential in the revolution and its aftermath. Both Babu and Umma garnered a great deal of attention from the West, due to the support they received from the Eastern bloc.

Sixty-eight Zanzibaris of Arab-descent were killed, and hundreds more were beaten and injured, during and immediately after the June 1961 elections, leading many

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6 On ZPPP, see Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution*, 10, 195.

7 See Appendix C: Glossary of key personalities
people to refer to the election violence as a precursor to the revolution. June became the “chosen trauma,” with ZNP rhetoric emphasizing the barbarity of the massacres. Meanwhile, ASP discourse highlighted political victimization, claiming the 1961 election was stolen from the ASP, and was therefore cause for retribution. The Commission of Inquiry on the 1961 disturbances, however, concluded that the violence was not racially based, but rather influenced by party politics and the “wind of change.” The British began to hesitate on holding more elections, due to the negative consequences and lack of possibility for a decisive victory on either side. After reconfiguring constituencies to create an odd number, the Constitutional Conference in 1962 was not successful in breaking the stalemate. At that time, the British proposed a coalition government of all three parties, but the ASP refused. The final pre-independence elections in July 1963 ended with the ASP winning 54% of the vote, but retaining only 13 of 31 seats in the legislature because of the distribution of their support among the new constituencies. Independence was granted on 10 December 1963, with the ASP supporters feeling cheated and convinced that the ZNP/ZPPP’s legislative majority meant the maintenance of the status quo of the Arab landowner elite ruling the islands. This feeling was exacerbated by the symbolism of the Duke of Edinburgh handing over the document issuing independence to the sultan, rather than to any of the ZNP/ZPPP leaders. One month later, on 12 January 1964, the sultan and the ZNP/ZPPP government were

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8 Glassman, War of Words, War of Stones, 264-5

9 Babu protested this conclusion, arguing that the British were whitewashing the violence. He was found guilty of sedition for his opposition to the analysis in this report. See Burgess, “Memory, Liberalism, and the Reconstructed Self: Wolfango Dourado and the Revolution in Zanzibar,” p 125 fn 23, in Social Memory, Silenced Voices, And Political Struggle

10 Constitutionally, this was probably the only option, as the Protectorate agreement the British had made in 1890 was with the sultanate. However, the action angered some of the ASP leaders, as they viewed the sultanate as another form of imperialism.
rapidly toppled. All the weapons were stolen from the police armories, and within hours, revolutionaries were taking over and the sultan was escaping on his yacht.

“Homespun Historians”

This revolution has fostered many conflicting accounts. The opposing narratives of the Revolution that continue to be vehemently debated in blogs and barazas (informal conversation groups), on TV and radio programs, in print and online magazines, include factual details as well as conspiratorial imaginings. I will deconstruct the narratives, pinpointing the details that serve as the roots of the conspiracies.

At the outset of my research, I was introduced to both the Party narrative11 and the writing of Zanzibaris whose goal was to discredit the revolution as merely an invasion from the mainland.12 The latter narratives were written by what Derek Peterson and Giacomo Macola refer to as “homespun historians”.13 These non-guild historians write with a patriotism that describes and defines a moral community. Peterson and Giacomo claim that these homespun historians have been neglected or sidelined by professional historians. Zanzibar has an abundance of homespun historians, who have done extensive research and pose incisive questions and meticulous, albeit foreseeable, answers. My research questions were guided predominantly by a drive to navigate the area between the Party narrative and the homespun historian narrative.

The Party narrative stemmed from a Pan-African nationalism, whereas the opposing

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11 By Party, I mean the ASP narrative that has become the Chama Cha Mapunduzi (CCM) narrative of today. The ASP merged with the Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU) in 1977 to become CCM.


narrative had its origins in cosmopolitan Zanzibari nationalism. Instead of attempting to compare these larger phenomena, which are well represented in scholarly works on Zanzibar and African History more broadly, I found myself embracing the minutae.

In many of my interviews, my interlocutors asked me what I thought or how I explained a particular detail or conundrum in response to a question I asked. The respondent often made certain assumptions about my perspective. This frequently led my interviewees to push back on the details, or to provide me with even more information in order to ensure that I subscribed to their position. Being guided by local narratives meant that detail begat detail begat detail. Each of the components of the revolution that are continuously debated in Zanzibar and its diaspora has led to specific interpretations and analyses. In order to effectively engage in the debates in Zanzibar about the revolution, or attempt to dismantle the conspiracy theories on either side of the political divide, it is necessary to be fully immersed in the details.

Jonathan Glassman pursued this level of detail in order to demonstrate that the ZNP’s connection to the villagers in Kiembe Samaki who opposed the colonial cattle dipping policy was fictive.\(^{14}\) He uses this minutia as the fulcrum of his argument that the ZNP shifted the way they presented themselves from PanArab Cosmopolitans, to creole nationalists, to nativist Zanzibari nationalists.\(^{15}\) The ZNP needed to create a narrative of indigenous authenticity in order to appeal to more Zanzibaris of African origin. In Chapter 3, I argue that there were three competing discourses of political legitimacy at

\(^{14}\) See fn #5 above. He found that the fictive origin story originated with articles in the ZNP newspaper, *Mwongozi*, in 1959, but had become ubiquitous in scholarly accounts because ZNP leaders told Michael Lofchie the story of their origins as an African peasant anti-colonial movement in 1962-63 when he was conducting PhD dissertation research. Glassman, “Creole Nationalists”, 240-3.

\(^{15}\) Glassman’s point is that the ZNP needed to create a narrative of indigenous authenticity in order to appeal to more Zanzibaris of African origin. Glassman, “Creole Nationalists”, 240-3
play in the Zanzibar revolution. First was African nationalism, as influenced by TANU. This position included majority rule as the basis for political rights. The second discourse was the legitimacy of the legally elected ZNP. This discourse included the elite intelligentsia who focused on the idea of *ustaarabu* (civilization), coastal exceptionalism, and cosmopolitanism.¹⁶ The third source of authenticity was, by virtue of being the most indigenous to the islands, the firstcomers.¹⁷ The fine points I draw out in my dissertation are the axes on which all three theories pivot.

While appreciative of the contributions and new framework contributed by Peterson and Macola’s concept of homespun historians, Gregory Mann critiques *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* by challenging the positive assumption of patriotic histories, and how they might be used for political purposes. He aptly denotes, “one person’s patriot is another’s ethnonationalist, and might be another’s *génocidaire*.”¹⁸ This is precisely the concern as it pertains to the Zanzibar Revolution: each of the different local versions become amplified into a full-fledged theory that the other side is the violent transgressor while the narrator’s side is the innocent victim. The specificity I provide allows for much richer reinterpretation of this pivotal moment.

**This Dissertation: Key Moments from a Burglary that became a Revolution**

This dissertation is a micro history. It focuses primarily on a twenty-four hour period during which the following happened: the theft of weapons, the overthrow of the

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¹⁶ See Glassman, *War of Words*, Chapter 3 for the creation of this narrative.

¹⁷ Those who claim most indigenous status are the Shirazis.

Government of Zanzibar, and the founding of the new Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. This event changed what was originally a burglary of the armories into a full-fledged revolution overnight. And it transformed a constitutional monarchy into a socialist republic within months.\(^1\) In order to understand how such rapid change is possible, we require an operational history of this revolution. Because it happened so quickly, this micro history includes a condensed hour-by-hour progression of events, rather than year-by-year or battle-by-battle narrative of a longer revolution. We also require this meticulous elucidation because Zanzibaris have developed interpretations and analyses from each moment of this brief revolution. Each moment, therefore, has been magnified in historical significance as it generates its own interpretation. We require this depth of exploration in order to effectively deconstruct the narratives that have been created, nourished, and embellished over the last fifty years.

I intend to disturb the notion that the Zanzibar Revolution was a monolithic event, a revolution deserving of one narrative, starting on 12 January 1964 and continuing on, possibly until present day. Scholars and Zanzibaris alike call what happened on the night of 12 January the revolution, yet they also refer to the government that followed as the revolution. The Government of Zanzibar still calls itself SMZ (Serikali Ya Mapinduzi Ya Zanzibar), the Revolutionary Government Of Zanzibar). However, I argue that the relatively bloodless heist of police weapons rapidly became an unorthodox coup d’état on 12 January; it then developed into a full-fledged bloody revolution. A small group of rebels was able to overthrow the government on the night of 12 January, but they were

\(^1\) I argue that Karume’s speech on 8 March 1964, which outlines the new regime’s policy, shows the formation of a socialist republic. See Kweupe, 10 March 1964, “Maazimio ya Serikali” (Government Resolutions) This was also the date that all land was nationalized. See Afro-Shirazy Party Revolution, 1964-74.
not military, nor were they part of a coherent movement as is the case in most historical revolutions. Instead, other groups joined the rebels in order to form a revolution. The overthrow of the government was hardly a movement of the masses, nor was it a military coup; it was a disturbance that rapidly escalated.20

The revolution, therefore, must be divided up into distinct units of analysis in order to understand its importance. I am only addressing the overthrow of the government on the night of 12 January 1964 and the political situation that arose in the immediate aftermath of the overthrow. I am not addressing the mass violence that was perpetrated in the days after the coup, nor am I extending into the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. The limited scope of my work allows me to analyze the events that allowed for the ousting of the government at such an accelerated pace. Additionally, the emotional response to the violence remains so potent in contemporary individual and social memory in Zanzibar that I conclude that coverage of that portion of the revolution would cloud or dominate the other aspects if it were part of the discussions. That is, in order to do justice to an operational history of the overthrow, it would not also be possible to research and analyze the violence.21

20 I follow Zanzibari rhetorical norms in calling the event on the night of 12 January a revolution, even though my analysis indicates that it became a revolution only in the midst of the process I describe in this dissertation. I use the word revolution partly because there is not another word that translates appropriately; mapinduzi is the only Swahili word that is used to describe this event. Mapinduzi derives from the verb kupindua, which means to overturn or overthrow. It is, therefore, as appropriate a word to describe the overthrow of the government, as it is to describe the entire revolution. I also use the term revolutionaries, sometimes in quotation marks, to reflect that the rebels called themselves wapinduzi (revolutionaries), even at the early points when they did not quite fit that definition. Many of the rebels turned into revolutionaries, even if they were not exactly revolutionaries at the outset.

21In the days after the overthrow of the government, thousands of Zanzibaris of Arab and Indian descent were killed and injured. Exactly how many is unknown, as the figures are widely debated. Thousands more Zanzibaris fled in the months after the overthrow. The revolution is usually remembered in terms of the violence, because it was so brutal, so targeted, and in such high numbers for a small island community.
I will attempt to show the origins of certain key moments that remain contentious, widely discussed, and disputed in Zanzibar and in scholarship. During the 24 hours of the governmental overthrow, various groups of people joined the ragtag group of rebels who had taken the weapons from the police. Together, these forces formed a revolutionary movement. The coup thus became a revolution. This dissertation attempts to disentangle the various threads of the revolution, showing how each small detail has created a whole theory or set of theories surrounding it. Each one has been developed over time into something greater than it originally was.

In deconstructing the revolution, we can determine how many components it actually had, and the way in which each of these components enabled the revolution to occur. Furthermore, we can see how each of these threads led to a particular theory which is both more expansive and less accurate in its new iteration, but stems from a verifiable thread of the events of the revolution.

Following the narrative tradition of the local debates in terms of the level and choice of detail, I also attempt to pick up where Jonathan Glassman left off in War of Words, War of Stones, that is, on the eve of the revolution, and to outline new flashpoints from the revolution itself. I also demonstrate unintended consequences of British decolonization, as well as previously undocumented local narratives.

Addressing the way in which the SMZ portray an official version of the revolution that has not previously been open for debate, Bill Bissell and Marie-Aude Fouéré remark:

If the official story had been consistent, detailed, and documented, oppositional narratives would have gained greater traction insofar as they would have been built by investigating, questioning, or even negating each
and every detail of the official version of history, rather than having to confront uncertainties, unknowns, and unstable accounts.

And:

Achieving a common understanding of the revolution might be a utopian wish, but public and scholarly inquiry could at least establish a shared body of elements upon which to ground further debates.22

Not only does the oppositional narrative lose out, as long as the scholarly process is neglected, all renditions of the story also lose out.

My dissertation tells a story that has been constructed through the historical method of weighing different forms of evidence to form an interpretation. It provides details that have not heretofore been included in the story of the revolution. It was written with precisely the goal of having an evidence-based story to critique and with which to dialogue. This story will elicit other stories that have not been part of the discourse on the revolution. Greater dialogue and more research will help us determine what happened, and will help us to better evaluate this moment in history.

This dissertation intentionally presents the revolution with an abundance of detail that resembles the harried, chaotic, rapid progression of events. This is an attempt to marry form and content, but also to remain consistent with the content of the local Zanzibari narratives.

This Story Needs to Be Told: the Un-Silencing?

In order to write the history that challenges the dominant narrative, we have to listen to the local and subaltern narratives that have never been sought out or have been silenced. The first level of Trouillot's "silences of the past" is at the research level,

in which some stories never get recorded. I chose to begin this process by seeking out the stories that had yet to be told.

There has been deliberate silencing of this historical event for political purposes and a resulting gap in scholarship surrounding the particular historical moment of the night of the overthrow and its immediate aftermath. The political climate in Zanzibar has limited research on the revolution. Scholarship generally covers up to the 1963 elections and the eve of the revolution, but does not cover the revolution itself. After Lofchie’s article, Clayton is the only scholar who wrote a monograph that attempts to operationalize the revolution, but he used only British sources, as they were all that were available at the time. Burgess addresses numerous details of the revolution in works on youth and memory.

Bissell and Fouéré point out:

Despite its local, national, regional, and global significance, the revolution has not been the subject of any full-length scholarly exploration in recent decades. There are a few established historical narratives written at a distance (e.g., Lofchie 1965; Clayton 1981) and numerous accounts or memoirs pressing ideologically or personally motivated interpretations, as will be seen below (see Loimeier 2006, and this volume; Myers 2000).

I aim to provide this kind of “full-length scholarly exploration” with this work.

When one historical account is rendered, it allows for reaction and new historical

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23 Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. Silencing the past: power and the production of history
24 Lofchie, Zanzibar; Glassman, War of Words
25 Lofchie’s book provides the social, economic and political background for the revolution, and he wrote one article on Okello and the revolution.
27 Bissell and Fouere, eds., Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle, 8
evidence to surface and be addressed. I aim to begin that process of operationalizing the revolution from the “distance” of a scholarly tradition.

Additionally, we learn a great deal about how revolutions happen from this research. Scholarly attempts at producing one overarching metanarrative to explain an event such as this are insufficient. However, the histories that build up to this moment are critical to our understanding of how the series of events and coincidences could have happened. But the event was not any one of them. It was not a Marxist revolution, nor an African revolution overthrowing an Arab government, nor an anti-colonial revolution, nor was it the youth overthrowing their elders, nor a conspiratorial invasion from Tanganyika. Instead, in a sense, it was all of them. A single one of these motives would not individually have been sufficient for the chaos of the coup to have become a full-fledged revolution. I attempt to pinpoint the places and times where a confluence of interests pushed the movement forward: clumsily, at times, forcefully, even dictatorially, at others.

Each of the components of the revolution that are continuously debated in Zanzibar and its diaspora has led to specific interpretations and analyses. In order to deconstruct these narratives, interpretations, and conspiracy theories, I felt it was necessary to delve deeply and to employ an inordinately fastidious level of detail. Without this depth, the existing stories maintain their roots and continue to grow. For example, Abeid Amani Karume’s role in the revolution and whether or not there were weapons brought in from outside are details that I considered. Each of these elements of the revolution functions as the cornerstone of an entire narrative. The narratives that have built up around these issues have become like tornadoes, swooping up everything
in their path and carrying it along in the maelstrom. Because Karume was the first president and the intended leader of the revolutionaries, but he needed political and military backing to maintain his tenuous position early on, it quickly became a political necessity to create a story that put him at the center of the preparations for and direction of the revolution. That story was then written in The Nationalist on the first anniversary of the revolution, and in every ASP history after that, as well as in all primary and secondary school textbooks. That story became history because it was required early on. On the other side of the political spectrum is the idea that weapons were brought in from the outside, which made the revolution a conspiracy and an invasion from outside, not a revolution from within. I, therefore, probe into great detail in order to overturn both of those accounts.

Selected Literature Review

As mentioned above, there has been no operational history of the Zanzibar Revolution. In fact, there have been only a few book-length scholarly monographs on the history of the revolution. The work that comes closest to addressing the question of “What happened?” is Harith Ghassany’s 2010 Kwaheri Ukoloni, Kwaheri Uhuru. Ghassany presents extensive archival and field research on the revolution, including numerous interviews about various people’s involvement in the revolution. His perspective echoes the cosmopolitan coastal exceptionalism of the homespun historians, as he raises similar conspiracy theories. However, Kwaheri Ukoloni, Kwaheri Uhuru resembles an anthology of primary sources more than a scholarly monograph. As such, it is a treasure trove for other scholars, but fails to take a solid analytical position. Several texts address the colonial era up to the moment of the revolution, but there is a dearth of scholarship on the period between the revolution and the 1990s
when Zanzibar held its first post-independence multi-party elections. The literature I have chosen to outline below demonstrates the various frameworks the historiography of the revolution has encompassed.

Michael Lofchie’s seminal book, published in 1965, just a year after the revolution, addresses the social, political, and economic context of Zanzibar prior to the Revolution. The revolution has been approached in a variety of different frameworks since Lofchie, though his remains the most influential. Those who have viewed the revolution in relationship with the subsequent formation of the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar have presented the revolution in a Cold War context. This is because the Union was believed either to have stemmed the communist tide, or seen as a Western anti-socialist, counter-revolutionary plot. Others have pointed to a class struggle, due to various political and land tenure changes. These arguments are often similar to those who mention economic problems, the Arab indebtedness crisis, and a weak parliamentary system. Another comparative political argument posits that this was a stratified society whose legitimacy was questioned with the introduction of the concepts of egalitarian democracy.

Historian Gary Burgess addresses the various contemporary memory communities, how they view the revolution, and what language they use to discuss it. He explains that those who view the revolution as a triumph use the language of African

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nationalism to present it as a legitimate retribution for a century of Arab oppression of Africans, starting with the slave trade. Those who oppose the revolution see it as a gross violation of human rights, and they tend to espouse a cosmopolitan, multicultural view in which pre-colonial Zanzibar was a harmonious, independent sultanate. The socialist view depicts the revolution a class struggle in which the peasantry overthrew exploitative landowners. The most contested theme in the literature, however, is about racial identity. Lofchie, Clayton, Martin, Mapuri, Middleton and Campbell all write about an African majority overthrowing an Arab minority, including the idea that the British had been supporting an Arab oligarchy. Zanzibari historian, Abdul Sheriff, argues that the revolution was a class revolt, and that race and class did not coincide in colonial and revolutionary Zanzibar, contrasting with what Lofchie and others posit. In taking apart the construct of “Arab landowner, Indian merchant, and African peasant,” Sheriff points to statistics on landholding and clove ownership and differences between Pemba and Unguja, to show that fewer than 10 percent of Arabs were big landowners on Unguja, and fewer than 5 percent on Pemba.31

Theories on Zanzibari racial identity include discussions of how Zanzibaris themselves constructed race through clothing, housing, and in the media.32 Glassman makes the distinction between those who point primarily to the influence of colonialism on that identity and those who acknowledge indigenous intelligentsia. His recent work meticulously demonstrates how coastal exceptionalism and racial nationalism develop

in Zanzibar, and then get lived out and reified by compelling rumors about actual, but unrelated, events. He vividly portrays a context within which revolution is impending, based on local vitriolic discourse.

Glassman presents flashpoints in which he shows that individual actions taken during the *wakati wa siasa* (time of politics) were personally retributive actions that then were interpreted in a racial framework. That framework is then the imagined, rather than the actual reason for retributive violence. So, race, like nationalism, provides an “imagined community,” which is a powerful motivator, but not as powerful as the individual reaction that caused a person to take vengeance on someone else.

Glassman concludes that a study of the revolution itself is needed to fill a gap in the historiography. Therefore, I aim to follow Glassman’s lead and provide contextual evidence about the flashpoints of the revolution.

**Main Argument: Multiplicity**

As stated above, this was not a communist revolution; it was not an African revolution overthrowing Arabs; it was not an invasion from outside; nor was it an Abeid Karume-led David and Goliath story. While each of these theories holds a kernel of truth, none of them can independently withstand intense scrutiny. The number of participants in the revolution snowballed after the first few hours; the movement grew rapidly and garnered support from unrelated constituents. Each time a different group joined or supported the effort (intentionally or not), the movement was transformed. At the outset, Okello and the *vibarua* who went to steal the weapons from the police were few, and some even ran away upon approaching the barracks. By Sunday morning, Umma Party Comrades were joining the effort. A few hours later, many ASP leaders were on board. Later in the day on Sunday, other East African leaders were supporting
the effort. Once Karume assumed the presidency, countries around the world began recognizing the new regime, and the Revolutionary Council began to work out a strategy for how they would rule. The metamorphosis was so complex, and each new iteration arose so rapidly, that the stability of the effort was constantly in flux. Eventually, after a few months, the formation of the Union solidified the amoebic progression, as the isles were swallowed up by the mainland.

Each of the different groups or people who influenced the movement did so for different reasons. The conglomeration of unlikely allies was the epitome of the ancient Sanskrit proverb, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” In fact, even a glance at the members of the first Baraza la Mapinduzi (Revolutionary Council) points to the multiplicity of interests and backgrounds that guided the revolution at its outset. If we take the sources at face value, John Okello and his band of migrant laborers fought against oppression and racial bias. The ASP Youth League fought for workers’ rights, against economic and social oppression, and against the older generation who were not as radical. The Umma Party joined the revolution in support of socialist principles of equality and rights for all, political power, personal disagreements, and disillusionment with the ZNP. Finally, the British, some of whom acted less intentionally than others, did so in the context of world opinion that supported majority rule (as well as individual dissatisfaction with some of the ZNP’s decisions).

Zanzibar: the do-it-yourself revolution.\textsuperscript{33} Take one isolated peninsula of power, one prophetic strong man, add some disaffected workers, unarmed policemen, a few

\textsuperscript{33} The Chinese have used Zanzibar as a model, recommending other African countries try the ‘do-it-yourself’ model (e.g. raid police for weapons, overthrow the government and then call on the Chinese). (CIA 1966, x-xi)
youth with Chinese and Cuban training, a party, and the result is a rapidly-emerging revolution. No need to stir; it is modern and self-mixing.

This was not a well-organized, well-planned revolution, but it succeeded in spite of that because some groups of people wanted it, for a variety of reasons, and others just did not know how to stop it. Many different groups were talking about revolution in their own *barazas* and living rooms. Most of those groups had at least one personal connection to those who ended up being part of the rebellion. Therefore, nearly all Zanzibaris had different opinions about who the real revolutionaries were. Undoubtedly, these conversations about revolution *did* happen in the groups I will discuss, as well as in numerous others I was not told about. But the revolution itself had no single mastermind; there were simply many people with a desire for a change from *kawaida ya kizanzibari* (the Zanzibari norm). This is the way of political intrigue in Zanzibar, then and now. In Zanzibari culture, linguistic play is valued over direct and/or confrontational communication. This often means infusing a personal interaction with a political interpretation. That political interpretation then takes on a life of its own, as people act on it, and so rumor substantially impacts history.\(^\text{34}\) In spite of there not being a true mastermind behind the revolution, these discussions ultimately provided support for the unlikely opportunists, John Okello, some members of the Afro-Shirazi Youth League (ASYL), and other *vibarua* (day laborers) who stole the weapons from the police. Without such widespread discontent and disappointment with the existing leadership, this action would not have led to a revolution. The plan for those who physically initiated the attacks on the police stations was simply about stealing weapons; youth were

\(^{34}\text{See Glassman, }\textit{War of Words},\text{ particularly chap 6, “Rumor, race, and crime” for specific examples of how rumor impacted interpretation and brought politics into everyday life.}\)
brought into town to assist in this effort. That was the extent of the plan. When the match was lit, however, the conflagration ensued. Many people jumped on board and the incident turned into a full-fledged revolution. Therefore, I will provide a narrative through which the reader can understand the pivotal moments that shaped the course of events. I will also deconstruct iconic moments and questions and assess whether their significance was real or perceived.

**Getting Rid of Colonialism and Oppression**

In response to the CIA report that claimed Abdulla Kassim Hanga had a plan for revolution and that Hassan Nassor Moyo was part of the planning, Moyo replied to me “wakati ule kila moja ana wazo lake” (“at that time, everyone had his/her own idea”). This seems an apt summary of what I discovered as I investigated the roles various people played in the revolution and their reasons for doing so. Having said that, Hanga did indeed have a plan for revolution, but it was not the one that was enacted on the night of 12 January. The overarching reasons by those who did actually play a role in toppling the government on 12 January were about political power and getting rid of colonialism and its “remnants.” The idea behind the revolution for the *vibarua* was the belief that if their party led, they would not be oppressed and would have greater justice. Karume used the terms “colonial stooges,” “imperialists,” and “alien monarch” to refer to the ZNP and the sultan, and he believed the ASP lost the election by “some peculiar

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35 Interview with Hassan Nassor Moyo, November 2013.

36 Interview with Hassan Nassor Moyo, November 2013.
means of cheating” that he referenced in speeches about the revolution. Chapter 3 outlines various provocations for the revolution in greater detail.

Another important element to the ASP story of the revolution was the fact that the revolutionaries only had small weapons, yet they were able to defeat the police force. Photographs of the May Day celebrations show effigies of revolutionaries and Arabs, with the revolutionaries carrying only pangas (machetes). These are elements of the David and Goliath version of the revolutionary narrative. It presents a similar idea as African nationalism in throwing off the yoke of not one, but two colonial rulers. After the ASP took over, ASP documents show a revolutionary army with guns, and from that time onward, newspapers and pamphlets show soldiers with guns, tanks, and other heavy weaponry. Even women are pictured carrying weapons at that point in the revolution. Other images that support a parallel narrative include President Karume burning the rickshaws on 5 March 1964. The idea was that no person should have to serve as another man’s mule and rickshaws were seen as akin to slavery, as they made humans do the work of animals.

The title of document “Gondoa Nchi, Ondoa Ukoloni, Zika Umaskini, Uijinga na Ugonjwa, Ishi Huru wewe na Vizazi Vyako Mnamo Uongozi wa ASP” translates to “liberate the country, get rid of colonialism, bury poverty, ignorance and sickness, live freely with your children during the leadership of the ASP.”

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37 ZNA AK 10/9 Press communiqué and other speeches: ZNA BA 70/3 Bwana Ibrahim Mussa na shairi la kumkaribisha Rais Nyerere Zanzibar Desemba 1964; ZNA AK 16/48: 19 August 1963
38 ZNA BA 74/2; ZNA BA 74/3; ZNA BA 74/5
39 Petterson, p. 212
40 ZNA BA 74/5, p.4
41 ZNA BA 74/3
To disregard the “getting rid of the oppression of colonialism” trope merely because it is part of the official government story is just as problematic as assuming its singular veracity. That is, some authors claim that the revolutionaries were not trying to get rid of colonial oppression, but that their argument was solely a political strategy used by the government. 42 Several interlocutors rejected the idea that the revolutionaries were actually fighting against colonialism, stating that, “life was better under colonialism: we had free education, good medical services, etc”. However, as historians, we should not look at what happened after, or as a result of the revolution, in order to explain the event itself. There was clearly a liberation narrative, from Okello’s rants to Karume’s early speeches. The fact that the CCM government today harkens back to those narratives in order to sew racial discord is a separate historical issue and does not discount the contemporaneous speeches as describing some of the motivations for revolt. The fact that the Revolutionary Government was poorly run, perhaps even worse than colonial government, also does not negate the idea that the rebels believed they were fighting against colonialism and oppression.

**On the British and Injustice**

Because of the massacres during the revolution and the dictatorial style of Karume’s regime, there is a pervasive (and well-deserved) perception of the revolution as a human rights disaster. One of the significant issues raised in this literature is why there was no international outcry about the violence during the revolution and the detention of the ministers in the ousted government. The thousands who were massacred in rural areas give credence to the practice of referring to the event as a

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42 Bissell and Fouéré, Introduction *Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle*, forthcoming.
genocide. The ministers were duly, freely, and fairly elected, and did nothing wrong in any legal sense, so their mistreatment and detention should have stirred international sentiment. Some believe the lack of international reaction indicates that the British were involved in organizing the revolution. Eventually there was some protest but it was not equivalent to the outrage that would be expected as the ministers were in jail for 10 years.

It was, in fact, questions and comments from Zanzibaris about the role of the British in the revolution that led me to devote two chapters of my dissertation to this topic. Several interlocutors claimed that the British were the masterminds of the revolution, pointing out that they did not help the newly independent fledgling government, yet within ten days, they went into all three neighboring countries to help their governments in the midst of army mutinies that could have evolved into revolutions. In order to address these issues, I needed to analyze the British and their role more thoroughly than I otherwise might have.

**The Birthing Process of the Revolution**

So many people had considered or planned revolution, including major political figures such as Abdulla Kassim Hanga and Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu. (See Chapter 3 for a thorough discussion of how many groups of people discussed revolution.) In spite of other plans, what ultimately occurred was that Okello and his group stole weapons from the police, the Umma Party got on board and instituted some structure, the British waffled and left the floodgates open, and Karume brought political legitimacy so that other governments felt they could support the revolution. It was messy and unpredictable, and the result was unlikely given the multitude of factors involved.
Numerous details of the overthrow of the government point to a lack of overall strategic thinking. For example, no revolutionaries attempted to capture the sultan or the cabinet members of the toppled government; they all had the opportunity to escape. The sultan escaped, while the ministers chose to remain and attempt to negotiate with the rebels and the new government. Revolutionaries claim that they had nothing against the old government members; instead, they simply wanted to run their own country. For some, this may well have been the case, but for others, it clearly was not. Given the violence in the aftermath of the revolution, this argument does not suffice. There were enough wadogo rebels who wanted retaliation for past inequities as well as future assurances that they would remain in power, that having control of the government was not enough. Additionally, many of the former ministers were imprisoned for ten years, which demonstrates that the revolutionaries harbored animosity toward the former government members, and that when they had a chance to capture them, they did. Rather than demonstrating benevolence, they simply did not have a plan in place to capture the ministers and the sultan as part of the government overthrow.

**Bibliographical Source Notes and Chapter Breakdowns**

I began my interviews in Zanzibar in 2008 when I was directing a study abroad program in East Africa. Unfortunately, one of my main contacts died before I could return for the bulk of my research. I also conducted preliminary archival research at the British National Archives in Kew in 2007 and 2008. I received a UF summer grant in 2009 to conduct research at Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum in Austin, TX and Michael Lofchie Collection, UCLA Special Collections, Los Angeles, CA, as well as to conduct interviews with Clyde Sanger, who was the primary journalist for the
Guardian during the revolution. I returned to the UK in 2012 for more archival work, which I conducted at the British National Archives, the BBC Written Archives Centre in Reading, and the British Red Cross Archives in London. My full-time doctoral research was conducted in 2013-14 under the auspices of a Fulbright-Hays DDRA grant. During that time, I read files at the Zanzibar National Archives in Zanzibar, the Makerere University Library in Kampala, Uganda, and the Rhodes House Library at Oxford University, Churchill Archives Center, Cambridge University, and the British Film Institute National Archives in London. Additionally, I conducted all of the interviews cited in this work and in the bibliography with more than 70 Zanzibaris, mostly men, who were either participants in or eyewitnesses to the revolution. The interviews were mostly conducted in the Swahili language, interspersed with English and/or clarifications of terms.

This is an operational history of the government overthrow and its immediate aftermath, not a history of the entire revolution. The components include the role of the British in the decolonization process; a play by play of key moments and the most widely debated elements of the overthrow; the role of John Okello; the role of the British in the revolution itself, and the way in which British foreign policy impacted the fledgling government.

In the first chapter, I address British decolonization in Zanzibar. I specifically address electoral design, the non-existent defense pact between Britain and Zanzibar, British relationships with Arabs, both political parties, and the sultan. The second and third chapters introduce the local narratives, address the motivations and the planning behind the revolt, as well as the widely debated elements of the revolution. These
elements include: the ASP Fete on 11 January, the actions of Abeid A Karume in relation to the overthrow, the weapons used, details of what happened at Police Headquarters Ziwani and Police Mobile Force Mtoni, when the Umma comrades joined in and what their roles were, what was going on at Raha Leo, details about the protracted battle at Malindi Police Post, the prison takeover, and the announcement of the first cabinet of the new government. These chapters rely predominantly on oral evidence, which I will reflect on below. In Chapter 4, I reintroduce Field Marshall John Okello to the historiography on the revolution. Okello was dropped from the revolutionary story because it was politically expedient to do so. He was not in conversation with anyone of political clout prior to the revolution. However, he led the overthrow of the government and had to be reckoned with for a brief period. In the last chapter, I return to the role of British individuals during the revolution itself, because their actions had meaning in the context of the chaos, as several Zanzibari participants informed me during interviews. The British sources are so rich in this regard because assigning blame became important after the revolution. I view the British written sources as performative in a way that parallels the oral Zanzibari sources; the British were writing in response to the questions about what happened and assumptions about follow up questions. They were writing in dialogue with their compatriots in the civil service as well as British officials in the Dominions Office, while Zanzibaris were talking to other Zanzibaris in their interviews with me. Lastly, I address the impact of the foreign policy blunders of the British and American governments on the new Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar.
CHAPTER 2
“IS BRITAIN IN FACT RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS? WAS OUR STEWARDSHIP REALLY DESERVING OF SUCH RESULTS?”¹

Enough Zanzibaris expressed to me that they blame the British for the revolution, either as its masterminds or as key figures, that I felt the need to assess their claims and reexamine the role of the British. Even though I do not subscribe to the theory of British intent to overthrow the government of Zanzibar, I do believe it is important to outline what happened and why some Zanzibaris interpret it the way they do. This chapter will address the decolonization process and its impact on Zanzibar; Chapter 5 will cover the acts of British officers during the revolution itself.

The process of decolonization involved competing ideas about what constituted a legitimately elected government. Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) supporters argued the constitutional legitimacy of their position, having won free and fair elections. Many of the elite intellectuals who were members of the ZNP also produced the narratives of coastal exceptionalism, and argued that they had been the most civilized in East Africa, and therefore, were prepared to rule themselves. Indeed, they argued, they had already ruled themselves prior to the British protectorate. Leaders of the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), having garnered the popular vote but not enough seats to form a government, felt that majority rule was the only acceptable result of the elections. Their inability to gain power by constitutional means led them to resort to violence as the only alternative. The British had fostered the validity of both positions: supporting African nationalism and majority rule, and appointing more experienced, better-educated politicians who were in the racial minority to most of the high-ranking posts in the civil

¹ The end of a letter from Anne Trace to Pat Robertson and to Sir George Mooring, RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 and MSS. Afr. t. 56
service. Scholars who claim the British supported an Arab oligarchy, which is what led to African frustration with the constitutional process, neglect to address the support the British tried to give African nationalists in Zanzibar. Lofchie, Ayany, and Clayton argue that the British upheld an Arab oligarchy, using the elections, the administrative and judicial structures, and the appreciation for Arab culture in their arguments. However, the British also helped the ASP set up their party, and they encouraged Africans to register and to vote, particularly in the early elections, in 1957. Pat Robertson, Deputy British resident, claims that he encouraged Abeid Karume to join the social clubs on the island and “get to know the right people.”

George Mooring, whose background in Nigeria pushed him toward African nationalism and majority rule, was brought on as British resident in 1960 in order to usher Zanzibar into independence. This support of Afro-Shirazi Party politicians is important because it strengthened their sense of legitimacy and frustrated ZNP leaders. The ambiguous process of decolonization served as the platform for the revolution.

This sense of legitimacy shows how the ambiguity of the British constitutional development led to a later use of force. Rene Lemarchand points out that the British colonial structure introduced the concept of an egalitarian system while allowing Arab political power to continue to dominate. He notes that use of force is more likely when people question the legitimacy of institutions, due to variations in how rules are applied. Revolutionary action, therefore, came about in part because the British introduced an egalitarian democratic system that they did not themselves follow. Lemarchand also

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2 RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250 Zanzibar Symposium, p.46. Ironically, Ali Muhsin claims that when George Mooring wanted to open the English Club to all members in 1961-2, Pat Robertson walked out of meeting in protest. Muhsin, Conflicts and Harmony in Zanzibar, 4.
claims that where rigid hierarchy is not changed by the colonial system, those in inferior situations tend to change their situation through violent means. 3 Both Lemarchand and Catherine Newbury have compared the Zanzibar Revolution with the Hutu Revolution of 1959-62 to analyze the surface similarity of a politically empowered minority under colonial rule that was suddenly overturned at independence. 4 The British response to Ali Muhsin’s request for help during the revolution was “you are a minority government” and we will not “interfere with the internal affairs of Zanzibar.” 5 And yet, it was the British whose colonial policy and electoral design enabled that minority government to win the 1963 election.

Much of the scholarship on the political history of the colonial period, constitutional development, and the wakati wa siasa (time of politics: 1957-63), raises the issues of race and class stratification in Zanzibar. 6 Lofchie and Ayany both provide detailed accounts of the process of constitutional development, arguing that the British upheld the Arab oligarchy in the process. Sheriff and Ferguson’s edited work, Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule, points to the class structures during colonialism that led to the Revolution. Sheriff argues that class and race were not directly linked, as is frequently the case, and he demonstrates that the revolution was a class revolt, rather than an African revolt against Arabs. In the same text, Babu argues that the revolution was a Marxist revolt of the “lumpen proletariat”. He goes on to say that this lumpen group had

3 Ibid./f p. 46

4 Newbury argues against the assumptive “primordial” nature of “ethnic” tensions, such as those in Zanzibar and Rwanda, and shows how political centralization and changes in land tenure under colonialism altered class relations in those two cases.

5 al-Barwani, Conflicts and Harmony in Zanzibar 153

6 See Sheriff & Ferguson; Ayany; Lofchie; Glassman, War of Words; Clayton; Middleton and Campbell; Martin
planned to burn down Stone Town, and the Umma Party turned violence into a political movement. Of those who focus on race, as opposed to class, Glassman meticulously demonstrates how coastal exceptionalism and racial nationalism developed in Zanzibar during the *wakati wa siasa* through indigenous intellectuals, rather than British influence. He not only uses local newspapers to elucidate the discourse of the elite and the subaltern intellectuals, he also examines violent events, as well as imagined violence, to demonstrate the power of the Zanzibari construct of race. He vividly portrays a context within which revolution is impending based on local vitriolic discourse. My approach in this chapter differs because I examine policy and administrative structures of the British rather than the culture of political violence. I am building on that literature by highlighting several specific actions that provided the context within which the revolution was able to happen. Given the context, explained by Glassman, of the cultivation of racial antagonism in Zanzibar, the actions of the British took on a whole new meaning. I intend to show the ambivalence and confusion of the colonial and decolonization processes. I argue that the British both maintained the status quo, in which the ZNP and the sultan retained political power, and that the British supported the ASP. Furthermore, by sending these mixed messages through the process of constitutional development and decolonization, members of both parties felt that their party was the legitimate and that the British were suppressing their leadership and mistreating them. The combination of the sense of legitimacy and that of exploitation served as the catalyst for revolution.

This chapter also aims to follow Luise White’s insights in her scholarship on the faltering process of decolonization in *Unpopular Sovereignty*. The questions of how
disparate communities of Zanzibaris were to fit into the political arena piggybacks on how various residents of Rhodesia under the UDI were to utilize political power. In Rhodesia, White addresses how white settlers and visitors use laws to maintain “responsible government by civilized people.” In the case of Zanzibar, there was also a group of British who were concerned with “responsible government” and “civilized” people in government, as well as an equally unfastidious process of decolonization. Ideas about majority rule as the guiding principal of political legitimacy in African nationalist movements challenged ideas about rule by those who were sufficiently “civilized” and “prepared to rule themselves”. These two contrasting ideas guided British historical actors. White focuses on who had the right to vote and the question of citizenship and the rights and responsibilities therein. In this chapter, I will show the ambivalence of the decolonization process through electoral design and the drawing of constituencies, the development of the constitution, the lack of a defense pact, relationships with the ZNP, and the relationship with the sultan and the sultanate.

**Electoral Design**

British Resident Rankine supported communal representation, albeit in unofficial positions, for Zanzibaris in LegCo. There were a certain number of seats for Africans, Asians, Comorians, and Arabs. Communal representation lasted until 1956, when the Coutts Commission recommended common roll election for some of the seats in LegCo.

In addition to the common roll, there were two more components of electoral design that most influenced the decolonization process: the way the constituencies were drawn, and the first past the post, single member district voting system, which was

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common among British-colonized African countries. For comparison’s sake, the party-
list proportional representation system was more common among European-colonized
African countries. A 2003 article by political scientist, David Horowitz recommends that
the choice of an electoral system be based on the goals of the system and not merely
“cultural affinity,” by which he means the influence of the colonizing power.\(^8\) Arend
Lijphart argues that a proportional representation system is better for divided societies.\(^9\)
Though I will not evaluate these political science theories in the case of Zanzibar, I
introduce them in order to demonstrate the significance and varieties of electoral
design. There was more than one option available, and yet the speed with which
decolonization occurred meant that the British maintained status quo, as opposed to
trying to determine what system would work best for Zanzibar.

The reason speed mattered in Zanzibar was because of the divisive political
situation and electoral stalemates. Decolonization was even more rapid in Tanganyika,
in large part because 90% of the electorate supported TANU. Tanganyika was the least
prepared for independence of the East African colonies, but there were no loyalists to
slow down the process, so it was the first to gain independence. However, Zanzibar’s
political situation was dramatically different than that of Tanganyika; the pace of
decolonization influenced the electoral process in Zanzibar whereas it did not in
Tanganyika. The British argument in Tanganyika was that the Tanganyikans would not
be ready for independence even in 50 years, but everyone would support TANU, so


there was no choice. Interestingly, perhaps Zanzibar would not have been ready for 50 more years either, but the ZNP leadership claimed that they were the most prepared in all of East Africa due to their education level and cosmopolitan sophistication. Ali Muhsin argued that the Supervisor of Elections created ASP to avoid the hazard of the all-too-familiar one-party state. Having two parties delayed independence in Zanzibar. Ali Muhsin claims, “we should have been first, but we came last”.

**The Blood Report**

There was to be a second election in 1960, but it had to be postponed until January 1961 to allow more time for preparations. Zanzibar’s second Constitutional Commissioner, Sir Hilary Blood, submitted a report in May 1960 recommending a wide variety of constitutional changes. They were aimed at taking Zanzibar to the next level of “responsible government,” not internal self-rule or independence. The recommendations included having the Legislative Council be composed of predominantly elected members. Blood recommended elected members from 21 single member constituencies plus three ex-officio members and five unofficial members, as opposed to the existing 25-member LegCo, only eight of whom were elected. The Blood Report was well received by many, including the ASP. However, the implementation of constitutional changes did not follow several of Sir Hilary’s recommendations. One significant change was that there would be 22 elected members, and Stone Town would be divided into two seats. The results of that decision

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10 Iliffe, “Weakest Link”, in *Search for a Nation*, 185

11 Muhsin, Conflicts and Harmony, 5.

are quite clear, as the January 1961 elections ended in a stalemate, owing to the even number of constituencies. Additionally, given that that extra seat for Stone Town would obviously go to the ZNP, the British acknowledged that the ASP would have won the January 1961 elections, had it not been for that decision.\textsuperscript{13} Pat Robertson, Deputy British Resident, said in a 1971 interview that the ASP had been so dominant, the idea of a stalemate did not really occur to anyone at the time. Ultimately, however, Robertson admits that that decision was a bad one for Zanzibar.\textsuperscript{14} One of the first reports on the background of the revolution explains that the ASP won five out of six seats in 1957, and then felt frustrated that they were being prevented from their just rewards through the electoral process from that point onwards.\textsuperscript{15}

The prevailing argument in the Legislative Council was that Stone Town was the center of government, commerce, culture, and education. As such, it should be represented more robustly. This is a thinly veiled argument claiming that the most civilized have the greatest political legitimacy. The most ardent argument against this second seat for Stone Town was based on majority rule as the most important democratic principle. “If democracy has any meaning,” it was said, one voter, one vote should hold true and more weight should not be given to Stone Town.\textsuperscript{16} Ultimately, Stone Town received the extra constituency, and both seats, predictably, went to ZNP.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} BNA DO 185/59, “Draft Despatch, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations”, p.3
\item \textsuperscript{14} RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, Item 2, p.20-22 Transcript of Zanzibar Symposium
\item \textsuperscript{15} BNA DO 185/59, “Draft Despatch, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations”, p.3
\item \textsuperscript{16} ZNA BA 16/52 and ZNA BA 16/53, Debates of the legislative council 1960”, p.32-41
\item \textsuperscript{17} In 1971, when asked whether or not the extra seat given to Stone Town was a decisive moment in the electoral history of Zanzibar, two British officers, Pat Robertson and Henry Hawker, acknowledge that that seat would clearly be a ZNP seat, and that it was a mistake, creating the stalemate, as it did. They then proceeded to turn the tables. Rather than accepting any of the political structures as decisive, they
\end{itemize}
Two years later, in 1962, another Delimitation Commission received input from the public on this issue of constituencies. Once again, it was pointed out that Stone Town, with a population of 18,179, received two seats, and Ng'ambo, with 39,744, more than twice Stone Town’s population, was allotted only three seats. Abeid Karume and Thabit Kombo, President and Secretary General of the ASP, reminded the Delimitation Commission that the Blood Commission had recommended that constituencies be based on population. Instead, the current state of affairs was such that some constituencies represented approximately 8,000 people, while others represented nearly twice that, at close to 16,000 people. They accepted single-member constituencies, but felt that the constituencies needed to be drawn to more accurately represent the population. Additionally, Hassan Nassor Moyo, of the Zanzibar and Pemba Federation of Labour, indicated that the electorate would be even larger in 1963 because franchise was extended to universal adult suffrage. Voters who previously did not qualify because of lack of property, income, or education would now be allowed to vote, along with many youth who had turned 21 since 1961, and others who had become naturalized. It was, therefore, even more important that constituencies be drawn with the concurrent population in mind. Most of these youth and un-propertied, instead claimed that it was Mohamed Shamte breaking away from the ASP, forming the ZPPP, and then joining forces with the ZNP that really meant that “the die had been cast.” They said that it was at that point that the Africans could see that although they had set up their party, as advised by the British, they had no chance of influencing elections. RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250 Zanzibar Symposium, 20-21.

18 ZNA AK 16/67 In Zanzibar, Stone Town North had 8381, Stone Town South 9798, and the others ranged from 12,744 to 14,678; while in Pemba, constituency sizes ranged from 13,892 to 16,046.

19 ZNA AK 16/67
uneducated voters would be living outside of Stone Town, in Ng’ambo or in rural areas.\(^{20}\)

**Timing of Independence and the Varying Perceptions**

There were several competing theories on the timing of Zanzibar’s independence. Reasons for keeping Zanzibar a protectorate versus granting independence also varied, as did the arguments made by British and ZNP politicians. When the British were concerned about political violence, they wanted to slow down independence. Ali Muhsin, on the other hand, put forth the argument of coastal exceptionalism to validate his reasoning in favor of independence. When the British finally committed to Zanzibar’s independence, officers on the ground felt as if they had little say in the process.

Britain had been preparing to give Zanzibar independence since 1955,\(^{21}\) but the \textit{wakati wa siasa} of the late 1950s early 1960s changed the situation. When Colonial Secretary Ian Macleod visited Zanzibar in April 1961, he would not set a date for independence, saying that he did not want “another Congo,” and claiming that that is what happens “when a people had not been prepared” for independence.\(^{22}\) SK Madon, the first and last Speaker of the National Assembly, commented on the problem of insufficient experience, pointing out that until July 1961, the LegCo held a British majority. Zanzibar obtained internal self-rule in July 1963 and full independence in December 1963, so Zanzibar ministers had only two years of exposure to this type of

\(^{20}\) BNA CO 822/ 3148, in March 1962, Karume requests universal suffrage, starting at age 18.

\(^{21}\) *New York Times* 29 October 1955

\(^{22}\) Ayany, 85 quotes the London *Times* 4 April 1961; *New York Times* 3 September 1961
government prior to independence.\textsuperscript{23} However, ZNP leaders like Ali Mushin continued to think they were more ready for independence than the rest of East Africa, due to their sense of coastal exceptionalism, even after Arab Zanzibaris were the victims of election violence in 1961.

Coastal exceptionalism is addressed in the scholarship, and linked with panArabism and the timing of Zanzibari independence in a variety of ways. Jonathan Glassman demonstrates how articles in \textit{Al Falaq} and \textit{Mazungumzo} extoll the glories of the precolonial Zanzibari past, including Omani rule freeing Zanzibar from the Portuguese, in a way that makes clear that mainlanders are viewed as \textit{washenzi} (barbarians), and are not encompassed by a community which values \textit{ustaarabu} (civilization).\textsuperscript{24} Harith Ghassany presents this perspective as it relates to the timing of independence, citing Sheikh Abdillahi, who said that the British were unhappy with Zanzibar because it was the only country in all of Africa who did not need any Europeans; they could rule themselves and show their neighbors how to do so as well. Ghassany also claimed that the British were upset with the ZNP because of their demonstration of pan-Arabism and their close connection with Nasser’s Egypt at a time when Egypt was an enemy of the British.\textsuperscript{25} Ali Muhsin al Barwani expressed the idea of coastal exceptionalism by stating: we “were the most advanced among the East African countries, the ones who had previously had a government of our own functioning for

\textsuperscript{23} RH MSS. Afr. s. 1690, K.S. Madon, p. 11

\textsuperscript{24} Glassman, \textit{War of Words}, 38, 77, 91. The very word \textit{ustaarabu} means imbued with Arab-ness, and was a shift in the lexicon from an older Bantu-based word, \textit{uungwana}, meaning civilized. Glassman cites Powells and Fair for discussions on the rise of the word \textit{ustaarabu}.

centuries…”  

He blamed the British for preventing Zanzibar from achieving independence. He cited the Supervisor of Elections who said in 1957 that he made certain that the ASP “came into being and ‘so saved Zanzibar from one-party rule of a dangerously familiar type.’” Ali Muhsin went on to say that it was the ASP and Julius Nyerere, Britain’s “man in the region,” who kept Zanzibar from getting independence for so long.27

Once the British decided to grant Zanzibar independence, Henry Hawker, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance (at the time of the revolution), believed that British colonial policy was the guiding factor, “The destiny, shall we say, of Zanzibar was not within the control really of any of the people who were there.”28 Hawker remarked that Zanzibar was not as important to Her Majesty’s Government (HMG) as Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika. Decolonization, therefore, would happen quickly, and with more concern for the way Zanzibar would impact the rest of East Africa than concern for Zanzibar itself. Neither Hawker nor Pat Robertson, former Deputy British Resident, felt that Zanzibar was ready for independence when it was granted.

Robertson, however, did not agree with Hawker that Zanzibar was an afterthought. Robertson felt that HMG were quite concerned with Zanzibar, but that they were in an awkward position of not being able to get the opposing parties to work together or even meet. He said they saw violence as a likely outcome, which concerned them. He claimed the logical response would be to refuse to grant independence to Zanzibar until the parties could work together, but that since the rest of East Africa was decolonizing


28 RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, Item 2, p. 35-37; Item 1, p.2
rapidly and without too many problems, what were they to do? He said the Arab
Zanzibaris saw themselves as former rulers of coastal East Africans in Kenya and
Tanganyika, so they would not accept remaining a Protectorate when the rest of East
Africa was independent. Additionally, he felt that with an Arab government in Zanzibar,
East Africans were not likely to allow British troops there; if they were to stay, they
would need a garrison in Zanzibar, an enormous task. “Therefore I think there was a
feeling on all sides that somehow the thing had got to be pushed along and if Zanzibar
could be given Independence with any semblance of decency, it ought to happen. I
think this was the tragedy of it, but the motives were good although in a sense it was a
gamble, but it didn’t come off.”29 In order to fully analyze these assertions, it is important
to note that both Hawker and Robertson were in positions of power in the colonial
government of Zanzibar. Blaming policy-makers in London and shrugging off the
“gamble” in spite of the violence were convenient ways to avoid blame for the disaster
that befell Zanzibar.

**Defense Treaty**

Given that British troops were brought in to put down army mutinies in
Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda just one week after the Zanzibar Revolution in January
1964, many Zanzibaris question why British troops did not come to save the
Government of Zanzibar when it was overthrown. The answer, in part, hinges on the
fact that Zanzibar had no Defense Treaty with Britain. The question that arises next is
why. There are several versions of the story, and sufficient confusion that Pat

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Robertson said that it took Whitehall some time to sort out the question of whether or not they could or should send troops to Zanzibar in the midst of the revolution.  

A Defense Treaty was considered because during the *wakati wa siasa*, daily life in Zanzibar had become dramatically politicized. Through the Newspaper Wars and daily rumors and gossip, the British became acutely aware of the venomous political discourse that had rapidly developed in Zanzibar. In Intelligence Summary Reports and Coffee Shop Gossip Reports from Special Branch, the British reported concerns about the internal political situation in Zanzibar. They were so concerned that they brought in the Gordon Highlanders and Scots Guards after the State of Emergency in 1961. These troops remained until December 1962, and the Scots Guards returned again in June 1963 for the elections. The British were not concerned about an attack on Zanzibar from the outside but rather internal instability. In meetings about the East African Federation in July 1963, a Deputy British Resident wrote,  

> with regard to defense, such threat as there might be to Zanzibar would appear to come from the mainland of Africa, if the relationships between Zanzibar and her neighbors were bad. Contrariwise, if her relationships are good, then there would appear to be little danger from external sources to Zanzibar. Internal security is, however, a rather different matter. History has shown that Zanzibar (as indeed, many other countries) has times when civil disorders break out and in practically all cases Zanzibar has had to rely on external aid.

He went on to say that a federal arrangement that would provide protection would ease Zanzibar’s anxiety about internal security. However, this makes it clear that

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30 See p. 52 transcript of Zanzibar Symposium Interviews, RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250  
31 See Glassman *War of Words*…  
32 BNA CO 822/3148; BNA CO 822/3063; BNA FCO 141/7068; RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250; ZNA AK 13/11  
33 RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250  
34 ZNA AB 49/218, Cabinet paper No.11, 19 July 1963
the British were very aware that, without a mutual defense pact, Zanzibar’s internal security was at grave risk.

At the Zanzibar Independence Conference in August of 1963, the question was put to the Zanzibar Ministers about whether or not they would request negotiations of a defense treaty. At the time, the ministers were not concerned about an external attack, but rather with “subversion within the territory aggravated by illegal immigration and, possibly, arms smuggling from the mainland.” The discussions at this conference included the Ministers asking for examples of Defense Treaties with former colonies, wondering if a treaty with HMG precluded treaties with other nations, and the fact that there may not be British bases in the region after all of East Africa had gained independence. Pat Robertson, the Deputy British Resident, searched for sample treaties as a result of this line of questioning, but by the end of the conference, it was otherwise unclear from the archival record what either side intended to do about this issue. Another perspective was that of the first Speaker of the National Assembly, K.S. Madon, who said that he spoke with two British Members of Parliament at the Independence Celebrations who reassured him that Britain would help, if need be. He also said that Prime Minister Shamte told him that during the Independence Conference, that Secretary of State Sandys promised them British protection for a year after Independence. Each person had a slightly different view of what was being

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35 BNA CO 822/3148, “Extracts from Cabinet Minutes on Papers Considered Up To and Including 31 August 1963”, p.4


37 RH MSS. Afr. s. 1690, p. 11 Transcript of Interview with Madon on 4 January 1966
proposed, but in the end, no signed Defense Agreement between Zanzibar and Britain was created.

Deputy British Resident Robertson claimed that HMG did offer Zanzibar Ministers a Defense Treaty in the first week of November 1963, but that they did not respond until a few days before Independence, he believed some time between the fourth and sixth of December. At that juncture, all they said was “yes;” they did not give enough time or submit a proposal, so there was not time for anything to be done. Robertson found the ZNP ministers “criminally negligent;” the responsibility was theirs and they did not prepare themselves with the support they knew they needed, even though it was offered to them. He said, “We recognized there would be trouble—nobody made a secret of that”. However, the archival record shows more ambiguity both on the part of the British and the Zanzibari ministers. Indeed, when Robertson was interviewed in 1971, hindsight and the need to place blame on someone else undoubtedly impacted his view of the situation. The question remains, if he was so certain that there would be trouble, why did he not follow through on finalizing a Defense Treaty before independence?

The negotiations continued. A secret telegram from the British Resident to the Secretary of State and the Governor of Kenya on 21 November 1963 says that Prime Minister Shamte had followed up with him, requesting the finalization of a defense agreement. The Prime Minister specifically desired access to a battalion of British troops for internal security purposes. Within a month of independence, the government of Zanzibar was concerned about security. The British Resident copied the Governor of Kenya to make sure that the Government of Kenya would not object to use of British

\[^{38}\text{RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, p. 52}\]
troops based in Kenya, if the need arose.\textsuperscript{39} This issue was clearly considered at this juncture, and yet, the same questions were revisited on 12 January 1964 when the situation the Government of Zanzibar was worried about came to fruition. There appears to be no resolution to this question, and the last document in the file on the Zanzibar security situation is about security during Independence Celebrations, when HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh was to be present.\textsuperscript{40} Notably, the British were not concerned about security during that celebration, as they would have Scots Guards marching together with the Zanzibari Police Mobile Force (PMF) at the ceremony. Other notes from 22 November 1963 at the beginning of the Zanzibar Intelligence Summaries, indicate that the British Resident had said no follow up was needed on the question of a defense agreement unless the Zanzibari Ministers raised it again themselves.\textsuperscript{41} It is unclear whether or not Webber, in the Colonial Office, who made these notes, knew of the other communication, but it clearly signals miscommunication or neglect on the part of the British, given that the Zanzibari Prime Minister had raised it again the day prior. This was just three weeks before Independence. Whether or not there was time to negotiate a Defense Treaty at that juncture is unclear. What is clear is that no one took sufficient responsibility for an agreement to be finalized.

The other perspective, from ZNP leader Ali Muhsin Al Barwani, claims that the Government of Zanzibar (GOZ) requested a mutual aid pact from the British Resident, Sir George Mooring, at the time of internal self-government (June 1963) and was

\textsuperscript{39} BNA FCO 141/7068, "Kenya: relations with Zanzibar; Zanzibar Emergency, security situation, independence.."

\textsuperscript{40} BNA FCO 141/7068, "Kenya: relations with Zanzibar; Zanzibar Emergency, security situation, independence.."

\textsuperscript{41} Internal note from F.D. Webber to Monson, 22 November 1963, BNA CO 822/3063
refused. Ali Muhsin wrote that Mooring asked, “half in jest: “why don’t you approach Oman or Saudi Arabia for that sort of arrangement?”42 Ali Muhsin went on to say that he was being provoked to provide information on the GOZ’s arrangement with Egypt, the archenemy of the British.43

In the final analysis, each side blames the other one for the lack of a Defense Treaty. Even though it had been discussed periodically for two years, no one on either side assumed sufficient responsibility for the task of finalizing the Defense Treaty. On the morning of 12 January 1964, such a treaty would have outlined a clearer course of action for the British. After all the back and forth and an in-depth analysis of the security situation, in the end, Zanzibar was left unprotected.

**Revolution as Anti-Imperial: What Uhuru, Whose Uhuru? Or the British Are against Us**

This revolution was an anti-colonial, anti-imperial act that happened a month after independence. This may seem counterintuitive but my argument is layered. The view of many revolutionaries and other East African leaders was that colonialism was not over. First, the British still played many major roles in the government and civil service of Zanzibar. Most of the Permanent Secretaries for the Ministers, the Attorney General, the Chief Justice, the Commissioner of Police, most of the Superintendents of Police, the Special Branch, as well as most of the teachers and many other lower level or less political civil service positions were occupied by British people.44 Although they

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42 Muhsin, *Conflict and Harmony*, 140

43 Muhsin, *Conflict and Harmony*, 140

44 This very issue, police and army leadership being British, was part of what led to the mutinies in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda just a week after the Revolution. For Zanzibar, many of these people who held these posts will be named later in this chapter. See BNA DO 185/59 for names of British officers in Zanzibar during Revolution.
were nominally gone, few British residents actually departed on or around independence. The British Resident, Deputy British Resident, and their staff left, but the Ministers were Zanzibari, and little else about the Administration changed.\footnote{Others were scheduled to leave in June 1964. There was much lamenting the Zanzibarization of the Civil Service, which meant getting rid of British officers, but many still remained in force in January 1964.}

Additionally, many ASP leaders, AS Youth Leaguers, and other laborers in Zanzibar viewed the sultanate as part of an imperial system maintained by the British. Tanganyika’s President, Julius Nyerere, frequently articulated this opinion as well. Nyerere told the Commonwealth Secretary in March 1963 that imperialism of the ZNP-British-sultan triad needed to end.\footnote{BNA CO 822/3204; BNA DO 121/237; BNA FCO 141/7074. Numerous reports cite Nyerere expressing this view of the sultanate as continued imperialism. In later chapters, I will discuss this issue further. For Zanzibari speeches and reports on the revolution getting rid of imperialism and colonialism, see ZNA AK 10/9; ZNA BA 70/3; ZNA BA 74/3; AK 17/10; AK 16/48; BA 68/16; SA 1/104, among others.}

British Resident George Mooring called Nyerere’s belief “regrettable,” but he was well aware of the view that the British were in Zanzibar to “protect and prop up” the feudal system. In the same note, Mooring wrote, “It is a wry commentary that the ZNP have felt equally that I do nothing but protect the ASP.”\footnote{BNA CO 822/3204} A year before the revolution, we see the view that imperialism will not end with independence, and feeling of both parties that the British are supporting the other party. This is not a recipe for smooth decolonization.

Both the ZNP and the ASP argued that the British, evidence of British ambivalence. The British, such as Forsyth-Thomson and the late Police Commissioner Biles\footnote{Other than British Resident and Deputy British Resident, these two are the most significant British officers to leave. That is, they had played significant roles in Security prior to their departure.} blame the ZNP for acting in ways they believed to be unwise, such as making the opposition fear retaliation for the 1961 election violence or believe that all opposition
parties would soon be banned. Biles felt particularly strongly about the decision to Zanzibarize the Police Force, which, according to him, meant getting rid of mainland African police, who were well trained.\textsuperscript{49} The British were also very worried about communism amongst ZNP members. The ASP leaders felt that the British were not supportive of them, that elections were rigged, and that constituency boundaries were gerrymandered. Pat Robertson, Deputy British Resident, claimed that no such thing happened, and that there has “never been anywhere in the world, before or since, where an election was so fair!”\textsuperscript{50} However, given the election results with the ASP garnering 54\% of the vote but only 13 out of 31 seats in the legislature, such claims are predictable.

Robertson’s testimony clearly demonstrates British equivocation. He said he hoped the ASP would win because there would be no peace unless a majority-supported party ran the government. The ASP was also less likely to be overthrown because the party had support from the mainland; Tanganyika would have helped fight off any potential Arab revolt. Robertson repeatedly tried to convince Abeid Karume to rejoin the political process after the ASP lost in 1961.\textsuperscript{51} Numerous overtures were made to the ASP; several British officers wanted a majority rule government, and yet the electoral process and drawing of constituencies did not support that outcome. The British knew that there was no real possibility of the ASP winning enough constituencies to form a government.

\textsuperscript{49} There is some question as to whether or not this actually happened prior to the Revolution, so I will address it more fully below.

\textsuperscript{50} BNA DO 185/59; RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, p. 47

\textsuperscript{51} RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, p. 28, 30
British Relationships with the ZNP

Several key British officers were very critical of the ZNP, some even to the point of leaving because they felt they would be unable to serve in a government run by the ZNP. These include Former Police Commissioner Biles, Former Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Department, Adrian Forsyth-Thomson, Former Permanent Secretary in the Finance Department, Henry Hawker, and Deputy British Resident, Patrick A. Robertson. On the other side of the political spectrum was Mervyn Smithyman, Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Department at the time of the revolution. Though much of the commentary that exposed the political bent of these officers was recorded after the revolution, Smithyman outwardly continued to lament the loss of the legitimate government of Zanzibar. He continued to question why certain steps were not taken in order to keep the government in power, while others were busy criticizing the government that had been overthrown, blaming them for their own failure.\(^5\)

Henry Hawker wrote that between September 1963 and January 1964 “the Ministers really weren’t living in this world at all.” He says some “hung about London,” others went off to the Gulf, Cairo, and other places; they were completely unrealistic about the work that needed to be done. They were captivated by the idea of being an independent state and member of the United Nations and did not recognize the problems that had to be dealt with back home.\(^6\) Police Commissioner Biles reported

\(^5\) Smithyman wrote about conversations with Murumbi in Kenya, who had said they might send troops as well as the possibility of ruling from Pemba. He wondered why the ministers had left the safety of the British High Commission, and why they had not gotten on the yacht to depart. RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston and private letters, thanks to Anne Chappel, Smithyman’s daughter.

\(^6\) RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, p. 54; Notable that there is a YouTube clip of Prime Minister Mohamed Shamte accepting Zanzibar’s entry into the United Nations that was posted in 2012 and is popular among
dissatisfaction with Seyyid Jamshid and the rest of the Royal Family (other than Seyyid Khalifa, of whom he was fond). He said that Jamshid had a slave labor mentality and thought he should be allowed to do anything he wanted. He picked fights with people while out driving, and then would complain to PC Biles, insisting that the other person be ticketed or arrested. Biles was also disappointed with Ali Muhsin’s push to Zanzibarize the Police Force. Biles said Ali Muhsin wanted all foreign elements out, which lowered the standards considerably. He said that when he arrived, the police were called the “Barefoot Police Force,” their uniforms were merely tunics, and the morale was very low. He spent seven years raising the standards, morale, education and training level, as well as the uniform of the police force, and the result of Ali Muhsin’s desire for a fully Zanzibari Police Force would undo the work Biles had done. Biles said, “It seemed to be a deliberate step by Ali Muhsin, I can’t understand why. I wrote him Report after Report, pointing out the dangers of a too rapid run-down in the Police Force.”

Forsyth-Thompson wrote, “The ZNP has from time to time made attempts to pass as an African and not an Arab party, but with the progressive withdrawal of British restraint over their activities, they have advanced from folly to folly.” He went on to list

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54 I heard numerous stories about the character flaws of Jamshid. One female friend of Jamshid’s who said he even tried to force himself on her.

55 RH MSS. Afr. s. 1446, Roy Henry Biles, p. 21

56 BNA DO 185/59, Zanzibar Revolution: A Report by Mr. A.A.E. Forsyth-Thompson, ex-Permanent Secretary, PM’s Department, Zanzibar, p. 1
numerous cooperations with Egypt, including financial aid, bringing teachers, doctors, and a Secretary, who was in jail at the time of the report— to the Cabinet.

Zanzibarization of the police force included a departure of British as well as mainland African members of the force. The ZNP/ZPPP government had declared that all British had to leave the police force by June 1964. Forsyth-Thompson said they also began discriminating against mainland Africans on the force.

“By this undisguised orientation toward an Arab country, and the clear intention of the Government to slough off the purely African elements in its security forces, the Ministers could not have conceived a better way of convincing Africans that their fears of a return to Arab domination were well-founded.”

Apart from the racial element, this move also destroyed the police force, since mainlanders were among the most well-trained and experienced officers, as well as the greatest in number.

However, Hawker also pointed out that numerous teachers, lawyers, and other British civil servants had closer personal ties with Arabs and Indians than did Africans, and they would have wanted the ZNP to win. He said, “We all know who those sort of people were.” There were others who more closely identified with Africans, and had served in mainland countries. But, he contended,

“When you talk of the administration you are not really talking about individual government officers in their general relations with the public. As far as the administration is concerned, that is the people who are really responsible, I would have said that all of us who knew what the issues were would have wanted the ASP to win because I think we knew that unless a majority of the people were in authority no result would really last very long.”

57 BNA DO 185/59, Zanzibar Revolution: A Report by Forsyth-Thompson
58 See Chapter 4 for more on the Zanzibarization of the Police Force
59 RH MSS Afr.s. 2250, p. 29
Allison Smith, the interviewer, pointed out that both of these pieces are important, which is precisely my point. Smith had asked about Arabic language ability in British officers, thinking that those who had previously served in the Middle East might be more prone to have Arab friends in Zanzibar. Hawker corrected her that Arabs in Zanzibar did not speak Arabic, but more to the point, if the British did not speak Swahili, they could not communicate as well with the African Zanzibaris. Those, like Robertson, who could speak with Karume and others in their own language, would be more likely to have closer relationships with Africans. On the other hand, those British who did not speak Swahili would find Indians or Arabs more likely to speak English. Even this analysis does not explain the division amongst British residents of Zanzibar. Mervyn Smithyman, for example, spoke fluent Swahili, but was decidedly in the camp that supported the ZNP and their governance. And George Mooring, who was new to East Africa, and did not speak Swahili, had greater support for the ASP.

**British Residents**

There seems to have been a progression of ideas among British Residents from the protectorate of the Arab State to independence, with several steps in between, including appointed communal representation and common roll elected representation. In 1951, as he departed, Sir Vincent Glenday said that HMG would maintain Zanzibar as an “Arab State.” Sir John Rankine (1952-4) opposed common roll elected members of LegCo, and Sir Henry Potter (1955-9) “did not really approve of elections,” according to the *Guardian*. Sir George Mooring (1960-3), however, came from Nigeria, most likely with independence as the goal, whereas previous British Residents had maintaining a

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60 RH MSS Afr.s. 2250, p. 30-1
protectorate in mind as their goal. Police Commissioner Biles, however, said that Potter had been in East Africa a long time, spoke the language, had a paternal approach to administration, and was respected. He said Mooring came from West Africa, did not speak Swahili, and did not understand the intrigue in Zanzibar. This shift in the background and expectations of the British Resident mirrors the changes in prevailing attitudes away from an empire toward independence, as well as away from the idea that the “most civilized” had the authority to rule and towards the concept of majority rule.

**The British Support for the Sultan**

The last issue I will investigate is the British relationship to the sultan, outlining the impact that relationship had on British actions at the time. Afro-Shirazi Party documents clearly address their discontent in having the sultan rule the islands and accuse the British of perpetuating the sultan's rule. Two elder Zanzibaris, an Indian and an Arab, independently told me that the British were protecting the sultan, and that getting rid of “the sultan’s government” was one of the aims of the Revolution. One of them made a point of saying that on 10 December 1963, the Duke of Edinburgh gave the document issuing independence to Sultan Jamshid, rather than to Prime Minister Shamte or Ali Muhsin al Barwani, which angered Karume. A more extreme form of this point was made by the Field Marshall, John Okello, who claimed that he was feeding and protecting Shamte and Ali Muhsin, and once he arrested them, he “was not

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61 RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, Item 2, Interviews, p.1  
62 RH MSS. Afr. s. 1446, Biles, p. 19  
64 Interview, Anonymous, 2 August 2008; John deSilva, 3 August 2008.
concerned with taking retribution against him.” Ali Muhsin, while claiming to have told the sultan, among other things, said, “you have 20 minutes to surrender, or we shall have no alternative but to extinguish you form the face of the earth…If I find you I shall kill you and all your dependents, and then burn your remains with a fierce and hungry fire.”65

Much of the ASP information around the time of the revolution is concerned with getting rid of the “Sultan’s Government,” as it represented the second form of colonialism, first the British, and then the Arab sultanate. The sultan was the symbol of Arab supremacy for many ASP members, and therefore played a role in the narrative because the revolution was about overthrowing him as well as overthrowing the ZNP. As stated in the introduction, however, the National Party of the Subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar, the foundation for the ZNP, was a peasant-based, anti-British-colonial party but clearly was not anti-sultan.

Additionally, the British support for the sultan had an impact on independent Zanzibar. Another contradiction, however, is that although the British supported the sultanate as an institution, they did not support Seyyid Jamshid, the young prince who became sultan in 1963. Jamshid’s grandfather, Seyyid Khalifa, was well liked and supported by all. The British even supported his son, Seyyid Abdulla, who was not as beloved among Zanzibaris. Jamshid, however, was by all accounts, a young playboy who was not respected.66 Ali Muhsin tells the story of Sir George Mooring asking Ali Muhsin to confirm that Zanzibarits wanted Jamshid to be their sultan when his father

65 Okello, Revolution, 145, 152-3.

66 I was even told that he had tried to rape a woman who was a friend of his wife, at the time. Interview, Anonymous, Zanzibar Town, 28 August 2013.
died. Ali Muhsin and the ZNP ministers replied that yes, it was his birthright. The British, then, had no legitimate reason not to support his ascendancy to the throne, though it seemingly pained them. Even Jamshid himself did not want the throne; he wanted it given to his younger brother so that he could enjoy a more private life. But the ZNP leaders maintained the strict rules of succession to the dismay of the British and the new sultan alike. This turned out to be an unwise decision, one of many the ZNP made, as it was much easier to garner support for a revolution against an unpopular sultan than a widely respected one, like Jamshid’s late grandfather, Khalifa.

In the midst of this bumpy process of decolonization, Seyyid Jamshid made a decision that rescued him after the revolution. He diplomatically relinquished the Kenyan Coastal Strip, but declined any financial transaction for the Strip. This was not a foregone conclusion. In 1930 and again in 1957, HMG debated purchasing the Strip from Zanzibar for the Kenya Colony. In 1961, the Government of Zanzibar was still unwilling to relinquish the Strip. James Brennan argues that the notion of “coastal Islamic sovereignty” is enveloped in the mwambao (coastline) movement in Kenya, which resisted the departure of the sultan’s rule in the Coastal Strip. In spite of this sense of sovereignty and coastal cultural cohesion, the sultan agreed to relinquish this territory. He expressed concern about protecting his subjects and their freedoms, particularly their religious freedom, in predominantly Christian Kenya. However, he did

67 Mushin, Conflicts and Harmony, 160
68 ZNA DD1/1
69 BNA FCO 141/5648; FCO 141/5649; ZNA DD1/1
not accept the money that was offered at independence for the coast. He most likely took this action on the advice of Zanzibari Arabs who had encouraged his father to have nothing to do with money from the Coastal Strip. The money was then supposed to be given to the Treasury of Zanzibar, but never was. In a fortuitous twist of fate for the young deposed sultan, this decision benefitted him personally a month later, when he decided to live in exile in Britain after the revolution. He reversed his position, and the money was disbursed to him. Robertson said the money was used to “save HMG the embarrassment of having to look after Jamshid and his family.”

Decolonization and Army Mutinies

Karume and other ASP leaders presented the revolution as anti-colonial, with the perspective that colonialism was still in force, albeit in the form of a dual colonialism of the ZNP/sultan who functioned as puppets of the British imperialists. Even though the revolution occurred just after independence, nothing had changed; the revolution was about the economic disparity and injustice that accompanied colonialism. ASP supporters did not see any positive changes that came with the official departure of the British. Firstly, the British were still there; they occupied major roles in positions of systemic power, including government/civil service, police, business, schools, shipping, and so forth. This was the case in numerous colonies in the months after independence, but it was in only a handful of cases that the situation fomented a rebellion of sorts. Europeans in the police force and military were particularly disturbing to newly independent African states. Famously, in newly independent Congo, the presence of Belgian officers in the military led to an army mutiny that was also one of several factors

71 RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, p. 40 Transcript of Zanzibar Symposium, Rumbold, Robertson, and Hawker The Arab Zanzibaris and the British viewed this money as the sultan’s, not the country’s.
in the quick toppling of Patrice Lumumba’s fledgling government as well as his assassination. Army mutinies in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda occurred within weeks of the Zanzibar Revolution. In fact, the success of the rebels in Zanzibar was a catalyst that led military men in the rest of East Africa to realize their bargaining power. In all three cases, there was a strike because the soldiers wanted better treatment from the independent government. They had assumed independence would bring a higher status and when it did not, they rebelled. In these three countries, the highest ranking officers were also still British. In each of these cases, the situation might have spiraled out of control, had the British not intervened to put down the revolts. In Tanganyika, President Julius Nyerere went into hiding, disappearing for days while Minister of Foreign Affairs Oscar Kambona dealt with the army mutiny. The mutinies had the potential for serious political impact, yet they became almost ignored historical events in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda. However, in Zanzibar, the revolution completely changed the political, social and economic situation of the isles.

In newly independent countries, the relationship with the previous colonial power was significant. In the midst of the Zanzibar Revolution, the British did not intervene to quell the revolt and the rebels protected the British. Belgium agitated the situation in Congo and were ultimately part of Lumumba’s assassination. When the British came to the aid of former colonies in the midst of army mutinies, the governments survived (at least for the next couple years in the case of Uganda). When the former colonial power did not support the government against a revolt, a revolution ensued.

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72 Parsons, Timothy. *The 1964 Army Mutinies and The making of Modern East Africa* 2003

Conclusion

In answer to Anne Trace’s question, Britain is partially responsible for this. British stewardship of the decolonization process was precisely what fostered a socio-political context ripe for revolution. This chapter has shown the ambivalence towards the decolonization process in Zanzibar.

Additionally, the 1971 interviews with Hawker, Robertson, and Rumbold demonstrate how important it was to blame someone else for the Zanzibar Revolution. Their explanations were frequently self-serving, as they attempted to point the finger elsewhere for the results of decolonization. It is possible that Hawker and Robertson might have colluded in order to present a united front in their interviews. In Hawker’s written preliminary comments, he stated that because he was mostly in the Department of Finance, “some of the views I have expressed on political background are made with some diffidence and I am fully aware that Pat Robertson and others may well disagree fundamentally with some of them.”74 Then, in the midst of the interview, when Robertson and Hawker’s responses were surprisingly consistent, Hawker made a perfunctory remark that I believe spoke volumes. He said, “as Pat and I agreed as we were driving along this morning…”75 At that moment, he was talking about the concept of the “Arab State” and how they all did things to please the old sultan, Khalifa. However, this leaves open the possibility that they spoke in the car on the way to the interview, in part, so that they did not speak at cross-purposes with one another.

74 RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, Part 1, p.1
75 RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250, Part 2, p. 6
This chapter begins with an explanation of its title. In an interview with Hamed Hilal, one of the Cuban-trained Umma comrades who joined the revolutionaries in late morning of Sunday 12 January, he told me that they had been warned that some kind of political disturbance might occur in the near future, but they did not know exactly what it might be. He and some other comrades had been at the famous ASP fete the night of 11 January, where Karume and Babu failed to appear. The next morning, he went for tea and heard gunshots. When he heard the initial shots, he thought they were shooting crows! There had been a campaign to get rid of the crows, who were a nuisance, and it had reached the point of shooting them.\(^1\) The crows, apparently, had been introduced to dispose of the corpses of the Zoroastrians in the early 20th century because vultures were not effective.\(^2\) The crows then multiplied and a British colonial administrator began to pay a small fee for each crow egg. Thus, Zanzibari boys began hunting for crows.\(^3\) I am using the metaphor of shooting crows to demonstrate that the revolution was a result of a history in which a colonial attempt to rid the isles of one problem ended up causing another one.\(^4\) Perhaps more telling, a man who became a revolutionary, fought at Malindi Police Post and took charge of the Prisons, did not recognize the first shots of the revolution for what they were. This supports my argument that despite all the warning signs, the surprise of this event was what allowed it to succeed. Additionally,

\(^1\) Interview with Hamed Hilal, 10 September 2013, Zanzibar Town.

\(^2\) Zoroastrians do not bury their dead because they believe corpses are impure and would contaminate the earth. They lay the corpses out in a specific tower to be exposed to the sun eaten by birds of prey.

\(^3\) Thanks to Roman Loimeier for the history of crows in Zanzibar.

\(^4\) In this case, the colonial attempt to decolonize led to the revolution.
the number of people who joined forces when they realized what was happening enabled the chain of events to unfold as it did. This is what separates the story I am going to tell from most of the other narratives on the Zanzibar Revolution. It is not a coherent package, nor a masterminded international conspiracy, nor a Karume-driven David and Goliath story. It was messy and circumstantial, and succeeded in part because enough people were unhappy with the government and the status quo that they either joined in or enabled the overthrow.

In addition to the variety of scholarly narratives that I addressed in the introduction, there are numerous local narratives on the Zanzibar Revolution. As the title of my Introduction indicates, “Kila moja ana mawazo yake” (everyone has his/her own idea). In Zanzibar, however, there are two main opposing narratives: the Afro-Shirazi Party story is that the revolution was precisely enacted under the direction of Abeid Amani Karume with only local weapons, such as machetes, hoes, axes, and rocks; or that it was an invasion from outside, instigated by any number of other odd bedfellows, including President Nyerere of Tanganyika, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Oscar Kambona, possibly the British, the Cubans, and Algerians. Some who consider Okello to be the main leader use his Ugandan origins as evidence that it was an invasion. Though the details of the theory vary widely from person to person, the essence remains that the revolution was non-Zanzibari in its origin and enactment. The elements most widely debated are: were there weapons and/or people brought in from outside to help with the revolution, who were the masterminds behind it, what was Abeid Amani

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5 Interview with Hassan Nassor Moyo, 17 November 2013

6 The invasion theory is widespread and has many iterations. The following are a sampling: Interviews with Sir Mohamed Salim Ali AlRiamy, Hamoud Salim, Ibrahim Mohamed Hussein, Ismail Jussa. Email from Ibrahim Noor Shariff.
Karume’s role and where was he; was there a battle at Malindi Police Post; were the police involved; who all was involved; and who knew and when did they know? These are some of the issues I will address in this chapter.

The Afro-Shirazi Party Revolutionary Story

The ASP version of the overthrow of the government (which is called the revolution in ASP materials) has few details, but is repeated thus:

The necessary preparation for the Revolution proceeded under the leadership and wise guidance of Mzee Abeid Amani Karume. The brave, resolute, and militant Afro-Shirazi youths, comprising a committee of fourteen undertook steps to organize troops which gathered more strength each day. The secrecy with which the necessary preparations were made was so exemplary that it is not proposed to disclose it in this volume. On the 11th January, 1964, the Afro-Shirazi Party held a great Fete at the Party Headquarters at Kiswandui and a dance at the Raha Leo Civic Centre, ostensibly to celebrate the independence, but in fact to dupe the Sultan and his puppet Government so that troops could be safely organized and prepared for action.

While the fete and dance were in progress the committee of fourteen and the revolutionary troops were ready to grab all places of strategic importance held by the Sultan’s Government. The time fixed for attack was 2 am sharp. When the clock struck two the brave Afro-Shirazi members converged at the various key points and by 12 am, thanks to the leadership of the Supreme Revolutionary Commander and redeemer, Mzee Abeid Amani Karume, all these places were easily taken over.

On Sunday the 12th January, morning (1964) the Sultan’s regime was toppled and the reins of Government were in the hands of the Afro-Shirazi Party. The Zanzibar Radio Station at Raha Leo became the headquarters of the new Government.

The Malindi Police was not taken over until Sunday night, after which fighting ceased. On Monday night the new ASP Government was placed on a firm footing.7

Those are all the details provided about the revolution in Afro-Shirazi Party materials.

The 12 January 1965 the *Nationalist* newspaper story from the new capital in Dar es Salaam says:

The Revolution was led and organized by the Afro-Shirazi Party under the direct guidance and inspiration of Sheikh Abeid Amani Karume, President of the People’s Republic of Zanzibar and First Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

President Karume, it can now be disclosed, actively directed the secret “Committee of Fourteen” charged with preparing the revolt against the Sultan.

When the moment for the rising came on the night of January 11, 1964, Abeid Karume was at the central control point of the revolution at Raha Leo radio headquarters. It was not until it had become clear that the Revolution had succeeded that the President left secretly the following morning by canoe, personally to inform President Julius Nyerere and the Secretary General of TANU, Oscar Kambona, of what had happened. For had not TANU helped and supported the Afro-Shirazi Party since its inception?

As soon as his mission was completed, President Karume returned to Zanzibar by a canoe-type mashua, accompanied by Kassim Hanga, Prime Minister-to-be, and Abdulrahman Babu, leader of the Umma Party, designated External Affairs Minister of the People’s Republic. They arrived back in Zanzibar on Monday, January 14, during the consolidation of the People’s victory, and immediately proceeded to establish the administrative and executive authority of the new regime.

Thabit Kombo wrote: (my translation)

Don’t ask me how our *vijana* (youth) planned and where they got their training or even who exactly attacked which location: I don’t know. I heard stories only after we won, some true, some false.

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First of all I would request you to understand clearly that what happened in our islands on that fateful day of 12 January 1964 was not a Revolution at all. It is not fit to call it so by any definition of the word. It was in truth and by all definitions an “INVASION.” A revolution must be planned, led and executed by the people of the country, its nationals. With regard to what happened in Zanzibar the operation was plotted, led and carried out by people from outside the country. And it was they, and not Zanzibaris, who took the lion’s share of the booty. Zanzibaris of all racial or political persuasions have been left much the worse.

This is seen much more clearly when we understand that the commander in chief of the operation was one John Okello and his second-in-command was Injin, and the third was Mfaranyaki. Which one of them had his umbilical cord buried in Zanzibar? \(^\text{10}\)

Harith Ghassany’s 2010 *Kwaheri Ukoloni Kwaheri Uhuru* produces many interviews that indicate that Tanganyikan President Julius Nyerere and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense, Oscar Kambona planned and sponsored the revolution. Various accounts mention men who were trained in the sisal fields of Sakura outside Tanga. This training effort was said to have been organized by TANU labor leader Victor Mkello. This theory also suggests that the Algerian weapons brought into Tanganyika on 9-10 January 1964 for liberation movements in southern Africa were carried to Zanzibar by Tanganyikans and used to take over the armories on 11-12 January. This theory says it was not Mzee Abeid Karume, nor Field Marshall John Okello, nor Comrade Abdulrahman Babu who led the revolution; rather, it was organized and carried out by Tanganyikans. It was, therefore, according to this theory, an invasion. \(^\text{11}\)

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\(^\text{10}\) Fairooz, Aman Thani. *The Truth (To Refute Falsehood)* (unpublished manuscript by ZNP youth leader), 1995.

\(^\text{11}\) Interview with Ismail Jussa; Interview with Sir Mohamed al Riaimi; Interview with Hamoud Salim.
Analytical Division of the Revolution

I argue that what happened on the night of 12 January 1964 was not a party-organized coup, but it succeeded in becoming a party-directed revolution. The 1964 Zanzibar Revolution must be analyzed in two parts: the night of the overthrow of the government and its immediate aftermath, which I will dissect thoroughly, and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (Serikali ya Mapinduzi ya Zanzibar or SMZ), which we can trace to the speech that laid out its ideology and new policy direction on 8 March 1964.\(^{12}\) The SMZ represented a complete social, economic, and political overhaul, changing a constitutional monarchy into a socialist republic. It is important to note that I argue that the political leaders prior to the night of the overthrow were not the ones who led, directed, or planned the overthrow. However, the reason the coup became a full-fledged revolution was because of the popularity of the idea of getting rid of the “sultan’s government” and of Abeid Amani Karume as a leader, with the ASP in power. Among the majority of the people who voted for the ASP in the 1963 elections, numerous groups had discussed amongst themselves how to get rid of the government of the sultan. Among the most significant motivators were political power and better conditions for the workers. A strong argument for this position is the presence of several trade union representatives in the first Revolutionary Council (Baraza la Mapinduzi, or BLM). The trade unions are also the primary – perhaps only – link between the Committee of 14, the Umma Party, and Okello, who ended up playing the most

\(^{12}\) Both the night of the coup as well as the government that followed are commonly referred to as the revolution. In this chapter, I will refer to the overthrow of the government as the coup or overthrow rather than the revolution. Additionally, the speech given on 8 March 1964 at Mnazi Moja (Tanganyika Standard, 10 March 1964 and “Maazimio ya Serikali”, Kweupe, 10 March 1964)
significant roles in the overthrow of the government and the transition to the new
Revolutionary Government.

This chapter will also address the motivations and the planning behind the revolt,
the ASP Fete on 11 January, the actions of Abeid A Karume in relation to the overthrow,
what weapons were used, details of what happened at police headquarters Ziwani and
Police Mobile Force Mtoni, when the Umma comrades joined in and what their roles
were, what was going on at Raha Leo, details about the protracted battle at Malindi
Police Post, the Prison take-over, and the announcement of the first Cabinet of the new
government.

Reasons/motivations behind Revolt

This revolution has been referred to as an African revolution overthrowing Arabs,
a class revolution, the proletariat overthrowing the bourgeoisie, and it has been viewed
as a socialist, and even communist, revolution. There were racial elements to the
motivations behind this revolution and there were class concerns about workers and
workers’ rights. The overthrow of the government became a socialist revolution, though
it was not a communist-sponsored event. This revolution was also an anti-colonial, anti-
imperialist action; it was about getting rid of the sultan, a symbol of foreign power. In a
press release issued on 11 February 1964, the new government referred to the sultan
and the Al Busaidi dynasty as a “constant reminder of human enslavement of the
workers and peasants, who participated in the armed uprising.”\textsuperscript{13} The reference to
slavery highlights the issue of race, and the reference to workers and peasants
elucidates the element of class. For those who took part in the overthrow, it was about

\textsuperscript{13} ZNA AK 10/ 9 Press communique: “Revolution was Inevitable in Zanzibar” by Information office,
People’s Republic of Zanzibar, 11 February 1964.
political power for a party that represented *wanyonge* (the oppressed). It was about *haki* (justice), equity, and fairness for the workers and peasants. The words *haki, wanyonge, bepari* (capitalism), and *kibeberu* (imperial/ism) appear in intelligence reports prior to the revolution and in government newspapers, official communications, and speeches immediately after the revolution and for several years thereafter.

In interviews I conducted, both Hassan Nassor Moyo, Assistant Minister of Labor, Roads, Power, and Light in the first BLM, and Salim Rashid, Secretary of the first BLM, spoke of the revolution in as a political struggle to have a party in power that represented the majority of Zanzibaris. This idea is consistent with intelligence reports from November 1962, in which a ZPFL pamphlet distributed at an East African leaders’ conference says, “such are the torments of Zanzibar which at one time the workers and peasants will be compelled to stage a revolution and an armed one if need it be. A time when they would hardly be in a position to tolerate the consequences of oppression, suppression, and exploitation. Thus a war of some kind is sure to take place.” Hassan Nassor Moyo proudly confirmed this as something he would have said back then.⁴ Moyo explained that the goal of a political party is to be in power, and if it cannot achieve power by legal means, it must prepare to do so through violent means. He said planning and preparation for this revolution had been in the works for years, since 1962 when it became clear that the ASP would not be able to win an election under the existing system. Rashid was careful to minimize the role of Umma in the planning of the revolution, but was clear that they joined it because they believed that the previous government had not worked for the best interests of the people. Another Umma Party

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⁴ ZNA AK 31/15 Intelligence Report: District Intelligence Committee Meeting on 21st November 1962; Interview with Hassan Nassor Moyo, 17 November 2013, Fuoni, Zanzibar.
member, Abdulrazak Musa Simai, “Kwacha” said that Babu’s intention, in 1963, of asking for six safe seats, was to have representatives in those seats who were looking out for the workers.\textsuperscript{15} Ali Muhsin rejected this proposal and it was then that Babu and Hizbu went their separate ways. After that, Babu and Ali Muhsin were both adamantly opposed to the other, and some claim that Ali Muhsin was more concerned about Babu than about the ASP, which is why he might have missed warning signs that he should have seen.

Another important point concerning the reasons for revolution which corroborates the exploitation angle is halafu unajua siasa ya kikomunisti inazaliwa na ubepari (politics of communism are born in capitalism). Hamid Ameir pointed out that everywhere in the world where revolution had occurred, there were reasons for it. The Russians, the Americans, they had reasons for their revolutions. The point this former member of the Committee of 14 was trying to make is that many who have thrived due to their own revolutions have denigrated the Zanzibar Revolution. In other words, the situation for low-level workers was bad enough to deserve this outcome.\textsuperscript{16}

A focus on race has been dominant due to the vitriolic discourse during the wakati wa siasa. There is no doubt that the African Zanzibaris felt as if they were wanyonge, and they wanted to be treated more fairly and given jobs and education. Critics of the argument that the revolution was about slavery claim that slavery ended seventy years before the revolution. Slavery ended, but the oppression did not. There are frequently told stories about the days when Arabs would cut open a pregnant

\textsuperscript{15} Interview with Abdulrazak Musa Simai, "Kwacha", 25 November 2013.

\textsuperscript{16} Interview with Hamid Ameir, November 2013.
African woman if an Arab wanted to see a baby growing inside or would tell an African to climb a tree and then shoot them dead to show someone else how it looks when someone dies. These stories are commonly heard in Zanzibar and have been for years. The elders who told them to me again in 2013 said they never experienced these particular atrocities but heard about them occurring during slavery, perhaps during Seyyid Bargash’s era. They said it never happened during Seyyid Khalifa’s reign. But the stories continued to be told; the injustice of the colonial system persisted enough that the stories had traction and power. The slavery trope elicits both physical and emotional violence done to Africans and migrants, while those who professed the cosmopolitan civilization prided their culture on a lack of physical violence. Africans intended to expose the hypocrisy of those who pride themselves on their ustaarabu by the repetition of these stories, and the level of violence they evoke. Furthermore, these stories provided justification for the violence of the revolution.

**Justice, Oppression, Colonialism**

The revolutionaries with whom I spoke all explained that the revolution was necessary for reasons of haki; they had been treated unfairly. Race may have been the dividing line, but the revolution was not conducted against Arabs, per se, but rather against those in power and their systemic treatment of the wanyonge, who were mostly of African descent. While British and Zanzibaris of Arab or Indian descent had better schools and positions of power, the Zanzibaris of African descent were looked down upon and not given the same opportunities as the others. The final elections seemed to cheat them out of having their own party – the party that received the majority of the

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17 Interview with Asha Abeid Suba and Bwana Mgao Kombo, Mwera, 29 October 2013.
votes – in power. The ASP wanted to get rid of the colonialism they felt they were still subject to. The removal of the sultan was an important element of the revolution. However, rather than view the sultan as solely a symbol of Arab colonialism, documents show that the sultan was viewed as a puppet of the British, and therefore a symbol of British colonialism. The sultan was referred to as a puppet and the Hizbu government was called “colonial stooges” of the imperialists.\textsuperscript{18}

The first article in the Zanzibar Government gazette, \textit{Kweupe}, on 18 January 1964 claims that the revolution occurred in order to get rid of the \textit{kibeberu} (imperial) government and \textit{kutengeneza hali za wanyonge} (to fix the conditions of the oppressed). Karume continued to give speeches highlighting that the revolution removed \textit{ukoloni} and rule of the elites. He said the purpose was “\textit{tuondoe unyonge wa milele, pili tuondoe Usultani nchini, na tatu tuondoe Serikali ya Kitajiri},” (We get rid of oppression forever, second we get rid of the sultanate in this country, and third we get rid of Government of the Wealthy). \textsuperscript{19}

An important analytical element, when discussing motivations for this revolution, is that there were many disparate forces involved in what became the Zanzibar Revolution. It is not accurate to argue that any one of these elements was the guiding reason behind the revolution. It was more like a mosaic, or a series of vignettes, that created a bigger picture that seemed as if it had far greater clarity than each of the smaller pieces. \textit{Vibarua} and uneducated, low-level civil servants initiated the overthrow

\textsuperscript{18} ZNA AK 17/10 District Administration: revolution: “Repoti ya Maendeleo Yaliotokea Baada Ya Mapinduzi”; ZNA AK 10/9 Press communique: 6 March 1964 upon British High Commissioner presenting his credentials

\textsuperscript{19} ZNA BA 68/16 Hotuba ya Mheshimiwa Makamo wa Kwanza wa Rais (20 Oktoba 1965) The translation is the author’s.
of the government and their motivations differed slightly from the political leaders who took over the government. The ASP leaders did not organize the overthrow of the government, but they did take over and form the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. They shaped the revolution as a political, social, and economic movement, whereas other men actually overthrew the previous government.

**Laborers**

There was a proletariat element to the revolution, which was visible through the trade union leaders on the Baraza la Mapinduzi. Additionally, Umma Party trade union leader, Ahmed Badawy Qulletein, was the first Umma Party member who knew about the revolution. He was the immediate connection between the ASP and the Umma comrades who joined the revolution on Sunday morning. Babu was in Dar es Salaam, and it was Qulletein who called upon some of the Umma youth to assist with the Sunday morning revolutionary effort.  

**Planning: Various Groups Meeting**

The CIA report from 1966 claimed that the uprising stemmed from the ASP fete on 11 January. There is much evidence to support the argument that it was not merely an organic output of the fete, though it was also not as well orchestrated in advance as ASP materials claim. There were so many groups discussing the possibility for revolution that it has been a daunting task to sort out who met with whom, where, and when. I will outline various groups who were meeting and show some of the threads between these groups. One revolutionary told me that some of these meetings took place in hiding. Other meetings must have taken place among cohorts, perhaps in

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20 Interview with Amour Dugheish, 17 September 2013, Dar es Salaam
homes, or personal “baraza” type gatherings. There are sources who claim that the Committee of 14 functioned as the central leadership, while each region had their own leadership.

**Committee of 14**

There is a great deal of skepticism surrounding the Committee of Fourteen. Zanzibaris commonly point to the famous photo of this group, which generally has no more than twelve people in it – one of whom is Okello – who was rejected and kicked out of the country and the revolution story. (See Chapter 5 on Okello and Figure 4-2 for the photo). The incredulity that this group planned and plotted a successful revolution also revolves around the lack of education and military training amongst the group. Ramadhan Haji Faki proudly told me that there were no *wasomi* (elites) in the group; he was the only one who had completed eighth grade. He had spent twelve years in the police and received a handsome pension of 4360 shillings; he was the only wealthy member of the Youth League. Others pointed out that people like Pili Khamis had been a bike *fundi* (repairman) and Yusuf Himid went from being a driver for the Public Works Department to a Brigadier in the new Army. This made it very hard for the well-educated elite of ZNP and the British to believe that these men planned and executed a revolution against the constitutional monarchy established by the British. The very coastal exceptionalism that frustrated African Zanzibaris to the point of revolution blinded the Hizbu and British in power to the potential capability of their political adversaries.

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21 Interview with Ramadhan Haji Faki, 27 August 2013, Zanzibar Town.
The last two living members of the Committee of 14 are Ramadhan Haji Faki and Hamid Ameir; I interviewed both of them. Ameir claims that the Committee of 14 included the following people: Ramadhan Haji Faki, Seif Bakari, Abdalla Said Natepe, Khamis Darwesh, Pili Khamis, Yussuf Himid, Said wa Shoto, Said Idi Buvuai, Hafidh Suleiman, Mohamed Abdalla Ameir (called Kaujore), Mohamed Mfaranyaki, Khamis Hemed Nyuni, and himself. The fourteenth person, he says, was Edington Kisasi, who the Committee hid because of his role in the police. Hamid Ameir said that John Okello took his place (in photos and discussions) as a diversion to protect Edington Kisasi who became Commissioner of Police after the revolution. Whether or not this committee met as one unit prior to the revolution remains speculative. But it is clear that many of these members met with one another to discuss a plan to attack police headquarters at Ziwani and Mtoni. I will address details of that plan below.

There is sufficient evidence that Edington Kisasi was part of the planning, minimal though it may have been. Both Hamid Ameir and Ramadhan Haji Faki claim that Kisasi played a key role in the revolution. Ameir said that Kisasi told them who the ASP supporters were so that they could put those men on sentry duty that night and would therefore face no resistance.22 Several other sources indicate that the keys to the armory were handed over at Ziwani, though not at Mtoni.23 Kisasi was in a position of high command at Ziwani, and could have helped make those arrangements. Additionally, intelligence reports from July-August 1963 indicate that Edington Kisasi


23 Interviews with Anonymous, 30 October 2013; Said Mohamed Seif, 30 September; and Corporal Mgeni Khalifa Mbaye (from PMF Mtoni), 13 September 2013, Zanzibar.
supplied police information to Babu.\textsuperscript{24} A British secret cable dated 17 January 1964 also indicates that former Police Commissioner Sullivan reported that Kisasi was the only ASP-affiliated police officer who did not reply to the summons after news of the revolt, and further that Babu praised Kisasi for his excellent work.\textsuperscript{25}

Zanzibaris who are skeptical of the Committee of 14 tend to say that the group never met before the revolution; instead they became a group in the midst of the revolt. Hamid Ameir claims that they \textit{did} meet prior to the revolution. He says the first place they met was at Mzee Ali Kombo’s house in Tumbatu. Kombo was the Chairman of the Dhow Captains. He claims they met in various places, including the ASP house by the electric company in Miti Ulaya, Unguja. Several other sources corroborate the ASP house as a meeting place for revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{26} The collaboration was essential to the success of the revolt, Hamid Ameir pointed out. He said, “No one can say ‘I overthrew,’ it was ‘we’ overthrew the government; this was not something that could have been done by one person.”\textsuperscript{27} The success of the revolution included the right combination of collaboration and secrecy. It had to be led by a very small group so that it could remain a surprise.

\textbf{Other Overlapping Groups}

There were other groups who met as well. In 1963, Juma Maulid, better known as Jimmy Ringo, formed a group who wanted to overthrow the government. This group included Yussuf Himid, Ibrahim Makungu, Said Idi Bavuai, Said Wa Shoto, Khamis

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\textsuperscript{24} BNA CO 822/3063 Zanzibar intelligence summaries (1963)\\
\textsuperscript{25} BNA PREM 11/5207, Inward telegram, Commonwealth Relations Office, 17 January 1964\\
\textsuperscript{26} One source even claims that some Umma members met with Committee of 14 and Karume prior to the revolution. Interview with Anonymous, 28 August 2013.\\
\textsuperscript{27} Interview with Hamid Ameir
\end{flushright}
Darwesh, Jamal Ramadhan Nasibu, Muhina Seifu, Juma Abdulla Saadala, Shamis, Ali Lumumba, and Jaha Ubwa.\textsuperscript{28} Ali Omar Lumumba and Jaha Ubwa were close to Okello.\textsuperscript{29} Okello credits Lumumba with connecting him to Seif Bakari and Jaha Ubwa became Okello’s secretary.\textsuperscript{30} Ahmed Khamis was asked to take part in these discussions, which were about mobilization; each person was to mobilize his own people who would then join together. The aim was to overthrow the sultan who had been in power too long. One of the reasons given was that the sultan captured women; if they bore a son, they could leave, but the son had to stay as part of the sultan’s household.\textsuperscript{31} This group of people were African laborers. They were not police or jeshi and they all had their own small jobs. Khamis was a carpenter. But the group got too big. Said wa Shoto mentioned the plan in mashamba (farms), and too many people were hearing about it. It is important to note that in this group there was no discussion of men being brought in from the mainland, and they were not talking with the political leaders. They also were not being trained in the use of guns or other sophisticated weapons.\textsuperscript{32}

**Afro Shirazi Youth League**

Simultaneously, a group of ASP Youth Leaguers were meeting. This was the group under Seif Bakari. At first, the two groups did not know that the other was also meeting. Ahmed Khamis was not sure at what point they joined forces, but Yussuf

\textsuperscript{28} Interview with Ahmed Khamis, Zanzibar Town, 14 September and 24 October 2013.

\textsuperscript{29} Interview with Hamid Ameir, Zanzibar Town, 25 November 2013.

\textsuperscript{30} Okello, *Revolution in Zanzibar*, 100.

\textsuperscript{31} Interview with Ahmed Khamis, Zanzibar Town, 24 October 2013

\textsuperscript{32} Interview with Ahmed Khamis, Zanzibar Town, 14 September 2013
Himid, Said Idi Bavuai, and Said Wa Shoto were all members of what became the Committee of 14 along with Seif Bakari and other ASP Youth League members. Finally, Okello and some of his cohort joined to make up the “leadership” of the overthrow. In his book, Okello mentions Ali Lumumba, Seif Bakari, and Ramadhan Haji. The leaders Okello mentions in his account also include Mohamed Abdalla Mfaranyaki (from Songea, Tanganyika), Absolom Amoi Ingen (Mluhya from Kenya), Mzee Kenya, Said Idi Bavuai, Matias Simba, Mzee Mohamed, Seif Bakari, and Ramadhan Haji Faki. What we begin to see is the Venn diagram of people meeting to discuss overthrowing the government, with varying degrees of specificity of planning. (see Figure D-1) The most significant pieces of the planning were mobilization of men and collection of homegrown weapons.

Among those who showed up that night and went to Bomani and Mtoni were men who had met in three groups organized by some of the ASP Youth League. The three groups were from the areas of: Ghana (central Unguja), Kilombero (north B Unguja), and Mijini (wilaya magharibi Unguja). One of the men who attended these meetings in the Ghana area and went to Bomani on the night of the revolution said that Mzee Kenya and John Okello were the leaders of the meetings. Okello was the one who outlined the plan, which was about bringing *silaha* (weapons); Yussuf Himid was going to drive them (in a PWD vehicle) to a location where they could be used for the overthrow. That was the extent of the ASP YL plan. They met out in the bush prior to the night of the revolution, but they were not given instructions on how to fire guns until after the
government had been overthrown. This informant went to Ziwani with 56 others from his meetings in Ghana.\textsuperscript{33} They met seven times prior to the revolution.

**The Plan**

The plan, insofar as it existed, was to bring weapons and youth into town unnoticed. Additionally, they wanted to make sure the sentries were ASP supporters, and needed to find someone to hand over the key to the armory. \textit{Bas}; that was the extent of it. The weapons they brought were \textit{pangas} (machetes), hoes, bows and arrows, and \textit{fimbos} (sticks). The youth were Afro Shirazi youth and other \textit{vibarua} whose physical presence would strengthen the effort. In reference to the overthrow of the government: there was no single mastermind. There was no military training. There was no outside assistance. There was also no advance leadership by concurrent political leaders, from the ASP or the Umma Party.

There was luck, circumstances that were ripe for action, and the Umma Party, whose youth had military and revolutionary training, was interested.

There was also discontent and there were enough people who had discussed revolution in their own homes and \textit{barazas} to jump on board when the opportunity presented itself. This may be part of the reason the new government was so poorly run: there was very little planning and preparation for new leadership; there was simply sufficient discontent with the old leadership. Overthrowing and running a government require vastly different skill sets. This chapter is solely about the overthrow of the sultan and the Hizbu government.

\textsuperscript{33} Interview with Said Mohamed Seif, Ndagaa, Unguja, 30 September 2013
Non-starters: Hanga’s Plan and Babu’s Plan

There are two additional groups who were planning for a revolution, but they had different timing. Abdalla Kassim Hanga was also planning his own revolution, and it is widely speculated that he was discussing his plans with Oscar Kambona and had some support from mainland Tanganyika. There had been posturing about getting Tanganyikan support for the ASP for a few years prior to independence. In Pemba in November 1962, ASP followers remarked on how poorly they would be treated by ZNP/ZPPP when internal self-government was established. They claimed that whether or not they won the next election, they would run the country, as “forces” would come from Tanganyika to help them force the sultan to abdicate and enable ASP to rise to power. This plan, however, is not the one that came to fruition on the night of the revolution. It was planned for a week after the revolution. Okello did not trust political leaders to be able to take the necessary action, so he pre-empted the other plan with his own. Babu also had plans for a revolution, but the CIA thought he had set aside his plans for the time being. When they raided the Umma Party offices on 4 January 1964, the British found documents outlining a plan that was similar to what happened, but CIA documents conjecture that he had postponed plans when China realized Babu needed more African support.

In summary, many people contemplated revolution. News reports from early 1964 mentioned Babu’s plan and Hanga’s plan, in addition to Okello’s, and I spoke with

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34 See Appendix C, Glossary of Key Personalities for brief biographical information on Hanga and Babu.

35 ZNA AK 13/11 Coffee shop gossip monthly report November 1962

36 Keith Kyle (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uPi3vh2hGE, accessed most recently 22 May 2015); Keith Kyle, Tonight Show, BBC 7 February 1964, BFI

37 U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 1966; p. 50
several men who were part of early discussions about revolution. Even if those plans were nothing more than parlor talk and never would have gone anywhere, the fact that people still claim them today, in spite of the series of events that followed, shows the deep dissatisfaction with the ZNP/ZPPP government and the sultan. To claim you were part of planning the revolution back in the late 1960s may have been self-serving, insofar as it demonstrated that you wanted a job in the government. Today, however, one Member of the House of Representatives points out, “they don’t want to take credit because there is nothing to take credit about in the revolution.”

Thus, the claims about being involved in the planning act as strong substantiation of other existing evidence, since there is no current benefit to those who make such assertions.

Who Were the “Revolutionaries”?  

The rebels who overthrew the government were people who lived in Zanzibar. Members of the ASP Youth League recruited most of the men who went to the armories. Many were of mainland origin or parentage, but they had lived and worked in Zanzibar for some time. They had not been brought over from the mainland for the purpose of fighting the revolution; they had been living and working there. This mixed identity lends itself to both antithetical interpretations: those who claim the revolution was carried out by mainlanders are partly correct and those who say it was Zanzibaris who overthrew the government are also partly correct. There were reports in the intelligence files that noted that Tanganyika sent men from the mainland to “support the ASP in everything the party does”. These rumors begin to find their way into

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38 Interview with Ismail Jussa, 31 August 2013, Zanzibar Town.

39 ZNA AK 13/11 Coffee shop gossip monthly report, October 1962, p. 3
intelligence reports from late 1962 onward. Additionally, it was reported in September 1963 that “most of the Tanganyika hooligans who illegally entered the Protectorate before the elections have returned to Tanganyika soon after the ASP failed to form a Government.”\textsuperscript{40} Later in this section, I will address more specifics about some of these Tanganyikan men who were ASP supporters.

Evidence of the identity of some of the men who entered the armories that night does exist, however. In the Zanzibar National Archives, I found lists of men who fought on the night of 11-12 January who needed housing (see Appendix E). Prior to the formation of an actual army, which was named Jeshi la Ukombozi (JLU), those who fought to take weapons from the armories and overthrow the government were called Freedom Military Force or FMF. Although no one in Zanzibar with whom I spoke remembers this name, it is the name that was used in the regional newspapers, \textit{Daily Nation}, \textit{Tanganyika Standard}, and \textit{Uganda Argus}, and it is the name that appears in several archival documents. The list of revolutionaries called FMF who needed housing has 114 names. It demonstrates that these men were expecting at least housing as payment for their actions. Hamid Ameir said revolutionaries were not promised anything, whereas Said Mohamed Seif said they were promised a shamba and jobs; they received shambas, but not jobs.\textsuperscript{41} The names are mostly names common in Zanzibar, though some appear to be Makonde or Mozambiquan in origin. I was only able to use this valuable resource to corroborate individuals with one revolutionary, but it is my hope that another scholar will be able to conduct a deeper analysis of this list.

\textsuperscript{40} ZNA AK 9/29 District Intelligence: sub-committee Zanzibar: 30 August-13 September 1963

\textsuperscript{41} Interview with Said Mohamed Seif, 30 September 2013; Interview with Hamid Ameir, 25 November 2013.
Some of the men I interviewed who were at Ziwani on the night of the overthrow say that most men who went with them were workers in Zanzibar, but not of Zanzibari origin or parentage. Zanzibaris, they said, would have given away the plan. Revolutionaries from the Ghana group were: Wamakonde, waNdengereko, WaYao, and those from Mtwara, but they had lived and worked in Zanzibar. They also mentioned specific people in the police force who helped out, including Thomas Tete and Absolom Ingen, among others.\(^{42}\) I will discuss their roles below.

Finally, another group of revolutionaries, most of whom did not know in advance about the specific plan that was to be enacted on 11-12 January, joined in on the morning of 12 January. Although they were not involved in planning this event, this group of Comrades significantly impacted the course of events. This last group of revolutionaries was the Umma Party’s youth, eighteen of whom had been trained in Cuba in 1962. These were the young men who showed the other ASP revolutionaries how to shoot guns. These men did not go to Ziwani or Mtoni to steal weapons, but they enabled other revolutionaries to use their weapons. They were part of the protracted battle for the Malindi Police Station, assisted in the take-over of the prisons, went house to house to make it clear who was in charge, and escorted Okello out of Zanzibar when Karume said it was his time to go. In terms of ethnic and political identity, these Umma Youth had been members of the ZNP, were primarily of Arab and Comorian descent, and were leftist followers of Babu. They left the ZNP with Babu in 1963, and joined him in the new Umma Party. They formed the beret-wearing group of rebels who said, “\textit{Venceremos!}” They were mistaken for Cubans, adding to the Western fear that the

\(^{42}\) Interview with Said Mohamed Seif; Okello, \textit{Revolution}
revolution was a Communist plot (see Figure 3-1). Although they comprise the few literate revolutionaries, only one of them is writing his memoirs, and they do not tend to give interviews. I spoke with three of the Umma Youth who were in Cuba for training, Hamed Hilal, Shaaban Salim, and Amour Dughesh. The other Umma Youth who went to Cuba for training were: Salim Saleh, Suleiman Sisi (Suleiman Mohamed), Ali Mshangama, Abdulrahim Mahmoud ("Handsome"), Mohamed Issa, Ali Abdallah, Abdul Gidem, Ali Amran, Hashil Seif Hashil, Ali Yussuf Balawy, Haji Othman, Said Seif, Abdalla Juma, Ahmed Bajabir (Toni).
Figure 3-1. Umma Youth during the Revolution, photo courtesy of Humoud Dugheish.
Mainlanders Who May Have Joined the Fight

In reference to the Tanganyikans who were brought over to support the ASP, I spoke with Mzee Mohamed Mkawa of Tanga, upon recommendation from Harith Ghassany. Mkawa provided far more evidence that he brought men over earlier, as the intelligence reports suggest. There is less evidence that these men came over to play a role in the revolution itself. Mkawa said he brought 49 men in total, but some went back to the mainland after the voting, some went back and forth between the mainland and the isles, and some stayed by choice. He said that Victor Mkello chose the men and brought them to Mkawa. When asked about their identities, he claimed there were too many to remember their names. Nyerere and Kambona gave him orders about what he was to do, and he got money from Nyerere to do it. He said the men got money for food but he did not recall how much; he simply handed over an envelope that Hasnu Makame had given to him. He explained how he taught them coastal Kiswahili so their accents would not be noticeable, and that the men lived with local families. He could not tell me how far in advance of the revolution they came to Zanzibar, just that he knew of the date, 12 January. He was quite clear that he was the only living person who can tell this story; all the others have since died. He claimed that the men he helped bring over aided with the revolution, but that they were not trained in the use of guns, and there were no weapons brought over from the mainland. They used machetes, sticks, rocks, bows and arrows, and baruti (gunpowder, explosives) to get into Mtoni. They knew that some police would help them and teach them how to use guns so, according to
Mkwawa, there was no training in the use of weapons or weapons brought over from the mainland.  

In a similar fashion, I found insufficient evidence to corroborate recent claims that Victor Mkello trained men from Tanga and then brought them to Zanzibar to help fight the revolution. It seems likely that he brought men to Mkwawa to prepare for voting and other ASP support in 1962 and 1963, but I have not seen evidence for any military or gun-use training. I was grateful for the assistance of both Harith Ghassany and Mohamed Said for the interviews I conducted in Tanga. However, I was told that Victor Mkello’s wife sat in on the interview between Ghassany and Mkello that took place at Mkello’s deathbed; this was the interview in which Mkello explained his role in training men in Sakura and Tanga, and then sending them over for the Zanzibar Revolution. Upon my arrival to interview the widow of Victor Mkello, she informed me that she knew nothing about the Zanzibar Revolution. She said she had not been part of the discussion between Ghassany and Mkello, she had never been to Zanzibar, and she could not tell me anything about that episode.  

**African Nationalism and Competing Ideas of Legitimacy**

In *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania*, Brennan demonstrates how African nationalism, as defined by TANU, affirms European trope of geographical determinism of continents. He explains that in the 1940s, the moniker “African” was a challenge to the concept of “indigenous” people who had rights as firstcomers. In Zanzibar as well, “African” and “indigenous” were part of the discourse of rights,

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43 Interview the Mzee Mohamed Omar Mkwawa, Tanga, 29 August 2013.

44 Interview with Wife of Victor Mkello, 30 August 2013.

45 Brennan, *Taifa*, 18, 118 (Both developed in opposition to “native”, due to its perjorative usage.)
although in Zanzibar, it was the Shirazis who called themselves indigenous. There were three competing discourses of legitimacy at play in the Zanzibar revolution. First was the ASP’s African nationalism, as influenced by TANU, following the continental rationale, mentioned above. This position included majority rule as the basis for political rights. The second treatise was Zanzibari nationalism, with a view of Zanzibar as a multi-racial Islamic society and a culturally unique territory. This discourse also included the elite intelligentsia who focused on the idea of *ustaarabu* (civilization), coastal exceptionalism, and cosmopolitanism. The Shirazi in all parties, but particularly in the ZPPP, argued that they were the most indigenous to the islands, and laid claims to political rights as firstcomers.

The argument that Nyerere sponsored and directed the Zanzibar revolution has its conceptual origins in the construct of African nationalism as a geographical phenomenon. The *vibarua* who took the weapons were indeed influenced by this idea of African nationalism and majority rule as espoused by TANU. From that perspective, the islands were already seen as part of the mainland.

**Karume’s Identity and Role in the Revolution**

Discussions about Abeid Karume and his role in the Zanzibar Revolution range from questions about his parentage to what he knew, when he knew it, and what he did as part of the revolution. Though he lived in Zanzibar from infancy, there continue to be

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46 Lofchie, *Background*, 198. Along with this concept of Islam as a unifying principle, this Zanzibari nationalism was also infused with the idea of *ustaarabu* (civilization, see Chapter One), as opposed to *ushenzi* (barbarity). These ideas had a history of sowing racial division. See Glassman, *War of Words.*

47 See Glassman, *War of Words*, Chapter 3 for the creation of this narrative.

48 There is literature that addresses these questions of indegeneity, and the history of the use of identifiers like Shirazi and Swahili. See Fair, Spear, Glassman, Middleton.
two stories about his arrival in Zanzibar: one states that he was born in Mwera, Unguja or carried on his mother’s back as an *mchanga* (newborn baby). His parentage is much discussed as it is commonly claimed his parents were from Malawi. Others said his father was from Malawi and his mother from Rwanda. They came as slaves, but Karume was born in Mwera. Still others say that his father was not known; Karume arrived with his mother from Rwanda or Malawi. Though some say he had to have been vetted before he ran for office, so his Zanzibari birth must have checked out, there remains the lingering story that he was brought to Zanzibar on his mother’s back as an infant. No one knows for sure, and it does not seem to matter to many people who point out that he accepted and acted in accordance with Zanzibari culture and was therefore Zanzibari. Karume, therefore, embodies the essence of the identity questions regarding key indicators of being Zanzibari. They are: is it your parents being Zanzibari that make you a Zanzibari? Is it being born in Zanzibar that identifies you as Zanzibari? Or is it language and culture that make you Zanzibari? If the latter are most important, as identity markers, which aspects of culture matter most? Religion? These questions are all used to make arguments about someone being a Zanzibari versus a mainlander or an Arab.

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49 Interview with Asha Abeid Suba, Mwera, 29 October 2013.

50 Interview with Jamal Adi, 1 August 2013; BNA DO 185/59 Forsyth-Thompson report that Banda was taking care of Karume children because his grandparents were from Nyasa.

51 Interview with Ali Msuko, 12 September 2013.

52 Interview with Denge Makame Mkali, Mwera, 14 January 2014 in which he says the elders from Mwera confirmed he was born there.


The story about how Karume joined the merchant seamen as a very young man also exemplifies polemical aspects of Zanzibari history and culture. Karume's mother was a slave to an Arab man who lived in Mwera. This man gave her to an Arab friend in marriage. This friend was a businessman from Muscat who travelled to Zanzibar for business. Karume's mother lived in his house and Karume went to live with and be raised by the Arab man who lived in Mwera. One day when Karume was in fourth or fifth grade, he was playing with an Arab boy; he accidentally cut the boy while playing. The boy bled and Karume ran away because he knew he would be punished severely for wounding the Arab boy. He ended up living with his uncle in Malindi for a while where he sold things to the ships that came in to port. One day, he was taken aboard a ship and given a job on the boat. Thus he began his career as a seaman, having had very little formal education. He was still in primary school at the time.\(^{55}\)

This story embodies several tropes in Zanzibari narratives: slavery and the marriage and lopsided relationship between an Arab man and an African woman. It shows an African boy afraid of getting in serious trouble for an accident done to an Arab boy. There are also interesting parallels with Okello’s loss of his parents, concern about mistreatment from a guardian figure, and running away. Karume and Okello were both uneducated, plucky young men who had to make it on their own early in life due to their loss of their fathers.

Karume’s role in the revolution is much discussed. As stated above, the ASP line has always been that the revolution was Karume’s from the beginning. Research clearly

\(^{55}\) Interview with Denge Makame Mkali, 14 January 2014, Mwera.
demonstrates that that was not the case. The leaders of the ASP did not know about the plans for revolution, as evidenced by Thabit Kombo’s statement, as well as Okello’s account and the Committee of 14 members, which was corroborated to me by Hassan Nassor Moyo and others.\footnote{Hassan Nassor Moyo was referring to himself, in particular, not knowing in advance. He subscribed to the theory that Karume directed people to be part of the revolution. Interview Hassan Nassor Moyo,} A few ASP leaders were told at the last minute; Karume was one of them but they were not involved in the planning. Okello claims that they did not tell Karume in advance for his own protection. Karume was told on Friday that there were plans to overthrow the government the following night. On Saturday morning, he went to Mr. Bott of Special Branch and told him that some \textit{fujo} (disturbance) was going to happen that night but it was not he and the ASP who were leading it.\footnote{BNA DO 185/59, Revolution Zanzibar; Misra report, Smithyman report, p.7, Sullivan report, p.5.} Several reports describe Karume as being absent during the first part of the revolution, and then being upset by the looting and killing and “obviously completely bewildered”.\footnote{BNA DO 185/59 Revolution Zanzibar; Misra report, p.3.} When I asked some informants why Karume would reveal information about his own revolution, if indeed it were his, one Zanzibari author told me that Karume told Special Branch about the unrest so that the police would get out of their barracks and be on patrol which would make it easier to attack the barracks.\footnote{Ali Shaaban Juma, Zanzibar Town, 25 July 2013.} Others, including most of the British police and intelligence reports, indicate that Karume was not the revolutionary type; he was moderate and not prone to this kind of action. Informing on the disturbance was a means of protecting himself in the event that it did not work.\footnote{BNA DO 185/59} British journalist Keith Kyle reported the same in his news report on 7 February 1964, calling Karume “a
cautious man” and claiming that it was unlikely that he was involved in any of the plots to overthrow the government.\textsuperscript{61}

In the aftermath, of course Karume claimed to have led the revolution, but the evidence suggests that he also got involved as soon as it was clear that the rebels had power. He may have taken this action at the urging of Julius Nyerere as well as other Zanzibari leaders. Karume went to Dar es Salaam on the night of the revolution to consult with Nyerere. He returned on Monday, once the transition of power was complete. During his absence, on Sunday 12 January, Okello requested Karume return to Zanzibar immediately in order to lead the new government.\textsuperscript{62}

Several informants who were members of the Umma Party discussed with me their experiences on the nights of Friday and Saturday 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} January in Dar es Salaam, with Babu.\textsuperscript{63} Babu had fled to Dar es Salaam after the ZNP/ZPPP government had raided the Umma Party offices and banned the party. There was a group of Umma Party members with Babu, including Adam Shafi, Shaaban Salim, BiUbwa Amour Zahor, Ali Mafudh, and ASP member Saleh Saadalla. Karume came over on Saturday night 11\textsuperscript{th} January, and they all met at the Atiens Hotel, run by a Greek man. Karume had traveled to Dar to get advice from Nyerere.\textsuperscript{64} Karume was clearly hesitant, and not convinced that the action taken would result in an effective change of power. In fact, one informant said that Karume had not told his wife, BiFatma, and that she was upset. BiFatma Karume had confided in a friend, saying that her husband had put her in

\textsuperscript{61} Keith Kyle, Tonight Show, BBC 7 February 1964

\textsuperscript{62} BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Part IV The Middle East and Africa, ME/1452/11

\textsuperscript{63} Interview with Hamed Hilali; Interview with Biubwa Amour Zahor; Interview with Adam Shafi.

\textsuperscript{64} Interview with Adam Shafi.
jeopardy by running away to Dar on the night of the revolution without even telling her about it.\textsuperscript{65} Although some Zanzibaris will say they saw Karume in Zanzibar on Saturday night and Sunday, even the official ASP story from 1965 admits that he left for Dar es Salaam and returned on Monday (see above, \textit{Nationalist}).

The story about Babu and Karume’s return to the island provides more fodder for conspiracy theorists. Babu, Karume, and Ali Mafudh returned to Zanzibar on Sunday evening on a glass-bottom boat run by Misha Finsilber, an Israeli who had been an ASP supporter.\textsuperscript{66} In 1963, Finsilber had reportedly recommended with the US Consul to support the ASP rather than the Egypt-backed ZNP.\textsuperscript{67} Contemporaneous documents report that Misha Finsilber told Audrey Smithyman that he had been ferrying people to and from Zanzibar for a long time, and that he took leaders ready for revolution over on Saturday night.\textsuperscript{68} This confirms the idea mentioned in the previous section that mainlanders were brought over to vote. Further, Finsilber’s identity as an Israeli has been taken as evidence of a larger anti-Arab conspiracy.\textsuperscript{69} In this context, it is pointed out that the lawyer who came to defend ASP members accused of disturbances in Wingwi, Pemba in 1962 was an Israeli. There were additionally rumors that ASP supporters were getting military training in Israel and that Israeli weapons were being

\textsuperscript{65} Interview Anonymous, Stone Town, 28 August 2013. It is important to note that this informant claimed that Karume was part of planning the revolution, just that he had not told his own wife.

\textsuperscript{66} Some sources report that Kassim Hanga, and Jimmy Ringo were also on this boat. (see Ghassany, \textit{Kwa Heri}, 220)


\textsuperscript{68} MSS Afr.t. 56 Mooring folder 2/7 DSC 4091-4190 4121

\textsuperscript{69} Ghassany, \textit{KwaHeri!}, 218-9, 222.
imported by the US and kept at Project Mercury, the NASA Tracking Station.\textsuperscript{70} Thirdly, there were reports that a Jewish woman visited Othman Sheriff several times, with promises of money from Israel. She then returned to check on how the money was being used.\textsuperscript{71} Interestingly, other international conspiracy theories sometimes include the British, Americans, and Cubans as allies against the ZNP and Arabs, as well as an elaborate story about Algeria’s Ben Bella convincing Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser that the class issue in Zanzibar needed to be addressed.\textsuperscript{72} Ben Bella’s reported position was that Maghrebian governments should support the ASP and the revolution, because they were involved in a class struggle, not an anti-Arab or anti-Muslim attack. Nasser, then, explained this to a meeting of the Arab League who were under the impression that the revolution was about Christians killing Muslims.\textsuperscript{73} These class, political, racial, and religious motifs: the oppressed against the powerful, Israel/USA/UK allies, Arab versus African, and Judeo-Christian against Muslim, are woven together like a spider web in Zanzibari stories of the revolution. Historical moments since the revolution have empowered one theme over another. For the past twenty years, the Christian mainlanders versus Muslim coastal Tanzanians and Zanzibaris has been the dominant theme, so it appears more often in current sources.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Specific details are tied to particular narratives about the Zanzibar revolution.

\textsuperscript{70} ZNA AK 31/15 Intelligence Report, 30, 78; AK 13/11 Coffee shop gossip monthly report, #10.

\textsuperscript{71} ZNA AK 31/15 Intelligence Report, p.80; ZNA AK 13/11 Coffee shop gossip monthly report.

\textsuperscript{72} Interview with Ismail Jussa, Zanzibar Town, 31 August 2013; Interview with Sir Mohamed Salim Ali AlRiamy, Zanzibar Town, 5 September 2013

\textsuperscript{73} Interview with Ismail Jussa, 31 August 2013.
Sunday at Raha Leo, for example), and they are certain of its veracity because they believe that Karume directed the revolution. The only way for them to feel that it is true is for the rumors about him disappearing Saturday night and Sunday to be untrue. When certain details are used repeatedly by a group of people or for a political or polemical point, it becomes very difficult for the other side to concede that detail, even if they can still make their argument. This is what has happened in Zanzibar: there are certain pivotal technicalities that are debated in great detail. In order to argue one side of the story or the other, Karume’s role, where he was during the revolution, and his own identity as Zanzibari or mainlander are precisely the minutiae that matter in the discourse about the revolution. Race, class, religion, and world powers/local powers arise in discussion of planning: who was this masterminded and was the revolution planned by World Powers? By Karume? By Tanganyika? By Okello? Once that level has been decided, the next level is to define – if it was Karume – if he was a Zanzibari or a mainlander? And so more minutiae and stories become attached to each branch of the story.
CHAPTER 4
NIGHT OF THE OVERTHROW: THE LEGENDARY MOMENTS REVISITED

This is the tactical chapter. It will outline the events of key moments in the overthrow of the sultan and the ZNP/ZPPP government. In order to focus on these events, this work addresses the elements of the revolution that caused the old government to fall. It does not address the violence in the streets of town or in the rural areas in the aftermath of the overthrow.¹ Nor does it seek to address scholarship on the revolution, but rather those moments that are of concern to Zanzibaris; the episodes that are continuously debated in the coffee shops and barazas. I intend to introduce new evidence in this chapter that will disturb both of the dominant local narratives about the revolution.

A group of untrained, unskilled laborers were able to take all the weapons from the police force armories and then gain support from others because the type of attack was not what was expected. Reports of disturbances included the idea that weapons were going to be transported, and that there would be attacks on Arabs.² The police had put up roadblocks from Friday night through Saturday evening; they were concerned about having men ready in case of attacks, but they were not expecting, nor were they prepared for, attacks on the barracks or armories. Indeed, the attacks on Arabs did occur, but only after the government was toppled. Additionally, weapons were brought in from outside, but again, only after the government was toppled. The armories were broken into, the sultan and others departed, and the ministers in the former government

¹ Although this will be disappointing to some readers, this is also due, in part, to the lack of solid evidence about these events. There is much that is contradictory and dredging up painful memories. The only way to do that topic justice would be a type of research on a scale that is beyond the scope of my study. Thus my decision to only cover tactical elements in the overthrow.

² BNA DO 185/59, Misra Statement.
were taken into custody by the rebels. This happened in a matter of hours with no outside weapons or other assistance. This chapter will outline several key events of those hours, constituting a microhistory that has not previously been written.

**Rumors and Police Preparation**

Rumors of revolution and getting weapons from various sources were widespread. It was difficult for police and intelligence to distinguish gossip from evidentiary information.³ One specific piece of gossip that guided the timeframe of the revolution was that some ASP leaders were going to be arrested on Monday 13th January, in a similar vein to the closure of Umma Party’s offices on 4 January.⁴ This is why Okello and some others instigated a revolution on the 12th; they did not want to wait for the possibility of arrests on Monday. One specific report that was considered a rumor came on Saturday 11 January, when Abeid Karume and Aboud Jumbe had secretly reported to expatriate Special Branch officer Mr. Bott that there would be trouble that night. They mentioned an attack on Arabs specifically. Consequently, all the officers and NCOs had gone to Malindi for a meeting at 6pm on Saturday. They were placed on duty at various locations. Acting Superintendent Misra reported to have three 999 cars, 75 men on foot patrol, two traffic scooters, and one small riot platoon in Stone Town and Ngambo. Misra then heard a rumor that Ali Muhsin and the sultan were in danger. He doubled the guards at Ali Muhsin’s house, told him to be alert, and requested that Derham double guards at the Palace.⁵ This kind of planning meant that the officers were not at the barracks to provide leadership and direction when the rebels arrived.

³ See Waring statement, BNA DO 185/59.
⁴ CIA, 1966, p. 27.
⁵ BNA DO 185/59: Statement of R.M. Misra of the Zanzibar Police. (999 cars are emergency vehicles)
One informant claimed that this was precisely why Karume informed the British, to get the officers and other police out of the barracks, which would allow for a smoother attack on the armories. However, Assistant Superintendent Thomas Waring, officer in charge of PMF Mtoni, indicates that Karume’s report says that there would be attacks on the armories, but he did not take it seriously because there were so many rumors. Hamid Ameir, of the Committee of 14, explains that none of the political leadership of the ASP knew about the revolution until the night before at which point Karume and Thabit Kombo were told. Ameir claims that is why the revolution succeeded. If too many people had known about it, it would not have been effective. However, these details also corroborate the idea that Karume was told but had no confidence the revolution would succeed, so he told the British in order to protect himself.

Superintendent of Police Training and Depot at Ziwani, Derham’s report says that they were told there might be trouble. He was told to double the guard at Ziwani and reinforce the palace guard. He says he stationed unarmed guards at the main gate of the barracks and unarmed “prowler patrol” perimeter guards on the inside. The fact that the guards were unarmed is another indicator that the police were not anticipating attacks on the barracks themselves. One former PMF Mtoni constable argues that keeping the police unarmed indicates British complicity in the overthrow. This supports

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6 Interview with Ali Shaaban Juma, 25 July 2013
7 BNA DO 185/59; Statement of Asst. Superintendent Waring
8 This will be addressed further in chapter 6. Interview with Humoud Dughesh, Zanzibar Town, 9 September, 19 September 2013.
with Waring’s report that acknowledges a rumor of attacks on the armories themselves, which was not taken seriously.⁹

In addition to the element of surprise, one major factor why the revolutionaries succeeded is that the police were not trained in military tactics, so they were not prepared to protect their armories and forces. They were thinking about riots and getting weapons to fight a force elsewhere on the island. The revolutionaries did not have superior weapons, such as guns, yet rumors and assumptions about the attack assumed that any group that would attempt an overthrow would have sophisticated weapons.

Fete

On the night of 11 January 1964, there was a fete at the ASP HQ in Kiswandui, ostensibly to celebrate independence. The ASP had boycotted the ZNP/ZPPP government independence celebrations, so they thought that if they hosted their own, it would appear that they now accepted the new government. This was a ruse in order to have a viable reason to bring young men in from the shambas (rural areas) without suspicion to support the revolution. There was also a dansi (dance) at Raha Leo and ngomas (traditional dance and drumming) all over town, including Mnazi mmoja and Makadara grounds.¹⁰ There were many events that night aside from the ASP Fete, which received the most attention. The difference between a fete and a dansi and an ngoma is that a fete is a festival that includes various games, taarabu, and other music;

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⁹ BNA DO 185/59; Statement of Asst. Superintendent Waring

¹⁰ Interview with Ramadhan Haji Faki, 27 August 2013; Said Mohamed Seif, 30 September 2013; and Ahmed Khamis, 14 September 2013
at an ngoma, people played taarabu, kidumbaki, lelemama, or beni music; at the dansi, they dance with a partner.\textsuperscript{11}

The 1966 CIA report, \textit{Zanzibar: The Hundred Days’ Revolution}, claims that the revolution was a spontaneous action resulting from a speech given by Karume at the ASP fete on 11 June 1964, amidst rumors that the government was going to arrest numerous ASP leaders on Monday.\textsuperscript{12} I argue that the revolution was not an organic product of the fete. The fete greased the wheels, but it was not the spark that ignited the fire. In fact, most of the men who came to town as part of the overthrow plot did not attend the fete, according to Committee of 14 member, Hamid Ameir, and most men who attended the fete knew nothing about the revolution until the next day. Okello and others who had been planning to bring \textit{pangas} in for the attack on the armories did not attend the fete. On the other hand, Umma party member, Hamed Hilal, did attend but he left after Babu and Karume failed to show up to give speeches; he did not hear about the revolution until the next morning. The fete was an important consideration for the men organizing the revolution, as they used its occurrence to keep people from becoming suspicious when men came in from the \textit{shambas}. Many of those men who brought weapons and were prepared to fight did not attend the fete. Given Okello’s account, which was corroborated by my interview with Said Mohamed Seif, many men approached the armories and ran away. My interpretation is that there may have been men who were influenced by the gossip at the fete, but they are most likely the ones who ran away. The men who had been meeting about the revolution in secret for weeks

\textsuperscript{11} Interview with Ahmed Khamis, Zanzibar Town, 14 September 2013.

were more likely to stick around for the action than those who had heard rumors a couple hours prior. Additionally, several sources indicate that Karume did not speak that night, so I argue that it was not a speech by Karume that stirred revolutionaries into action.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Ziwani/Mtoni Attack and Armory Break-ins}

The two main sites of the first attacks at 2:45am were the police headquarters at Ziwani and the Police Mobile Force (PMF) station at Mtoni. The PMF was a paramilitary wing put in place after the 1961 election violence. The PMF were specifically trained in riot control. They were sometimes referred to as \textit{jeshi} (army) even though Zanzibar had no army at the time of independence; they had only the police and the police mobile force. These two sites, Ziwani and Mtoni, held most of the police guns and ammunition on the island of Unguja. This is why attacking the armories at these locations amounted to taking de facto control of the island.

There were several differences between Ziwani and Mtoni, which include the nature of the police units, preparation, which revolutionaries went to each location, and how the weapons were retrieved. Ziwani had more police of mainland origin and more who were sympathetic to the ASP. The police at Mtoni were more highly trained; their ethnic makeup was 70\% Shirazi, 20\% Arab, and 10\% other races.\textsuperscript{14} Although police were not supposed to be members of political parties, this group was more likely to

\textsuperscript{13} Interview with Hamed Hilali. He said that he went to the fete to hear Karume and Babu speak, but left when neither of them materialized. Hamid Ameir also reported that Karume did not attend the fete; he was told to stay home and out of sight. The CIA reports that Hanga and Karume addressed the crowd that night (p. ix-x). Given that two revolutionaries report that Karume was not there, and the other evidence that Karume had just found out about the revolution the day before and he reported it to the Special Branch as cause for concern, he was clearly skeptical about the revolution on 11 January 1964. It is therefore highly unlikely that he spurred men to take an action that he, himself, was wary of.

\textsuperscript{14} BNA DO 185/59, Statement of Asst Superintendent Waring.
support the Hizbu government and less likely to assist with the revolution. However, Assistant Superintendent Waring claims that he was told that the Umma Party had infiltrated his unit. This impacted how the events unfolded at each location. At Ziwani, Eddington Kisasi told the Committee of 14 (who were ASP members) so that those men could be put on duty as sentries as they might be more sympathetic to the cause. There were also a few policemen who had been instructed to give the key to the armory to Seif Bakari. When he did not show up, they gave it to Yussuf Himid. The revolutionaries got in and amassed weapons much more easily at Ziwani because they had people on the inside who were willing to help the process.

**Stories from Ziwani, from Rebels and Police**

An anonymous police corporal helped the revolutionaries when they reached Ziwani. He had been contacted ahead of time and had taken an oath of secrecy regarding the mission. He told the *wadogo* police (constables and other low ranking men) to go to sleep so they would not be hurt in the ruckus, leaving only three policemen awake at Ziwani: the sentry Mohamed Saidi, the corporal, and Sergeant Major Waziri Suleimani, who were supportive of the effort. Bwana Khamisi Jenga had told the corporal three months earlier about the plan. He and Sergeant Major Waziri were called to a meeting in Jang’ombe and took an oath of secrecy regarding the plans for the revolution. Yussuf Himid was at this meeting, but not all members of the Committee of 14 were there.

At 1:30am on 12 January, the Corporal told the other police to go to sleep, so they would not be in the midst of the *fujo* (disturbance). The revolutionaries entered at
2am exactly. Only about 50-60 men came to Ziwani. Of those men, about half of them were from the Afro-Shirazi Youth League meetings at Ghana; Mzee Kenya was the leader of that group. The Committee of 14 members who went to Ziwani were: Eddington Kisasi, Said Idi Bavuai, Mohamed Abdallah Kaujore, Saidi wa Shoto, Hafidh Suleiman, and Yussuf Himid. Abdalla Said Natepe and Seif Bakari were outside on reserve, but they did not go to Ziwani. Other less known revolutionaries who came to Ziwani were: Ramadhan Bakari, Mzee Maulidi, Abdalla Mbasama, Shindano Saidi (who was hit on the cheek), Abdalla Brahim (also called Ovyo), Issa from Mtwara (near Malindi), Safisha Fundi, Maulidi Nyasa, Endelea Daudi, Amuri Sampuri, Mussa Mbasama, and Abdalla Coka Cola.

One askari resisted and was beaten. He was hit by a revolutionary of Makonde origin called Amuri Sampuri. British Superintendent Derham makes a point of saying that Kilonzi, a Kenyan, was in charge of the perimeter guards who did not report rebels advancing, and that Kilonzi did not reply to him or report to duty. Derham and Assistant Superintendent Hilal Barwani fought attackers for a short time. The emphasis on details differs from accounts of the police and revolutionaries at Ziwani but both sides reported that several policemen agreed to help with the efforts, and those who did not comply

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15 Superintendent Derham thought there were perhaps 200 rebels. See BNA DO 185/59 Derham Statement. A former policeman told me that Derham probably thought it was so many people because they made a lot of noise.

16 This is the same Mzee Kenya who Okello reported had been a bugler in the Tanganyikan police but was a farmer when he was recruited. Okello also claimed he placed Mzee Kenya in charge of food stores and prisons. (Okello, p. 117-8)

17 See Appendix E. These names were on a list I copied from the Zanzibar National Archives and corroborated by Said Mohamed Seif, who was chair of AS YL for Ghana section. See ZNA AK 17/10 for list.

18 Interviews with Said Mohamed Seif, 30 September 2013; and Anonymous, 30 October 2013.
were beaten. The sentry resisted and was beaten. The aforementioned Corporal had the key to the armory, which he handed over. However, there was a slight change in plans, as it was Seif Bakari to whom he was supposed to give the key. Bakari was not at Ziwani, so he gave the key to Yussuf Himid instead. This was only after another skirmish. The Sergeant Major argued with the revolutionaries about Seif Bakari’s absence, so he was beaten.\(^{19}\) They key was later handed to Mohamed Kaonange, another revolutionary who got into the armory.\(^{20}\) There were two sections of the armory at Ziwani; one for daily use and another for longer-term storage. The armory was weak; the police commissioner had recently requested funds for an upgrade for security purposes.\(^{21}\) With or without the key, breaking into the armory did not pose much of a problem.

The rebels created a fair amount of noise to help with their efforts. Once the rebels had gotten access to the arms, mostly Mark 4s, they received instructions on how to use them and began shooting.\(^{22}\) Derham reports, “as it was obvious I was not going to convince the platoon commander or his men to advance through this fire, I ordered a withdrawal to the main gate.”\(^{23}\) These were policemen, and it appears that they were prepared to deal with crime, but not an attack on their barracks. There was confusion, mayhem, and no apparent plan for how to defend the barracks. From Malindi, Commissioner Sullivan sent a relief force who returned, saying the gate was

\(^{19}\) Interview with Anonymous, 30 Oct 2013

\(^{20}\) Interview with Said Mohamed Seif, 30 Sep 2013

\(^{21}\) BNA DO 185/59, Smithyman’s statement and Derham’s statement

\(^{22}\) Interview with Said Mohamed Seif, 30 Sep 2013

\(^{23}\) BNA DO 185/59, Derham’s statement, p. 4.
locked and they could not gain entry. Derham reports that the gate was not locked, and the only car he had seen approach it belonged to the PMF. Did the so-called relief group actually reach Ziwani? Was the PMF car one that the rebels had taken already from the Mtoni site? Why was the gate open? This relief effort appears to have been lackluster at best.

Okello describes the attack on Ziwani in a manner that resembles a movie script. The battle is dramatically described, including Okello stabbing a man with his own bayonet after hitting him on the cheek with the butt of the gun, and shooting the bugler off the top step, as the “trumpet” came “clattering” down. Though I have no corroboration of this story, the bayonet incident could have been inspired by Ramadhan Haji Faki, who was stabbed by a bayonet at Mtoni.24

The British police commanders who wrote reports about the night of the revolution were clearly trying to explain how this was allowed to happen under their command. It was embarrassing to have men without any police or military training and no weapons other than machetes, bows and arrows, and hoes take over both of the main police barracks. These reports and perspectives will be further analyzed in Chapter 5.

**Stories from Mtoni on the Night of the “Revolution”**

Ramadhan Haji Faki was the leader of the revolutionaries who went to Mtoni. Other Committee of 14 members who went were: Khamis Darwesh, Mfaranyaki, Pili Khamisi, and Hamid Ameir.25 The sentry and Ramadhan Haji Faki were both injured.

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24 Okello, p. 31-33. On the stabbing: Interview with Ramadhan Haji Faki, Interview with Hamid Ameir, Interview with Jamal Nassor Adi.

25 Interview with Hamid Ameir, November 2013.
Faki was the only member of the Committee of 14 who was injured; he was stabbed by an “askari of the sultan”. On the other side, there were five police killed at Mtoni, and a man named Bosco was hit. Khamis Kibera was the first killed; Ali Rukon, Abubakar Ali, and Stickman were three others. There were a total of 16 police killed during the revolution. Most policemen fled; one fled to the toilet, and others left the area.

Humud Dughesh was eighteen at the time of the revolution, having entered PMF forces in 1961 at age sixteen, younger than the official age of entry of eighteen. He was very tall at 5’11” and was a good marksman, so they let him join young. He was in the platoon honor guard, which marched behind the Scotts Guard at the independence celebrations on 10 December 1963. He loved his country and respected the British officers until the revolution. He felt as if the British not only let them down, but abandoned them in their hour of need. In fact, he believes the British supported the revolution.

Humud was a constable at Mtoni, and he was on sentry duty from midnight until 2am on 12 January 1964. The revolutionaries arrived just after his sentry shift. There were four sentries in the area; one on duty, one in the office, and one walking the perimeter while the last one slept. Humud went back to sleep. Soon after the revolutionaries broke into Mtoni. Corporal Mgeni Khalifa Mbaye was in the office by himself when the sentry came in and told him there were people outside. Corporal Mgeni went out and saw a large group of people approaching. Their approach seemed ominous, but they were not shooting, as they had no guns yet, and they were not yet

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26 Interview with Ramadhan Haji Faki, Zanzibar Town, 27 August 2013.
shouting and creating *ghasia* (mayhem). The gate was closed, and Mgeni went into the latrine to hide; he hid there until morning.\textsuperscript{28}

The revolutionaries entered at 2:30am with basic weapons, but did not yet have guns.\textsuperscript{29} The sentry who was on duty at the gate was hit trying to protect himself. He woke up Humud to ask for help. The PMF at Mtoni had no guns or ammunition, so there was nothing productive they could do.\textsuperscript{30} They could not attack the revolutionaries without live ammunition! The bugler sounded the alarm, but the revolutionaries had already entered and found the men with no guns or bullets with which to protect themselves. During this time, the revolutionaries broke into two of the armories. Humud hid in the barracks and Mgeni hid in the latrine. The officers were sleeping or were far away and there was no radio with which to call them so they hid. Those who went out to see what was going on were killed.\textsuperscript{31} Humud took off his uniform and put on dirty clothes. When he was finally able to get away from the barracks, the revolutionaries tried to stop him, but he kept moving, knowing that if he stopped, they would kill him. They did not know how to shoot well, and there still was plenty of confusion, so no one followed him. When he heard shooting in town, he returned to the forest to hide. He was captured after three days in Kiszimbani. He was staying in someone else’s house, and all of them were Arab, so they were all taken. First, they were taken to Mskiti wa Kifuli,\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{28} Interview with Mgeni Khalifa Mbaye, 13 September 2013 and BNA DO 185/59, Waring Statement.

\textsuperscript{29} Interview with Mgeni Khalifa Mbaye, 13 September

\textsuperscript{30} The statement by Waring says that he doubled the sentries and issued live ammo. However, he also states that one riot squad was armed and another he told to be prepared but to leave weapons in the armory. Humud vehemently argues that they did not have guns or bullets with which to shoot.

\textsuperscript{31} Interview with Mgeni

\textsuperscript{32} Near where the zoo is currently located.
and overheard plans to kill them in a large pit nearby. Then Humud overheard them say, “We'll make them slaves like they made us in the past.” Finally, the group was taken to Raha Leo, where hundreds of others were detained. He felt safe there because there were so many people. He cited the proverb: *Kufa kwa wengi arusi* to indicate safety in numbers, the idea that even if you die, it is not a problem because you are with people. However, it became clear that he did not have a safety net. His brother, Amour Dughesh, had been part of the Umma Youth who had trained in Cuba, and had joined the rebels. Amour would not even acknowledge Humud in this setting.³³

The store was broken into while officers slept. Those who went out to see what was going on were killed. There were three British officers in the unit; Waring was in charge, one officer was out, and there was one more officer. By the time the bugler sounded the alarm, the revolutionaries had already gotten in and were breaking into the armories. The bugler kept sounding the alarm, even while being beaten. There were four separate armories and revolutionaries were still breaking into at least one of them in the morning.³⁴ Others went to Waring’s house to ask what to do after having been beaten by the mob who were making “a deafening noise.” Waring ordered everyone to withdraw out the back gate.

Waring took the group to European houses and planned to get help from Ziwani, until he found out about the simultaneous attack on Ziwani and other police stations. He

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³³ Interviews with Humud Dughesh, 9, 10, 19, 26 September 2013.

³⁴ Four armories: Waring report, Humud Dughesh; breaking in still in morning, Interview with Mgeni.
ordered his men to go to Bububu police station, away from the trouble and await further orders.\textsuperscript{35}

Waring had the key to HQ armory; he still had it in his possession when he left the island. Platoon commanders held keys to other respective armories. Mgeni had an armory key, which he did not relinquish. The revolutionaries spent all night breaking into the armories at Mtoni.

Mgeni hid in the latrine all night and tried to escape in the morning. He was still wearing his uniform when he snuck out. When he left, he saw that they were breaking the walls next to the armory door as they tried to break in. They saw him, but did not attack. Mgeni knew one of the revolutionaries who saved him. The revolutionary told him to get his stuff and leave with his driver. The driver was instructed to take Mgeni to Raha Leo, which he did. Mgeni wore civilian clothes and found that there were already many people at Raha Leo when he arrived around 9 or 10am on Sunday morning.\textsuperscript{36}

\textbf{Zanzibarization or Not}

Former police from Ziwani and Mtoni said there was no feeling that \textit{wabara} were going to be dismissed. The British have used the Zanzibarization of the police force as a focal point of analysis because it was mostly British who were to be dismissed from the force.\textsuperscript{37} Phasing out a police force was a British scapegoat, somewhere to lay blame for the revolution that occurred while their officers were in charge. The Zanzibarization also

\textsuperscript{35} BNA DO 185/59, Waring Statement. More details on Waring and the other British officers’ actions in Chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{36} Interview with Mgeni Khalifa Mbaye, 13 Sep 2013.

\textsuperscript{37} See BNA DO 185/59; RH MSS. Afr. s. 2250; RH MSS. Afr. s. 1446; RH MSS. Afr. s. 1690; Clayton; Lofchie; Okello p. 119.
stood in opposition to the British theory about who made good policemen. The British believed that there were certain ethnic groups, mostly Nilotic groups, who were more violent and better suited to work as soldiers or police. Zanzibaris did not fit this type, so they were not viewed as “naturally” good soldiers. Indeed, getting rid of qualified police would have left Zanzibar vulnerable. The ZNP did intend to Zanzibarize the police force, but in reality, no African police, except for those who failed their tests, were let go. In fact, people like Edington Kisasi and Anthony Musa were promoted. The way in which Zanzibari police remember it, there was no feeling of low morale among the police and no specific sense that police were going to be removed. Three men told me this, two who were at Mtoni and did not support the revolution and one who was a Corporal at Ziwani and who helped with the revolution. Waring also reports that morale was high in his PMF units prior to the revolution. Although this does not explain why policemen at Ziwani helped with the revolution, it demonstrates the complexity of ideas and motivations behind this event and it shows that even without an immediate fear for their jobs, enough police were dissatisfied with the status quo to help the rebels.

The British emphasized this story because it impacted them; they were being pushed out and were not pleased with the situation. However, Okello also emphasized it in his book. He reports on Zanzibarization, but does not give details. Former PMF Mtoni

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39 Interview with Humud Dughesh, 19 September 2013. Additionally, British reports present the fear of this move but provide no evidence or details about men who actually had been sacked. Humud challenges researchers to provide the evidence for those who were dismissed. I was unable to find specifics, just the British concerns.

40 BNA 185/59 Statement of Waring. (IMG 4066-7) He also reports that 30 of his men had not completed training, that senior NCOs and inspectors had been mainlanders, and two mainland inspectors had not yet been replaced. This is reported without details of who or how many left.
members asked me, “were the Africans who were being chased out the ones who did not pass the test?” Additionally, Okello reports that Ramadhan Haji Faki “had been dismissed as a police corporal before I recruited him...,” when in fact, Faki retired from the police with a handsome pension. Both sources of this information had their reasons for bias. The British felt it would weaken the police force not to have them and the best trained police who were mainlanders, and Okello wanted to appear to be the savior for those who had been ousted by the Hisbu government, even if they had not actually been sacked.

In addition to the British view that mainlanders of certain ethnic groups made the best askaris, Zanzibaris themselves did not originally have an interest in joining the police. Police work was not among the desirable jobs from an utamaduni wa ustaarabu perspective. The work was manual labor, in close proximity with others, and not one appreciated in Zanzibar culture. Therefore, it was difficult to get Zanzibari policemen at first.

There were rumors that the ZNP was going to Zanzibarize the police force, which they had every right to do, but did it actually happen? Was concern about Zanzibarization of the police the cause of unrest and low morale for the police? I have not seen evidence for this in Zanzibari sources, only in British sources and Okello.

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41 Interview with Humoud Dugheish, 19 September 2013. The idea is that there may have been some African recruits who did not make it, but perhaps they were not qualified by merit, as opposed to race.

42 Okello, 117. And Interview with Ramadhan Haji Faki, August 2013.

43 Interview with Humud Dughesh, 10 September 2013.
Training in the Use of Guns

Numerous British intelligence reports included remarks that the rebels did not know how to use guns and were shooting all over the place. My research corroborated the lack of knowledge of weaponry. They brought only machetes, hoes, sticks, and bows and arrows with them to the armories, at which point they began using the guns they stole. In spite of the fact that most of the revolutionaries did not know how to use weapons, there are several episodes of training that are essential to this story. Okello claims to have conducted some training with his recruits; there are rumors that Ali Mafoudh of the Umma Party was involved in some training exercises prior to the revolution; the Umma Youth who were trained in military and guerilla warfare tactics in Cuba joined in the fighting forces on Sunday and trained others; and some training took place upon distribution of the guns at the armories and in Miti Ulaya in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Okello claims to have trained his group with “axes, pangas, crowbars, hammers,” and toy guns. When he initially proposed overthrowing the government, people asked how they would do this since they did not know how to use guns. He promised to train them in “the use of rifles, bows and arrows, knives, sticks, spears, wrestling, boxing, and stone throwing.” When he described the training later, he says they did it in the forest with toy guns he had bought at local shops. This training would have been enough to boost the morale of the men, but not enough for them to know how to cock, load, aim, and shoot the Mark 4s they took from the armories.

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44 Okello, p. 115.
45 Okello, p. 103
46 Okello, p. 132.
Ali Mafoudh’s brother told a number of friends that Ali Mafoudh had been busy a month or two before the revolution. He said that Mafoudh would come home with mud on his shoes as if he had been at the shamba, (rural area), meaning that he was training people in a remote part of the island. A number of men were given basic training at Ziwani immediately upon seizing the guns; they then went to Kilima Miguu for further instruction.

The revolutionaries who helped with later training and carrying out the revolution were the Umma Party youth who had been to Cuba for military training. Some of them came to the house where Ali Sultan Issa and Ahmed Badawy Qulletein lived in Miti Ulaya and reassembled weapons and trained revolutionaries on Sunday morning 12 January. This was the first instance of the revolution in which Umma Youth got involved. They had not been among the planners, nor among the forces who went to Mtoni and Ziwani. They did play a significant role, however, in training revolutionaries in how to use weapons and suggesting further strategic tactics for keeping the revolutionary momentum going. In fact, a full plan for revolution was found amongst the documents confiscated at the Umma Party headquarters on 4 January, and thus provided more fodder for the British belief that Babu was behind the revolution.

47 Interview with Anonymous, 19 Sept 2013.
48 Interview with Said Mohamed Seif, 30 Sept 2013.
49 Interview with Ali Sultan Issa, 15 Aug 2013. This house was near the maternity hospital at Mwembe Ladu so some refer to it as Mwembe Ladu and others as Miti Ulaya.
50 RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston, letter from Mervyn Smithyman 18 Jan 1964. Interview with Ismail Jussa, 31 August 2013. Jussa also remarked that the diary they found at Babu’s place showed plans that were very close to what happened during the revolution.
Raha Leo

Raha Leo was another location of deep contradictions. It was at once a detention center, the site of terrorizing radio broadcasts, and a place where people on both sides congregated and felt strength in their togetherness. In the heart of Ng’ambo, it was simultaneously the headquarters for the revolutionaries, the place where everyone went to get information, and the site of predominantly Arab detainees. Revolutionaries went to Raha Leo to get updates on their struggle and orders for their next moves. There was not one central leader, but it did serve as a central place where leaders met and discussed next steps. It was a place of posturing and demonstrating which side you were on. Former PMF policeman, Humud Dughesh, recalls his own brother left him inside the detention area at Raha Leo as a show of strength to his fellow revolutionaries.51

This was also the location of the infamous radio announcements by John Okello. In an ironic parallel to Okello’s broadcasts, longtime Zanzibar radio broadcaster, Sheikh Salim Mzee was called upon to make certain radio announcements. The ASP political leaders wanted Zanzibaris to hear his familiar Zanzibari voice over the radio, as it lent a sense of continuity and security to an otherwise frightening time. Mzee was stationed at Raha Leo for about three days before he was able to return home.52

Photographs and videos of Okello were taken outside Raha Leo, as were some of the moving photographs of Arabs in detention. Raha Leo was the center of activity during the revolution, and it held the same conflicting meaning and memory as the

51 Interview with Humud Dughesh, 19 Sept 2013.
52 Interview with Salim Mzee, 10 Dec 2013.
revolution itself. The way people felt about Raha Leo in those days merged the contradictory feelings of community and fear, confusion and purpose.

**The Battle at Malindi Police Post**

The battle at the Malindi Police Post was the most protracted fight of the revolution. Writing about the event is controversial because some claimed that it was a significant battle, while others doubt that much happened as they did not see a single bullet hole in the building.\(^5^3\) Once again, both of these claims hold some validity, and the explanation requires more details than have been provided. Numerous police officers gathered at the post in the morning; there was fighting on and off from Sunday morning until Sunday evening. The police had .303 No. 4 MK 2 long-range rifles and a good view from the rooftop while the rebels had short-range weapons, Sterling submachine guns and pistols, and no visibility, which resulted in little damage to the police station.\(^5^4\)

However, this was the only location in which there was a real struggle and both sides were armed. This was the location where the last stand was relinquished. The attacks on Ziwani and Mtoni were fairly quick and had little resistance because the police were mostly unarmed, whereas from Malindi armed police commanders tried to bolster the existing government. Geographically, this site was significant, as it was surrounded by ZNP supporters on three sides and was open to a field and road on the front side where


\(^5^4\) Interview with Amour Dughesh; BNA 185/69 Waring statement and Sullivan statement: Waring and Sullivan report that captured automatic weapons were used against them in Malindi, and Dughesh stated that he had a submachine gun. The .303 No. 4 MK 2 are listed in several police reports; their use is supported by interviews with rebels who were being fired upon by police in Malindi Post.
the rebels tried to approach. It was at the geographic and temporal nexus of the past and future, ZNP and ASP.

British police began to congregate at Malindi in the early morning. Once the various superintendents learned that there were simultaneous attacks on Ziwani and Mtoni, they were instructed to congregate at Malindi Police Post. They began to congregate at 6:30am. The police had clear lines of sight down both Creek Road and Hollis Road. There were tall buildings to the south and west that would have been an enormous threat if they had been rebel controlled or if ASP sympathizers lived there. Fortunately for the police, Malindi was a ZNP stronghold, so those buildings provided cover for the police.

From 10 am onwards, several groups of rebels approached the police station; some were killed, others ran. They kept trying but could not take Malindi Police Station while the police were inside. In between attacks, rebels went to nearby stores to loot before returning to fight. Groups continued to try to take the police station because it was the only holdout. New groups of men thought they could not know the situation until they saw it for themselves. By 11am, the only officers left at Malindi Police post were: Commissioner Sullivan, Waring, Derham, Mr. Hilal Barwani from Ziwani, Mr. Baasalama, European Special Constable Tremlett, and Belcher. Rebels continued to use PMF vehicles to approach Malindi Police Post and attack as well as to carry loot from nearby stores.

55 BNA DO 185/59 Waring Statement
56 BNA DO 185/59 Derham Statement
57 BNA DO 185/59 Waring Statement
This was an important site to take, so in the middle of the day, Aboud Jumbe instructed a group of trained fighters to try. This group, one of the last to attempt to take the station, included Umma Youth: Amour Dughesh, Hamid Hilali, Hashil Seif Hashil, “Handsome,” Ahmed Maulidi, and five others (about ten in total). They approached Malindi on Hollis Road around 2pm. They saw bodies of rebels who had been shot trying to take the post earlier in the day. Ten of them drove up in a Land Rover and were visible to the police from Hollis Road (See Figure 4-1). The police, however, were on the roof of the police station. They utilized the embrasures on the parapet to hide while maintaining visibility. The police shot the Patchett gun out of Amour Dughesh’s hand. He had loaded it with twenty rounds, but it got stuck inside, and was useless. Everyone took cover as best they could; some ran. They realized they could not succeed so they retreated. They could not take the police station from where they were. Amour took cover in a drainage ditch after before heading north up Hollis Rd. Since they were unable to take the post, Amour, Hamid, and others returned to Raha Leo.\footnote{Interview with Amour Dughesh, 17 September 2013; Interview with Hamid Hilali, 10 Sept 2013.}
Departure of British Officers to the Yacht in the Harbor

The rebels had not allowed an ambulance in, even to collect their own wounded until late in the day. By 4pm, an ambulance was allowed through to Malindi; it reported that a larger force of rebels was on the way. The police had fewer than 100 rounds of ammunition remaining, they were almost encircled by rebels, and they were told that the docks were about to be attacked. At this juncture, Commissioner Sullivan ordered a retreat. Numerous people saw this group withdraw to the docks, so Waring was concerned for their safety in the event that they were asked to return to Zanzibar.59

59 BNA DO 185/59 Waring Statement
Most of the police ran to the port, which was still under fire from revolutionaries. There are other tactical elements of the police departure, which relate specifically to the role the British played in the revolution; they will be covered in Chapter 6.

**Prison Take-Over**

At around 4 pm on Sunday afternoon, a telephone call came from the prison to Raha Leo headquarters informing the revolutionaries that the Chief Prison Officer (a British man) had departed and the prison had surrendered. Aboud Jumbe instructed the caller that they should put up a white flag. Jumbe and Badawy Qullatein then instructed Umma Comrades Hamed Hilali, Amour Dughesh, Hashil Seif Hashil, and Said Seif to take over control of the prison. Dughesh was still armed (with his submachine gun that he had fixed), but Hamed Hilali did not have a weapon. However, they did not need weapons as there was no resistance when they arrived at the prison. They immediately told the prisoners they were free to go; there would be no more hangings. The guards were nervous and it was a hectic time, but still there were other considerations. Prisoners were supposed to get a food allowance of twenty cents per day. Some prisoners were unable to return home without money to travel. Others had nowhere to go. Some were kept on as cooks or in other roles. Among those who were released was Mohamed Hamoud who killed Mugheiri in 1956 and whose son killed Abeid Karume in 1972.

The ministers in the overthrown government were kept at Raha Leo until Monday evening, 13 January, when they were brought to the prison. They were given a special

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60 Said Seif’s nickname was Rahati Leil, “pleasure of the night.” Nicknames were important to several of these Umma Comrades. Interview Hamed Hilali, 10 Sep 2013.

61 Interviews with Hamed Hilali, Ahmed Rajab, Amour Dughesh.
area and were not searched like other prisoners. They were not harassed at that juncture. Ali Muhsin had been beaten by someone in the crowd when he was originally brought to Raha Leo; he was hit with a stick above his eye and required stitches. This attack on Ali Muhsin upset Karume, and Okello admonished this behavior over the airwaves.  

Once in prison, Ali Muhsin asked to speak with Karume; he wanted to know where they stood vis a vis the new government. He did not get that chance. Abdul Aziz Twala visited the prison to see the conditions of the ex-ministers. Among other ironies, Ali Muhsin was related to Hamed Hilali, who was in charge of the prison where Ali Muhsin was being held. When Ali Muhsin was eventually released, he stayed with Hilali (his relative and former “jailer”) in Dar es Salaam. This is a further example of my argument that this revolution was about convoluted relationships of power.

During this time, Okello would come to the prison with his soldiers who had looted or stolen things and have the prison wardens whip them for disobedience.

**Weapons from Outside**

Another point of considerable debate is the issue of weapons. The ASP official version claims that the rebels overtook with basic weapons, while other sources claim that weapons were brought to Tanganyika from Algeria, and Nyerere and Kambona sent them over with their men who directed the revolution. The reality is that weapons from Algeria (for freedom movements in southern Africa with which Tanganyika was assisting) did arrive in Dar es Salaam a few days before the revolution. Some of those

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63 See Glassman, *War of Words*, about flashpoints and how personal arguments developed into legends that represented one ideology or position.

64 Interview with Hamed Hilali, Zanzibar Town, 10 September 2013.
weapons made their way to Zanzibar on Monday 13\textsuperscript{th} after the overthrow of the government.\textsuperscript{65} Tanganyika supported the revolution once it occurred, but they did not plan or execute it.

If the revolutionaries had had guns when they entered the barracks, they would have killed many more people.\textsuperscript{66} As it was, only 16 police were killed that night. The mass killings happened later, after the government had been overthrown. If they had weapons from Algeria, they would have used them at the beginning of the revolution, but they did not. All accounts of the attacks at Ziwani and Mtoni indicate that guns were obtained at the armories.

The weapons earned a great deal of publicity in the immediate aftermath of the revolution.\textsuperscript{67} The more recent explanation for the Algerian weapons is that their presence indicated an international conspiracy to overthrow the Government of Zanzibar. Ghassany claims that these weapons show that Algeria’s Ahmed Ben Bella collaborated with Tanganyika to help plan the revolution.\textsuperscript{68} Ismail Jussa also points to this, asking why there are schools named after Ben Bella in Zanzibar. He cites Kingunge Ngombale Mwiru, who was close with Nyerere, and who told Jussa that Egypt’s Abdul Gamel Nasser was pro-Arab (and pro-ZNP) until Ben Bella convinced him that the ASP cause was a class war, and they should support it. Arabs were saying that the revolution was about Christians killing Muslims, so a meeting of the Arab League was hastily convened to discuss the matter. Mwiru said Nasser helped them a


\textsuperscript{66} Interview with Humud Dughesh, 19 Septmeber 2013.

\textsuperscript{67} BNA DO 185/59 Forsyth-Thompson report, p.2.

great deal, supporting their cause after Ben Bella convinced him that the Zanzibar revolution was a class war, and they should support it.\textsuperscript{69} I argue that if this support was given, it was done in the aftermath of the revolution, and not in preparation for it. There could not have been this many parties in conspiracy about the revolution in advance for it to succeed, and there is insufficient evidence of these meetings prior to the revolution.\textsuperscript{70} The Algerian weapons were brought to Dar es Salaam in order to support the freedom fighters in southern Africa, primarily Mozambique and Angola. Some were redirected to the Zanzibar Revolution just after the ZNP/ZPPP government was toppled, but they were not sent to Tanganyika for that cause.

There were no weapons brought to Zanzibar from mainland Tanzania before the revolution. However, those Algerian weapons were among those brought in on Monday 13 January. Though this information is not widely available, the British Red Cross Archives show that a BRC volunteer was asked to go to Zanzibar on Monday from Dar es Salaam. When she arrived on the plane, she found it loaded with guns “of all shapes and sizes”. She told the Minister for Home Affairs, who was in charge of the situation, that she would not ride with the guns. He remarked, “Oh, of course, Red Cross…” and offered her a plane the next morning, so she waited and went on Tuesday.\textsuperscript{71} It is clear that the Government of Tanganyika was pleased with the revolution and helped it gain force, but only after the overthrow of the Zanzibar Government had already occurred.

This critical detail about the transportation of the weapons from Dar es Salaam to

\textsuperscript{69} Interview with Ismail Jussa, 31 August 2013

\textsuperscript{70} Additionally, the Christians killing Muslims trope is a more recent addition to the historiography, and not one that is found in the archival documents from the 1960s.

\textsuperscript{71} BRC 1983/64 File: disturbances in Zanzibar volume I, 1964
Zanzibar by the British Red Cross on Monday is not one that has been previously published, and it disturbs the conspiracy theory about Algerian weapons. It is therefore pivotal to our understanding of who was involved and at what juncture. TANU certainly backed the ASP in advance of the revolution and helped with boosting numbers of voters, as I have shown. TANU also enthusiastically bolstered the process of the revolution after the initial overthrow. However, the revolution that actually happened on 12 January was not one born of a TANU-ASP conspiracy.

The Announcement of the First Cabinet and the Members of the BLM

On Sunday evening 12 January, Okello requested Abeid Amani Karume return to Zanzibar and take up his role as President. The first time the new President Abeid Amani Karume spoke on the radio in Zanzibar was 13 January.\(^\text{72}\) When the new Cabinet of the Revolutionary Government was to be declared, Thabit Kombo called upon longtime radio announcer, Sheikh Salim Mzee because the revolutionary leaders wanted a voice Zanzibaris knew and were comfortable with.\(^\text{73}\) This was a significant turnaround from the strategy of using Okello’s distinctly non-Zanzibari voice for other purposes. Salim Mzee was at Raha Leo for several days making announcements as directed by the new revolutionary leaders.

There has been some local debate about who made the decisions regarding the composition of the first cabinet of the BLM. Badawy Qullatein reportedly claimed that he, Okello, and Aboud Jumbe discussed who would get what portfolio, and that


\(^{73}\) Interview with Salim Mzee, 10 Dec 2013. Seif Bakari came to Salim Mzee’s house to request that Mzee accompany him to Raha Leo to make announcements. Additionally, see BBC Summary of world broadcasts, Part 4: Middle East and Africa, which indicate that the announcement was made in Swahili, but was not attributed to Okello or any other named political leader, as other announcements were.
Abdullah Kassim Hanga was first declared Prime Minister with Karume as figurehead President. Though not perpetuated by the same group of people, this claim coincides with the theory of the revolution as Hanga’s plan. That theory, as presented by Ghassany, includes a conspiracy between Hanga and Oscar Kambona and other Tanganyikan mainlanders. In this version of events, Karume learned that he was supposed to play second fiddle to Hanga and addressed this during the first Revolutionary Council meeting. However, the first radio announcement of the Cabinet declared Hanga Vice President. Though I was unable to find further corroborating evidence of this interaction, and my evidence points in a different direction, it is precisely the kind of story that maintains traction in Zanzibar.

**The Trade Unions: Connecting Disparate Parties**

The leaders of the trade unions did not organize the revolution, but the trade unions themselves were places where disgruntled workers met and connected with one another. They provide one of the only links between the disparate parties who formed the new Revolutionary Government. Workers’ rights was one of the only issues that the various revolutionaries agreed on. Okello, the Committee of 14, Umma Party Youth and Leadership, trade union leaders, and some ASP leaders all wanted workers’ rights. They also had met with one another at various times and discussed trade unions and uniting for workers’ rights. Okello links to the ASP and the Committee of 14 were through Seif Bakari, via Ali Lumumba, Jaha Ubwa, and Said idi Bavuai. Umma Party

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75 BBC. Monitoring Service. Summary of world broadcasts, Part 4: Middle East and Africa.
leaders met with the Committee of 14 and Karume. Okello was Assistant Secretary General of the Zanzibar and Pemba Paint Workers Union and played a role in the ASP branch office in Vitongoji, Pemba specifically in support of workers’ rights. Hassan Nassor Moyo had met Okello in Pemba on trade union business.

Hassan Nassor Moyo identified the links between the trade unions, as both groups ZPFL (ASP trade union) and FPTU (ZNP trade union) demanded safe constituencies for their people. ZPFL wrote a letter to ASP and to Karume demanding six constituencies, six safe seats for ZPFL politicians. It was precisely this issue that caused the political split when Babu left the ZNP and formed the Umma Party. Ali Muhsin refused Babu’s request for the safe seats, and the result was Babu’s departure from ZNP in June 1963. Additionally, a source close to both BABU and Karume claims that Babu went to Karume and wanted to join ASP at that juncture. Karume agreed, but another ASP leader, Daud Mahmoud, was suspicious and encouraged Karume to make Babu form his own party and work with them that way; Babu formed the Umma Party.

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76 Okello, p.100; Connection to Jaha Ubwa from Interview with Hamid Ameir; connection to Said Idi Bavuai and Umma meeting with Ctte 14 from Interview with Anonymous, 28 August 2013.

77 Okello, p. 98.

78 Interview with Hassan Nassor Moyo.

79 Interview with Hassan Nassor Moyo; ZNA AK 9/ 29 District Intelligence: sub-committee Zanzibar (Mar 1963-Jan 1964)

80 There is debate about whether Babu left or was kicked out of ZNP and the way this issue has been couched varies from source to source. Lofchie cites the ZNP Statement on Babu’s resignation which addresses one safe seat for what he describes as “the African peasant movement.” (p.259) Ali Sultan Issa explains the split in reference to three safe seats for progressive candidates. (Burgess: 2009, p. 79)

81 Interview Anonymous, 28 August 2013
In 1963 there were numerous discussions about unifying the two trade unions.\textsuperscript{82} The British intelligence officers viewed this as communism and believed that Babu was trying to push his agenda on both ASP and ZNP supporters. There was a desire by all parties to support workers’ rights and to potentially do so as one unified political body.\textsuperscript{83} This explains how Badawy Qullatein, who worked with FPTU, knew about the revolution early and rallied the Umma Youth to help support it on Sunday morning. Additionally, the Umma members of the original Revolutionary Council were Babu, Salim Rashid as Secretary, and Khamis Abdulla Ameir, who was head of FPTU. The issue that brought these unusual bedfellows – like Okello and Umma Party – together was worker’s rights and supporting the trade unions.

**Conclusion and Role of Umma Youth**

Numerous details of the overthrow of the government indicate a lack of traditional strategic thinking. For example, no revolutionaries went to capture the sultan or the Cabinet members of the government once it was toppled; they all had the opportunity to escape. The sultan chose to escape, while the ministers chose to remain and attempt negotiations with the rebels and the new government.\textsuperscript{84} Decisions such as this are part of the analysis of who was in charge of the revolution. The Umma Party had training and plans that were more strategic than the early stages of the revolution bear out. Because of what happened after the revolution, many Umma members have tried to

\textsuperscript{82} ZNA AK 9/ 29 District Intelligence: sub-committee Zanzibar (Mar 1963-Jan 1964); Intelligence reports refer to this possibility of unification of trade unions as communist influence, outside influence, and “It appears that Babu is behind the drive to unite all workers so as to achieve his own ends.” AK 31/15 Intelligence Reports. District Intelligence Committee Meeting, 18 Oct 1963. (IMG1946)

\textsuperscript{83} Interview with Hassan Nassor Moyo; Ali Sultan Issa in Burgess: 2009, p. 79; Okello.

\textsuperscript{84} These will be examined in the next chapter.
distance themselves from their role in the revolution. However, some Umma Party members (Comrades) did play a pivotal role in the revolution. Comrades tend to credit themselves with trying to keep the violence to a minimum, and with bringing some bigger picture strategic vision to the situation. Other Zanzibaris of Arab descent accuse Umma of being the ones who pointed out particular ZNP supporters who were taken from their homes in Stone Town and detained or worse. They say it had to have been Umma youth who identified them because they knew and were part of the same communities, whereas those other revolutionaries did not know who was who among Arab and Comorian Zanzibari communities. There were specific Umma Youth who came around to let people know who was in charge. Captain Mohamed Mzee “Badi” tells of a Comrade named Handsome who came to his house to harass him in the days following the revolution.

There are few Umma Party members who knew any details of the revolution before it happened. Those who might have were Ali Mafoudh and Qullatein. Qullatein had told some of the Umma youth to be prepared, but had not revealed any of the details of what might happen. However, Umma youth clearly joined in the revolution on Sunday morning and did have an impact on the events that followed.

Both living members of the Committee of 14 claim that Umma youth did not join in the fighting Sunday morning, and that Umma had nothing to do with the revolution.

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85 Interview with Salim Rashid, 31 October 2013. He was on the first Revolutionary Council and supported the revolution, but he did not support what happened afterward, including the formation of the Union.


87 Interview with Captain Mohamed Mzee Badi, 27 September 2013.

88 Interview with Hamed Hilali.
There is sufficient evidence to indicate that this is not accurate. I have provided some of it in this chapter, but additionally, I turn to the cover page of the first *Kweupe* paper published after the revolution, on 18 January 1964 (see Figure 4-2). Umma comrade Hashil Seif Hashil is pictured on the right, and slightly behind John Okello, both of whom are holding guns.

The Umma youth knew how to use weapons and had training; they were sent to Malindi Police Post, the prison, and to cable and wireless; they were part of the group that kicked Okello out of Zanzibar for good in March. Three Umma political leaders were in the original Baraza la Mapinduzi: Babu, Salim Rashid, and Khamis Abdulla Ameir. Ali Mafoudh controlled the army for a few months after the revolution. They played a role in some of the significant moments of the revolution. Babu’s own description of the forces behind the revolution and how it transpired is far more accurate than is often acknowledged. Although he diminishes Okello and the other “lumpen” elements as wanting “to simply burn down Zanzibar Town in order to create maximum social chaos,” he explains how Umma helped transform the movement into a full-fledged political revolution.  

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Figure 4-2. First Kweupe newspaper after the Revolution, courtesy of Zanzibar National Archives
CHAPTER 5
THE VOICE OF THE REVOLUTION: FIELD MARSHAL JOHN OKELLO

I am Field Marshall Okello! Wake up, you imperialists, there is no longer an imperialist government on this Island; this is now the government of the Freedom Fighters.

- John Okello, Revolution in Zanzibar

The Voice

It was the Ugandan, self-proclaimed Field Marshal John Okello, whose booming voice Zanzibaris heard over the radio on the morning of 12 January 1964 informing them that their country had undergone a revolution the night before and threatening those who might oppose it.¹ For the next two months, Okello continued his barrage of violent and extreme threats on the radio, becoming the voice of the revolution. There is no other singular voice that comes to mind when people think about the revolution. Okello’s was a voice no Zanzibari who heard it has ever forgotten. People comment on the timbre of his voice, saying for instance that, “aliguruma kama simba” (“he growled like a lion”).² They also remembered the specific contents of his threats, ranging from terrifying to ludicrous. He ranted that the sultan should kill his children and wives, if not, the revolutionaries would “extinguish [him] from the face of the earth,” and “burn [his] remains with a fierce and hungry fire.”³ The most common recollection Zanzibaris shared in interviews about Okello, however, was his tendency to order everyone outside, stripped to their underpants, and lying down as he drove by in his car in the

¹ The word revolution is generally used to describe both the overthrow of the constitutional monarchy on the night of 11–12 January 1964 and the regime that followed under the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. In this chapter, I am primarily using this term to designate the overthrow.

² Interview with Ali Omar Abdalla, 3 November 2013. Abdalla worked for the Public Works Department in Vitongoji, Pemba, and met Okello when he first came to Pemba looking for work.

³ Okello, Revolution, 145.
Malindi section of Stone Town. Yet it also appears that the psychological warfare he conducted from the radio station at the revolutionaries’ headquarters in Raha Leo had a significant effect and that it actually intimidated people into obeying the Freedom Fighters who toppled the government on the night of 11–12 January 1964. It also appears that the verbal terror Okello unleashed was not due to an alleged lack of sanity on his part, as many British reports concluded at the time, but was instead the result of a tactical strategy. Before the revolution, Okello told Ali Omar Abdalla in Pemba that it was more important to talk tough than to know how to use weapons, and after the revolution, he told his friend Jonathan Opio in Uganda that “even shouting was enough to topple the government.” In spite of his lack of formal education and sophistication, Okello seems to have had keen insights into psychological warfare. He was well aware of the performative dimensions of political power: by acting as if he was brutal, ruthless, and utterly in charge, he knew he could wield authority that otherwise might elude his grasp. For almost two months, this strategy of terror over the airwaves provided him with a position of command he otherwise would likely not have been able to gain—even as subsequent events prove how much he overestimated the long-lasting effect of his strategy of psychological warfare.

Another example of Okello’s tactical intelligence was that he knew that the British were key to the success of his venture. He grasped that the revolution would have to

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4 Interview with Ali Mbamba, 23 August 2013; Fatma Jinja, 30 November 2013; and Salim Rashid, 30 October 2013. Numerous people told me this story, and Okello’s instructions can also be found in the BBC Written Archives, Summary of World Broadcasts Part IV The Middle East and Africa on 14 January 1964.

5 Interview with Ali Omar Abdalla, 3 November 2013.

6 Interview with Jonathan Opio, 23 January 2014.
wait until after independence, when the British would be gone. He realized that if the revolutionaries tried to take action while the British were still there, the colonialists would send in reinforcements to protect their interests and quash it.\(^7\) Okello also made it very clear that the lives and property of Europeans were to be safeguarded during the revolution. He knew that the revolutionaries had to protect British lives and property so that the British would have no reason to intervene.\(^8\) These are strategic considerations that none of the other members of the Committee of 14 appear to have contemplated.\(^9\) Indeed, the British discussion about possible intervention and military action in Zanzibar in January and February 1964 was couched in terms of potential threat to British lives.\(^10\)

Both of the remaining living members of the Committee of 14, Ramadhan Haji Faki and Hamid Ameir, said that Okello was chosen for his voice. He was to make announcements in his clearly non-Zanzibari Kiswahili so that people would pay attention and obey. Hamid Ameir said Okello was chosen so that people would ask who was running the revolution, as it was clearly not someone from Zanzibar. And Faki insisted that if he (or one of his Zanzibari colleagues) had made the announcement, people would have laughed, saying something like, “Kweli? [Seriously?] Ramadhan Haji? Yeye mshamba tu. [He’s just a hick.] He thinks he can overthrow the government?” By

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\(^7\) Okello 1967: 92; Drum February 1967

\(^8\) Interview with Ali Omar Abdalla, 3 November 2013. He said Okello told him this in advance of the revolution.

\(^9\) The Committee of 14 is a legendary group comprised mostly of Afro-Shirazi Youth League members who were in the first Revolutionary Council. ASP documents claim they led the revolution at the behest of Karume (ZNA BA 76/19). On the point of protecting the British, William Smith asserts that President Karume gave orders that no Europeans should be arrested (1973: 106).

\(^10\) BNA CAB 21/5524.
making an outsider the voice of the revolution, the revolutionaries led people to think Wabara (mainlanders) were in charge, ensuring that they would follow instructions. Faki also spoke of Mau Mau and how ferocious they were, insinuating that if people thought Mau Mau were involved, there would be no resistance.¹¹

In the introduction to Okello’s book, Clyde Sanger wrote insightfully, “In order to diminish Okello’s popularity and ease his removal, Babu, then Foreign Minister, claimed Okello had never been anything more than a sort of disc-jockey, a man given the job of broadcasting over the captured radio station because his Kiswahili (with its Kenyan accent) would reassure the mainland governments.”¹² Sanger was correct about why Okello was depicted in these revisionist terms in the aftermath of the revolution. However, Okello is also the only figure involved who has actually spoken about the planning and the events during the night of the revolution. None of the other Committee of 14 members, any Afro-Shirazi Party politician, or anyone else in the first Baraza la Mapinduzi (Revolutionary Council) has reported anywhere near as complete a story as John Okello. In fact, none have written memoirs. Khamis Darwesh was interviewed for an article in Mwananchi in 2002, as was Hamid Ameir in 2008, and Major General Abdallah Said Natepe was interviewed for a few pages in an army history magazine but provided very little detail.¹³ While Okello often exaggerates his account, bending the story to make him look more like the man he envisioned himself to be, he


¹² Okello 1967: 7

provides many more specifics and explanations than anyone else. This is significant because Okello’s bravado and his histrionics over the radio are part of why he was not accepted in Zanzibar. As early as 24 January 1964, he was warned in an unsigned letter, “Your behavior is inconsistent with the requirements of the indigenous people. You are the only person boasting of having all the power in the Revolutionary Government.”\(^{14}\) The other members of the Committee of 14 were either born in Zanzibar or had spent much more of their lives there than Okello; they knew that their silence would protect them, even give them power. It was a political move on their part, as well as appropriate behavior in Zanzibari culture, where discretion, subtlety in language, and linguistic play are highly valued.\(^{15}\) Okello lacked the political and cultural awareness to act in a way that would have deepened his power base.

In this chapter, I critically reexamine Field Marshal John Okello’s role in the revolution, exploring how he has been represented and remembered. I use oral interviews, contemporary local newspapers, online news and blogs, and archival sources and newspapers concurrent with the revolution to show how Okello is and has been viewed in Zanzibar. Having spent six months in Zanzibar, including a trip to Pemba to interview people who knew Okello, and one month in Uganda meeting Okello’s family and friends from before and after the revolution, I use recent, first-hand field research to examine individuals’ memories of Okello and to reintroduce him to the historiography of the Zanzibar revolution. I contrast powerful personal memories of Okello and his radio broadcasts with the relative lack of a collective memory of Okello in

\(^{14}\) Okello, Revolution, 177.

Zanzibar, due to his expulsion and elimination from the official record. Finally, I argue that he served as the voice of the revolution not just because of his accent and non-Zanzibari Kiswahili language, but because he played a critical role as its leader. Tying this historiographical claim to current social memories, I show a recent trend in Zanzibari and Tanzanian media to restore Okello to his position in Zanzibari history. The biographical portion of this chapter provides personal recollections that enable us to better understand the role and fate of Okello during the revolutionary moment and its aftermath.

Confusion about Okello’s Identity

There are still Zanzibaris who remember Okello as he was portrayed in early press reports in January 1964: as a Kenyan Luo who fought in the Mau Mau, or as a former Zanzibari policeman with Cuban training. However, my research confirms that Okello was a Ugandan Langi who did not fight in the Mau Mau and who had never been to Cuba. British archives reveal that there was no record of a John Okello in the Zanzibar police in the 1960s. There is no evidence, other than his own bombastic claims on the radio, that Okello was part of the Mau Mau. Chronology further supports this assertion. Okello was in Nairobi from October 1954 until late 1955, when, by his own admission, he was imprisoned. He accounts for that time—the jobs he had and the night school he tried to attend—precisely in his book. When he got out of prison, he went straight to Machakos and then on to Mombasa. There was not enough time for him to have been in Mau Mau, even assuming that he, as a Langi (in the Luo ethnic family),

16 BNA DO 185/59 and RHL MSS. Afr. s. 1446.
17 Okello 1967: 54–8
could have made deep enough connections among the Gikuyus. Despite the rumors that he served in World War II, he had no formal military training. (Given that he was born in 1937, he was not old enough to have participated in the war.) These false portrayals represent ways in which his identity was misunderstood or manipulated to provide explanations for his position of power, which was greater than most people thought it should be. Luise White contends that plausibility is a necessary component of rumors, gossip, and lies: That which is “socially conceivable” is what ends up being passed on.\(^{18}\) This explains recollections that Okello was a Mau Mau, soldier, or policeman, because these were credible stories about a man who led a revolution. With no media or literature to provide accurate (and plausible) biographical information, the memories remain.

**Biography, Take One: Sources Close to Okello**

**Early Life in Uganda and Youth in Kenya**

The man we know as John Okello was born John Etuku. His baptismal name was Gideon so he was known as John Gideon Etuku until he left home. Okello was his father’s name, which he took to use in the workplace when he left home in 1953.\(^{19}\)\(^{20}\) He went by John Okello for the rest of his life, but he was to use the name Gideon again in the future, when he tried to avoid journalists after the revolution.\(^{21}\) Although Okello was

\(^{18}\) Okello 1967: 35

\(^{19}\) Interview with Akello Kulusita Mary, 22 January 2014.

\(^{20}\) Okello tried to avoid talking to the press after leaving Zanzibar in March 1964, and he called himself Gideon Baker from Kenya, directly lying to reporters who tried to talk with him while he was in Dar. He said he was returning to Kenya, his home, not Zanzibar or Uganda. Reporter Sammy Mdee confronted Okello, saying that they had just met in Zanzibar and that he knew that Okello was not returning to Zanzibar because he was not wanted there. Okello insisted that he was Kenyan Gideon Baker, and he
never in the military, he was interested in soldiers and physical strength from a young age. When he was seven-years-old, he ran away to try to join the military. Because he was too young, he was returned home by the district commissioner. But Okello viewed himself as mighty, even as a young boy, and this thinking was widely accepted by others. As his half-brother, Yeko tells it, Okello’s mother’s firstborn was an elephant calf. As someone born from the same womb as an elephant, Okello viewed himself as imbued with superhuman strength. He also called himself Hitler, reflecting his self-image as a powerful man. His actions were often aggressive, and other boys were physically afraid of him. The Lango word *ger*, meaning fierce or cruel, was used by almost everyone who spoke about Okello. But Langis nevertheless liked him, and he was described as “humble” by the same people.

He was a good footballer; he was social, liked singing and dancing, and was well-behaved, according to his now 90-year-old sister Akello Kulusita Mary. Although his brawniness was admired in Uganda but not in Zanzibar, the family reports of Okello as both cruel and well-liked are consistent with later reports of him as both despotic and concerned with protecting those in need. Okello had a convoluted personality with seemingly contradictory character traits. This unexplored complexity contributes to the propensity to remember or focus on one


23 Interview with Yeko Okello, 22 January 2014. Yeko explained this boast in its Langi cultural context, as admiration of power and might, not as a veneration of Hitler as a Nazi. This is important for understanding Okello’s obsession with strength and domination. There are examples of people being named Hitler in other parts of British Africa as a sign of anticolonial strength, because Hitler fought the British. (Thanks to Luise White for this information.)

24 Interview with Yeko Okello, 22 January 2014.

25 Interview with Akello Kulusita Mary, 22 January 2014.
aspect of this multifarious figure. That is to say, for those who witnessed his ruthless radio broadcasts or public floggings, there was no reason to consider that he might have had another side to him as well.

After the death of his parents, Okello and his younger brother, Ogangi Tito, were sent to live with an uncle in 1952. The uncle beat Okello. When asked how the younger brother fared while living with the uncle, some family members said he did fine. Okello’s beatings, they alleged, were due in part to Okello’s stubborn nature, which his uncle would not tolerate. Okello refused to accept this treatment and ran away. The fact that Okello was orphaned at an early age had considerable impact on his life and outlook. Okello was told he was less important, as an orphan in his uncle’s home, and that he had to make his own way in the world. The beatings and mistreatment made him question the fairness of the world at an earlier age than most. Okello found comfort in the biblical Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3, citing the text in his memoir: “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted . . . blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs in the Kingdom of Heaven . . . blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you...Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”26 This was an early sign of his spiritual belief that God was giving him a mission. It is evident from his book that he had a heightened awareness of oppression and was moved by the desire to overcome injustice. David Koff, who helped Okello edit the manuscript that

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26 Okello, Revolution, 41-42.
became his book, said that Okello struck him as someone who truly believed in the cause he was fighting for.\textsuperscript{27}

Okello himself provides us with many examples of his learning to be strong, independent, and opposed to discrimination. He did not have an older brother to protect him and other boys beat him up when he would not “join any of their small gangs.” He fought them “until they fled” and “learned young, and in a hard way, how to stand alone.”\textsuperscript{28} He also tells of how he acted as mother and father to his younger brother after they were orphaned, fetching water and doing other domestic jobs. Since his sister was already married, the boys stayed on their own for a while before their uncle came to collect them. They learned to gather mushrooms from the forest when their cruel uncle drank, beat them, and did not feed them. When Okello left to join the workforce, he once again saw inequality and stood up to it. He claims to have taken grievances to a district labor officer to help his worker colleagues at a cotton ginnery in Otuboi get better working conditions from their Asian bosses. While living and working in Soroti, he quickly began to question why whites felt superior to blacks and why there were so many foreign owners of land and businesses in Africa. He asked himself existential and religious questions about the equality of all humankind and came up with the answer that Africans must assert themselves to overcome the status quo. He also prided himself on being a diligent and efficient worker, getting pay raises for his good work, and helping the destitute while others were out drinking.\textsuperscript{29} Okello had been mistreated and taken advantage of, which he found unfair; he did not want others to suffer a similar

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{27} Email correspondence with David Koff, 26 June 2013.
\item\textsuperscript{28} Okello, \textit{Revolution}, 39
\item\textsuperscript{29} Okello 1967: 41–51
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
fate. He had been orphaned and had lived on his own for most of his life, so he was strong and self-sufficient and had little patience for laziness or luxuries.

After working for primarily Asian bosses, moving around to various places, including Kisumu in Kenya, where he found the Luos similar to Langis from his home, he decided that he wanted more education. He had only had two years of primary school because he had been unable to pay school fees, but he was beginning to see the importance of education. Unfortunately, he was off to a late start and was never able to get the education he desperately needed. Nevertheless, he went to Nairobi, where he heard he could take night classes while working.30

His time in Nairobi, beginning in October 1954, impacted him greatly, shaping his ideas about injustice in a political light. Upon arrival at the train station, he was beaten and robbed by white soldiers, only to be mistreated further by the white police. When he returned to the train station with Luo police, he discovered that he was not alone in this treatment. He described seeing an African mother who had been beaten unconscious: “Beside her lay her aborted baby, dead as a result of the brutal behavior of the white soldiers.”31 He says that he met some leaders of the Land Freedom Army and later joined the Nairobi African District Congress under C. M. G. Argwings-Kodhek. He says the political education he received during this time was something he used later, “when teaching the masses of Zanzibar.” He says he realized that many Europeans hated Africans and that was why they engaged in such discriminatory practices. In late 1955, he went to prison in Kenya for two years. Because this incarceration took place during

30 Okello 1967: 54
31 Okello 1967: 55–6
the emergency, he was in prison with Mau Mau members who were being tortured and forced to confess what they knew about the movement. Okello articulates, “I came out of prison with a deep hatred of injustice and colonialism.” Although Okello was not in the Mau Mau himself, he was clearly influenced by the movement, the fear it elicited in the British, and the brutal way in which the British dealt with it.

Two more incidents in Kenya seem to have affected him similarly. When he was on the coast of Kenya in the village of Takaungu where the powerful Mazrui family held sway, he asked some Arabs if he could rest on their verandah. They called him slave and told him that he could rest but that he could not snore—he should “sleep as quietly as a dead dog.” Later, he traveled to a sisal plantation in Vipingoni, but he struggled with the social climate there, saying, “I hated to hear an Indian calling a 30 year old servant, ‘boy’, or an Arab shouting ‘mtumwa’ (slave). It goes deep into one’s nerves to hear such things.” These incidents motivated him to feel deeply the injustice of colonial rule and of the racial stratification that it upheld and reified.

The figure we see in 1959 is a man with two years of primary school education; a man who works hard and believes he has to fight for everything because he is an orphan; a man who is physically strong and who reveres physical strength and, perhaps, brutality; an itinerant laborer who longs for success; and a man who has been a victim of and witness to the oppression and exploitation of colonialism.

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32 In response to the Mau Mau movement, the British declared a state of emergency in Kenya, which lasted from 1952 until 1960.

33 Okello 1967: 55–8

34 See David Anderson (2005) and Caroline Elkins (2005) for detailed accounts of British torture and hangings of Mau Mau and suspected sympathizers.

35 Okello 1967: 62–3
In Pemba and Zanzibar, Stonecutter to Revolutionary

In 1959, Okello accompanied a Luo friend to Pemba Island where jobs were reportedly easy to secure. Friends of Okello in Pemba, particularly in Vitongoji where he lived and worked, remembered him with fondness. In other parts of Pemba, stories differed dramatically, as Pemba suffered severely under the Revolutionary Government, but in Vitongoji, people claimed to have liked him. One of his friends who worked for the Public Works Department (PWD), while Okello worked for himself cutting stones said that Okello was not a drinker. He would beat his friends if they did bad things while drunk. This may have earned him some moral admiration in a primarily Muslim society where drinking is not respected. Okello clearly viewed himself in a moral leadership role, as if he could and should provide guidance to others when they went astray. He also felt that the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) needed an office in that area, so when he moved to Unguja in 1963, he gave his house to the party. The building is much larger now than it was then, but it is still an office of the ruling party. Later, Okello returned to Pemba after the revolution and held public floggings to show who was in charge. Some members of the former ruling party were beaten by seven people at once. In spite of this show of force, however, Okello refused to beat anyone from Vitongoji or anyone (including Arabs or Indians) he had worked with or for. This is particularly striking, given how brutal the public floggings in Pemba are described as having been, with

36 Interview with Rajab Hakim Mrisho, 3 November 2013.
37 Interview with Saleh Nassor Juma, 3 November 2013.
38 Interviews Mohamed Aley Abdalla 2 November 2013.
39 People in Pemba consistently remarked upon this (interviews with Abdallah Bin Juma and Ali Omar Abdalla, 3 November 2013). Mzee Ghulum told a very specific story of an Indian soda factory owner who had fired Okello for stealing dye. Okello called him in after the revolution and asked him what he wanted. The man was terrified, but said nothing. Okello said, “Fine, but let me know if you want anything. I am in charge now and I can help you out.”
some people beaten by a *bakora* (cane) one hundred times on bare skin.\footnote{Interviews with Saleh Nassor Juma, Mohamed Haji Khalid, and Rufai Said Rufai, 23 October 2013, and Mohamed Aley Abdalla, 2 November 2013.} These are just a few examples of the duality of character we see in memories of Okello.

By the end of 1962, Okello had already decided that revolution was necessary so he went to Unguja to see the situation there for himself.\footnote{Okello 1967: 86} He moved from Pemba to Unguja in February 1963, about a year before the revolution.\footnote{Drum, February 1967. Interview with Ali Omar Abdalla, 3 Nov 2013.} While there, he worked as a house painter and in a bakery. Many different groups of people were discussing revolution at this time in Unguja, so the time was ripe when Okello began to approach people with his idea. He used the Zanzibar and Pemba Paint Workers Union in order to find a cadre of semi-skilled workers to join the revolutionary ranks. He says that the first people he and two other union leaders contacted thought that the plan was to kill the sultan rather than overthrow the government.\footnote{Okello 1967: 99} Many saw the sultan’s leadership as another form of imperialism. The key issue for these prospective revolutionaries was getting out from under colonial oppression, an idea that Okello was fanatical about.

**Biography, Take Two: Archival Sources**

**Threats and Mixed Messages over the Radio while Forgiving the Hypocrites**

In a broadcast on 12 January 1964, after Okello announced the new republic and named ASP leader Abeid Amani Karume as its president, he requested that Karume return to Zanzibar and assume his position in the new government. He continued to make numerous radio broadcasts during the next few days. The contrasting natures of Okello’s character came out in his radio broadcasts, as well as in people’s memories of...
him. One minute he was threatening people with imprisonment or being shot, and the next minute he was punishing people for being violent. Some examples of these threatening and confusing broadcasts follow.

On 13 January, when instructing everyone to bring all the weapons from their homes to Raha Leo headquarters, he said that the “Field Marshal is the leader of this Government, and he has ordered that cars can go out and search houses.” He claimed he knew of 17 youths with weapons who were given 20 minutes to surrender their weapons or they would be shot on sight. Arab youth were to stay inside as well; they also would be shot if seen out of doors. In the next sentence, however, Okello said that they should come outside with their weapons when his soldiers came to collect them and that the buildings would be ransacked to make sure there were no more weapons hidden inside. Later that same day, 13 January, after former Prime Minister Mohamed Shamte and former Minister of External Affairs and Trade Ali Muhsin al-Barwani pleaded for peace and requested that everyone maintain peace and order, Okello said they no longer had the right to ask for peace, as it was now up to the people to restore peace themselves. But, he said, if people did not obey, he would take measures 88 times more kali (severe) than now. He went on to say that the army had the strength of 99,099,000 and that those who did not do as they were told would be punished. An hour and a half later, he reported that Sheikh Ali Muhsin was beaten and that he was very unhappy about that. Okello wanted peace, and people were not to beat up ministers.

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44 Mohamed Shamte was the leader of the Zanzibar and Pemba People’s Party, which had formed a coalition with the Zanzibar Nationalist Party, led by Ali Muhsin, to form a government in 1963. These two men held the most powerful positions in the government that was overthrown.
even if Ali Mushin was the “leader of the hypocrites.”

Then, when Ali Muhsin was brought to his office, Okello put his pistol to Ali Muhsin’s face and asked whether he should kill him. After Ali Muhsin replied he should do as he wished, Okello said that his government would not oppress people, so he forgave Ali Mushin. Okello was also constantly making announcements demanding that people hand over weapons and vehicles to Raha Leo, as they were property of the government. There was simultaneously a significant amount of looting going on in town. Almost all stores were looted. Okello declared that this would not be tolerated: Any man caught with so much as half a bar of soap would get eight years in prison. This threat from Okello made a lasting impression on young people; despite all the stealing, if they found something on the ground and took it, they would rather throw it away or hide it for fear of getting caught.

Okello sought freedom from oppression and tried to lead in the midst of chaos without military training or guidance. This underdog status in a fight for justice had religious significance for Okello. He read the Bible avidly and had dreams in which God told him to help the Africans in Zanzibar. He saw himself as a martyr for the cause of saving his people from subjugation. Okello claims he was introduced to an Afro-Shirazi Youth League meeting as “Our Redeemer,” and he prophesied his own rejection at the hand of his followers. Ten days after the revolution, he was on a boat from Pemba to

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45 BBC Written Archives, Summary of World Broadcasts Part IV The Middle East and Africa.
46 Okello 1967: 152
47 *Daily Nation*, 14 January 1964
48 Interview with Mohamed Jiddawi and Nassor Hemed Nassor, 5 November 2013.
49 Okello 1967: 107, 113, 122, 186–7
Unguja with the Anglican bishop of Zanzibar. He asked the bishop to read him a biblical passage about the scribes and Pharisees and their hypocrisy. Okello told the bishop, “I don’t mean all those things about burning people in oil, you know.” The bishop replied, “it was time to quieten things down,” to which Okello responded, “Nobody tells me these things.” The last statement shows us that he had no trusted advisors he could count on. Additionally, in these instances Okello was drawing parallels between Jesus’ seeking to reform a system of duplicitous rulers and Okello’s own struggle against colonial domination. Although this may have been motivational for Okello, this is not part of Zanzibaris’ memories of him. It may never have been known to Zanzibaris, as they would not have been moved by this Christian martyr concept.

**The Symbolism of Mau Mau**

Okello was not a participant in the Mau Mau uprising but he used the reputation of this resistance movement to strengthen his own position. On 14 January 1964, Okello proclaimed, “I was a very high ranking person in Kenya in the Mau Mau Army which knows how to make weapons . . . . In fact, I can easily make no less than 500 guns per day. I can beyond doubt make a bomb that can destroy an area of three square miles. I can make about 100 grenades in an hour.” In his book, Okello reports that in a discussion with some African fishermen on his way to Unguja Island in February 1963, he explained that they would soon see “Arab colonialists eliminated.” They did not believe that was possible, remarking that “perhaps the ‘Mau Mau’ from Kenya” could do such a thing, but “no one can dare attack the imperialists here.”

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50 Smith 1973: 107–8

51 BBC Written Archives, Summary of World Broadcasts Part IV The Middle East and Africa.

52 Okello 1967: 90
help explain that Okello used the Mau Mau movement metaphorically, for its psychological value of striking fear into the hearts of both British and Zanzibaris, given the British view of the Mau Mau as uncontrollable atavistic savages. For his African audience, Okello also claimed a connection with the Mau Mau on the radio to give himself credibility as a guerilla leader, since the Mau Mau were a symbol of African guerilla fighters who could bring down imperialists. Given that he had no military or police training or experience, he needed to make himself look more prepared than he was. This type of misinformation was passed along not only by newspapers but by British and American intelligence reports. Don Petterson, the vice consul at the U.S. embassy in Zanzibar at the time of the revolution, comments on the process of information gathering, indicating that the British MI5 accepted information with little discernment and the Americans banked on the good name of MI5 and parroted it. Despite all the evidence that he was none of these, the myths of Okello as Mau Mau fighter, Zanzibari policeman, World War II veteran, King’s African Rifles soldier, and Cuban-trained revolutionary are still quite active. That these myths persist elucidates how this untrained, uneducated man played such a fundamental role in overthrowing the government of Zanzibar. His supporters proudly claim he was a soldier because it adds to his prestige. His detractors are convinced he had military training because the

53 It did not matter that the Mau Mau technically “lost” their campaign; they fought the British, and Kenya got its independence as a result. And East Africans knew that the British were afraid of the Mau Mau.

54 All the Ugandan elders who knew Okello, as well as a Ugandan military historian, confirmed that he was never in the King’s African Rifles or the Ugandan military. Additionally, Okello was not a policeman in Zanzibar (BNA DO 185/59 and RHL MSS. Afr. s. 1446).

55 Petterson 2002: 74–5

56 His wife’s son proudly told me that Okello was in KAR, and fought in World War II. Interview with Moses Onyok, 20 January 2014; Another informant said Okello was chosen to lead the revolution because he
idea of a barely literate mainlander, such as Okello, having the ability to topple a
government of more sophisticated and better-educated men was difficult to believe; this
feat was incongruous with Zanzibari exceptionalism.

**Biography, Take Three: East African Newspapers In the Aftermath of the Revolution**

Immediately after the revolution, Okello was in Dar es Salaam during the Tanganyikan army mutiny. This raised suspicion among many observers about his role in the mutiny, though historical sources clearly show that he did not have anything to do with it. Okello had gained power so suddenly and so incomprehensibly with the Zanzibar revolution, however, many East African leaders were suspicious of and concerned about him. On 20 February, Okello traveled to Uganda and Kenya, where he met with his family, President Milton Obote, and President Jomo Kenyatta. Kenyatta apparently teased Okello about coming through without seeing him on his way to Uganda and joked that some people told him Okello was trying to overthrow his government.  

Okello claims to have been well received by Obote and by some Kenyan leaders during this trip. On his way back from the trip, however, he was detained in Dar es Salaam for a few days, and then, when he flew to Zanzibar on 9 March, he was met at the airport and told he was no longer welcome there; he was flown back to Dar es Salaam. Several reports say he was flown back along with Karume for talks with Julius K. Nyerere, who was helping Karume strengthen his position. Nyerere asked Okello why he used the radio to “make fierce and boastful speeches, more than was

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fought in World War II and was in Mau Mau. Interview with Maisara Mahoukum Iddi, 2 November 2013. Family members used his title Field Marshal with similar admiration.

57 Okello 1967: 183

necessary.\textsuperscript{59} Despite Okello’s claim in his book that he had prophesied that he would be rejected even after being a hero, in reality, he was shocked and confused when he was kicked out. He was quoted as saying, “Even God must have been surprised.”\textsuperscript{60} This inflated self-image may well have provided the impetus for his removal, but his political naïveté also contributed. He was unable to see this move coming or do anything to prevent it. After a time, he was able to reflect on his expulsion for his book and use his religious sentiments to describe himself as a martyr to a just cause.

Once Okello had been removed from Zanzibar, all East African leaders became wary of him. This was an indicator that they believed not only that he was the leader of the Zanzibar revolution but that he was also capable of leading more revolutions. Okello was pronounced persona non grata in Zanzibar (and later Tanzania) and declared a prohibited immigrant in Kenya, and he was jailed consistently (for various reasons) in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda during the next five years. Okello was first arrested in Mwanza in northern Tanzania in October 1964, along with “Lumumbist” rebels from Congo. He was then detained in Kenya for 18 months beginning on 23 June 1965 for trying to enter the country as a prohibited immigrant. Okello then returned to Uganda and again was detained, from 3 July 1967 until 8 September 1968, under the Emergency Regulations, with no other reason given. Finally, on 3 January 1969, he was arrested on the Kenya-Uganda border while traveling on a bus bound for Nairobi. Once again, Okello was detained in Kenya as a prohibited immigrant.\textsuperscript{61} This pervasive fear of Okello spread beyond East Africa: in Malawi, even President Dr. Hastings Kamuzu

\textsuperscript{59} Okello 1967: 188
\textsuperscript{60} Okello 1967: 89; Tanganyika Standard, “World Shock, says Okello,” 17 March 1964
\textsuperscript{61} Daily Nation and Uganda Argus
Banda claimed that his former Foreign Minister was trying to enlist Okello’s help to overthrow him.\textsuperscript{62}

His notoriety was such that when he was released from prison in Nairobi at the end of 1966, he called John Nottingham, executive director of the East African Publishing House, and asked him if the company would agree to publish his book. Okello had a secretary who helped him write a first draft, which he brought with him. He spent several months living in a hotel on River Road, editing the book with David Koff, who was asked by Nottingham to help Okello with this task.\textsuperscript{63}

\textbf{Biography, Take Four: Views from Back Home in Uganda}

When Okello returned to Uganda in 1967, he was originally still trying to get back to Zanzibar. His own actions may not have helped him escape the kind of suspicion that kept landing him in jail. For example, Okello met with President Obote, who was from the same area, to see if he would be able to help facilitate a move back to Zanzibar. That did not pan out. However, Obote had his cousin and minister of information, Adoko Nyekyon, offer Okello a position in the military, with the stipulation that Okello also marry a sister of theirs. Okello refused, and from that time on he was under surveillance, and his relationship with Obote was strained.\textsuperscript{64}

Okello was so disillusioned with Obote that when Idi Amin Dada overthrew Obote’s government on 25 January 1971, Okello was pleased. In fact, he was so

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Daily Nation}, “Bid to Recruit Okello–Banda,” 17 November 1964. Okello seemed to have become known worldwide as an extreme revolutionary, as is shown by Werner Herzog naming a character after him in his 1972 film \textit{Aguirre, the Wrath of God}.

\textsuperscript{63} Email communication with David Koff, 26 June 2013 and interview with John Nottingham, 21 June 2013.

\textsuperscript{64} Interview with Okello Ajoka and Jonathan Opio, 23 January 2014.
hopeful and naïve that he went to Amin’s office to congratulate him (see Figure 5-1 courtesy of Makerere University Library). In the social memory of the Langi, Amin came to Alebtong to give a speech, and Okello knelt before him in greeting. His relatives criticized that move, not only when Amin’s true colors became clear, but also because they believed he might have survived if he had kept a lower profile. His continued use of the field marshal title is another way in which he set himself apart publicly. The legends surrounding his title of field marshal are also part of the Ugandan memories of Okello. Once again, his need for recognition and attention contributed to his downfall. As time went on and he saw how bad Amin was, Okello worked with his friend Jonathan Opio to begin recruiting people to overthrow Amin. They did so as they prepared to travel to Tanzania to ask the exiled Obote to join their plan. They did not get that far as Okello was killed before departing Uganda.

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65 Interview with Okello Ajoka, 23 January 2013; interview with Akello Kulusita Mary, 22 January 2014.

66 His cousin, Yeko, claimed that Idi Amin later took the title field marshal because he killed Field Marshal Okello (interview 22 January 2014). Moses Onyok said Okello was the first African to hold this title. He explained that the two ways one can take this title are by overthrowing a government or killing another field marshal (interview 20 January 2013). There is also an urban legend in which Okello joked that “now Uganda has two field marshals” and one in which Amin remarked that there cannot be two field marshals. These examples show the significance of the title and the rivalry it embellished between Okello and Amin.
Ugandan Memories of Okello’s Death

There is no social memory of Okello’s death in Zanzibar. His physical removal is reflected in the memories. In Uganda, the collective memory asserts Okello’s disappearance at the hand of Idi Amin. However, most Ugandans speak of it as legend, and are unaware of the details. Okello’s family and close friends provided new details about this event.

An Acholi named Latigo is said to have been the one who betrayed Okello and Opio and got Okello killed. The two men had collected some money and sent an intermediary to meet Alex Ojera, one of Obote’s men in Tanzania, who had been a minister in the first Obote cabinet. But that intermediary did not report back on the discussions, so they became suspicious of him. They collected more money to send Okello himself, since he was the leader of this group. He was supposed to go straight to

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67 More than one informant seemed genuinely sorry to hear the news that Okello was killed by Idi Amin.
Tanzania but he stopped at his home in Amugu on the way. Meanwhile, Latigo came to Okello’s home in Alebtong and was told Okello was in Amugu. Latigo then brought Amin’s men to Amugu and greeted Okello and told him that a friend had arrived from Nairobi and they should go meet him in Lira. Okello agreed, but he was strangled and his body was dumped in the swamp on the Aloï road before reaching Lira.⁶⁸ There were other stories that Okello’s body was thrown into the Karuma Falls but most of the stories about Okello being picked up by Amin’s men are quite similar. People drove to his home area and asked where he was, and they were taken to his home at Amugu, where they collected him and drove away. In one story, it was a boy who took the men to Okello. Okello was also reported to be waving to people as he left. That was the last time he was ever seen alive.⁶⁹

Okello left behind two widows, Akao Erin Okello, whom he inherited in 1972 from a brother who passed away, and Lily Atim, whom he married in 1972. He had two biological children: Agnes Awilo, Erin’s daughter, and Yoweri Acon, Lily’s son. Yoweri died, but Agnes is still living and has children of her own.⁷⁰ Erin had five more children who, according to tradition, were considered Okello’s, as she never remarried after Okello’s death. Lily Atim left the area and remarried.

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⁶⁸ Interview with Okello Ajoka and Jonathan Opio, 23 January 2014.

⁶⁹ Interview with Erin Okello, 20 January 2014. Okello also told his wife, Erin, that he was going to Kampala to collect building supplies rather than setting out to help Obote overthrow Amin’s government.

⁷⁰ His daughter Agnes Awilo resembles her father, as does one of her children, Okello Jonathan, whom she named after her father.
Okello in the Media, Then and Now

Old Sources, New Views: Local Media from 1964

Okello had been written out of Afro-Shirazi Party history by 1965. However, East African newspapers from 1964 leave little doubt about the significance of Okello’s role. The first edition of Kweupe, the official newspaper of the new revolutionary government, has four photos on its front cover. One is of President Karume, one of his cabinet, one of Field Marshal John Okello standing in his office in Raha Leo with weapons and bodyguards, and one of the Committee of 14 with Okello front and center (see Figure 4-2: Kweupe, 18 January 1964). Many Zanzibaris commented on how this series of photographs alone was a significant indicator of Okello’s position at that historical juncture. Additionally, on the eve of Okello’s visit to Kenya and Uganda, on 18 February 1964, the Tanganyika Standard front page depicted a photo of President Karume and Field Marshal Okello clasping hands at the Idd al Fitr baraza (gathering) in Zanzibar city (see Figure 5-2, courtesy of Makerere University Library). If Okello was merely a DJ with no following and no political sway, Karume would certainly not have felt the need to stand with him in a public display of (fake) unity. If Okello had no influence, there also would have been no need to get rid of him. This photo demonstrates the challenge Okello posed to Karume’s leadership at the time.

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71 See the Nationalist, 12 January 1965.
Most of the early reports of Okello in newspapers and archives were concerned with his violent broadcasts, his ambition, and brute force. The British, in particular, were concerned about how fierce and ruthless he might be. Okello’s own book confirms his courage as well as his ability to kill. While he makes the exaggerated claim that 11,995 enemy soldiers and people were killed, he also describes a physical battle with a sentry at Ziwani police headquarters in which he wrested the rifle from the sentry, hit him with
the butt of the gun, and killed him with its bayonet. In light of all this, it is odd that we also hear two Committee of 14 members calling Okello a coward. On a visit to Cuba in June 1964, Ramadhan Haji Faki and Said Iddi Bavuai told the Cuban press that Okello was no more than one of the deserters from the police barracks who tried to run away in a boat. What inspired such contradictory reports? This deserter story seems highly unlikely given all that is known about Okello; it did not catch on publicly or become a well-known story. I did not hear it from any other source, nor did Faki repeat it to me when we spoke in August 2013. In fact, at that time, Faki told me that he invited Okello to join the Committee of 14, a story which embraces rather than disparages Okello. It appears that at the time they reported the story about Okello’s cowardice, these men wanted to deemphasize Okello’s role in the revolution. This view is consistent with the official history, which was written a few months later (see below).

Many people believed that Okello was thrown out so quickly because he thought he was in charge and had managed to seize a great deal of power; he wanted to be president. His desire and ambition were too much, and even those who were impressed by what he had done did not support his attempts to gain power. Revolutionaries were pleased with what Okello was able to accomplish, but they wanted Karume as president. As a result, there was little protest over Okello’s removal in March.

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72 Okello 1967: 30–2, 160

73 BNA FO 371/174035. These men also reported the same story to Jamal Nassor Adi when he was asked to research the details of the revolution for Aboud Jumbe in 1980 (interview with Jamal Nassor Adi, 7 August 2013). In this archival source, Faki and Bavuai also say that Karume and Babu had not participated in the revolution but that they were still deserving of the positions they had.
A video that was originally part of Keith Kyle’s report on the BBC’s news program *Tonight* on 7 February 1964 is now available on YouTube. In it, Kyle reports on the revolution and interviews Karume, Okello, and Abdulrahman Muhammed Babu. The footage has garnered much interest in Zanzibar recently, as it is one of the only available sources of video and audio footage from the time. Kyle explains the planning of the revolution and the various plots that were being developed; he then questions the three leaders. Both Karume and Babu appear uncomfortable. Karume stammers a bit as he explains why a revolution was necessary, speaking in Kiswahili and to Babu rather than facing the reporter. Babu laughs nervously as he translates many of Kyle’s questions and Karume and Okello’s answers. Neither Karume nor Babu can answer the question of why Okello was chosen as leader of the revolution, but Okello states clearly and firmly that he was chosen by “viongozi inapenda na hawa watu wote” (leaders who were liked by all these people). When Babu translates this, he says Okello was chosen “because of his experience and the leadership which is popular to the people who organized the [revolution].” When asked about his military experience, Okello says that he got his experience and success “kwa Mungu wa Afrika” (by the God of Africa). Babu admits that he had no prior knowledge of this revolution and repeats that the revolution succeeded because of the “God of the Africans.” Today’s discussions about this video bring Okello back to the forefront in debates about the history of the revolution.

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74 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uPi3vh2hGE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uPi3vh2hGE).

75 Babu had been the secretary general of the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) until 1963, when a dispute with its leader, Ali Muhsin, led Babu to leave the party. He formed his own Umma Party in 1963 and joined the ASP in opposing the ZNP. He was a Marxist with close ties to China and Cuba. Eighteen of his Umma Party members received military training in Cuba and joined the revolution on the morning of 12 January.
Current Blogs and Newspapers: Okello Brought Back as Leader

As recently as 2012, Okello was compared to Che Guevara as a revolutionary leader. Joseph Mihangwa has written several pieces in Raia Mwema in conversation with what journalist Ahmed Rajab has written on the revolution and on Okello. Mihangwa points out that even if the ASP had won the 1963 election, the sultan would still have been in power but that the ASP only agreed to support this system of constitutional monarchy because party leaders knew they would lead a revolution later. He notes that Karume asked the youth to wait and work for victory at the ballot box, but that other more radical ASP leaders like Abdulla Kassim Hanga and Babu and his Umma party did not want to wait. They, as well as Okello, had begun planning for revolution. Without summarizing all of Mihangwa’s argument here, he uses much of Okello’s own book for biographical information, not only repositioning Okello at the center of his historical recounting of the revolutionary event but even presenting him as a forgotten hero.

Similar revisionist views are cropping up on websites. A 2011 Zanzibar blogspot points out that Karume was called to his position (from Dar es Salaam) while Okello was the actual leader of the revolution. The author of the piece observes that the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (SMZ) does not tell the whole story, questioning how the state could maintain that Karume was the man who led the revolution when Karume did not even know about the planned overthrow of the government. The author’s pen name is Free Zanzibar People from Mkoloni Mweusi (Black Colonialism),

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77 Hanga had lived and studied in the Soviet Union.
and his main issue is that Zanzibar celebrates Karume, who yoked the isles to Tanganyika in the union, but not Okello, who risked his life for the revolution—an unusual position, given that most Zanzibaris who feel this way about the union also deeply lament the revolution itself. Though the writing lacks idiomatic expression and appropriate grammar, the author seems to support the revolution but not the union with Tanganyika. His point is, if you support the revolution, you should recognize and honor Okello and other heroes who risked their safety for it.

Finally, in the issue of the newspaper *Nipashe* commemorating the 50th anniversary of the revolution on 12 January 2014, an article titled “Ushariki wa Okello Mapinduzi ya Zanzibar 1964” concludes that Okello was the leader of the revolution and that Karume was not involved in the planning or on the night of the revolution. The revolutionaries would have kept Karume out of the coup for his own protection and Afro-Shirazi Youth League leader and Committee of 14 member Seif Bakari refused to involve Karume until it was time for him to take over the country. The article cites interviews with former Afro-Shirazi Youth League (ASYL) leaders Abdallah Said Natepe and Ibrahim Amani in which they discuss how Okello was introduced to the Committee of 14 and how he came to be the main speaker on radio Sauti ya Unguja (Voice of Unguja). The author also cites the video by Keith Kyle and argues that it shows that Okello was the leader of the revolution as he stood right next to Karume, both of them wearing suits and being interviewed about the revolution. The article maintains that Okello had experience as a liberator as part of the Mau Mau, but also acknowledges


79 This is asserted by many other sources as well, including interviews documented in BNA FO 371/174035 and DO 185/59, and by Hamid Ameir, 25 November 2013.
that he had no formal military training. It claims that Okello had been introduced to the Committee of 14 by another ASYL member, Ali Lumumba, after Okello asked him when colonialists would leave Africa as that seemed to be a litmus test of sorts. The idea that the sultan and the ZNP-led government of Zanzibar were imperialist overlords is one of the narratives presented by African nationalists in Zanzibar and on the mainland. Okello independently expressing this opinion ingratiated him with the ASYL.

This new trend of crediting Okello is generally linked to the notion that Karume did not plan and lead the revolution as ASP party histories contend. Even though only one article explicitly associates the union with Karume and the revolution, the union is the most politically salient topic in Zanzibar today. Since Zanzibaris have been allowed to debate the constitution of Tanzania and the union openly for the past few years, the opinion that Zanzibar lost its sovereignty in the Union has been stated publicly by numerous politicians. This has opened the door for Karume to be criticized for his role in the formation of the union. That is the political environment in which Okello has returned to local media memories of the revolution.

**Okello in Academic Accounts and Party Histories**

Numerous early reports place Okello as leader of the revolution, whether they were local newspapers, foreign newspapers, or Western intelligence and diplomatic reports. Many of these initial reports included factual inaccuracies, such as describing

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80 For Zanzibari speeches and reports on the revolution getting rid of imperialism and colonialism, see ZNA AK 10/9, ZNA BA 70/3, ZNA BA 74/3, ZNA AK 17/10, ZNA AK 16/48, ZNA BA 68/16, and ZNA SA 1/104. Numerous reports cite Tanganyikan president Nyerere expressing this view of the sultanate as continued imperialism; see BNA CO 822/3204, BNA DO 121/237, and BNA FCO 141/7074.

Okello as a Kenyan Luo. However, Okello was widely acknowledged to be in charge of the overthrow of the government. Similarly, Michael Lofchie (1965), who wrote the earliest scholarship on the Zanzibar revolution, credited Okello with leading the uprising. Yet just as Okello was driven out of Zanzibar and later Tanganyika, so too was he written out of the official history of the revolution by the ASP. The government newspaper *The Nationalist*'s account of 12 January 1965 and the official history, *The Afro-Shirazi Party Revolution, 1964–74*, do not even mention his name, let alone credit him in any way with the overthrow of the government. Okello’s role in the revolution disturbed the narrative that it was Karume’s and the ASP’s revolution from the beginning. Because the SMZ came to power through the revolution, not through an election, its political legitimacy was dependent upon the revolution.\(^{82}\) According to this line of thought, if Okello were given credit for leading the revolution, Karume’s role would be diminished.\(^{83}\) The two exceptions were histories by non-Zanzibaris published after Karume’s death: Esmond Bradley Martin (1978) and Anthony Clayton (1981) both follow Lofchie’s example, crediting Okello with leadership of the revolution. After a period of a dearth of scholarship and other writing on the history of the revolution, the introduction of multiparty democracy in Tanzania in 1995 and the change in the political climate ushered in a new era of writing on the revolution.\(^{84}\) For a time, it was mostly those who resented the revolution and opposed the SMZ who gave Okello credit for his leadership role. Today, however, he is given credit in local media sources, as shown

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\(^{82}\) Bakari 2001

\(^{83}\) This is how the SMZ has viewed it: the need for a singular, political narrative. However, there were numerous groups who were discussing revolution at the time, including a group of Afro-Shirazi Party politicians. The reality is much more complex than the official discourse allows.

\(^{84}\) Fouéré 2012
above, as well as by several Zanzibaris with whom I spoke who say he certainly appeared to be in charge at the outset. Even Party authors\textsuperscript{85} have begun to acknowledge him. This new reading of Okello’s role in the revolution began, surprisingly, with Omar Mapuri’s \textit{Zanzibar, The 1964 Revolution: Achievements and Prospects} in which the author acknowledges the mistake of early ASP materials that left Okello out of the history completely.\textsuperscript{86,87} Additionally, in a recent unpublished Revolutionary Government manuscript entitled \textit{Historia ya Baraza la Mapinduzi 1964–2012},\textsuperscript{88} the authors cite Okello’s 1967 book about who was involved in the planning of the revolution. This indicates a certain credibility given to Okello in official SMZ materials and perhaps a new approach to his role. This broadening of the official story may stem from the 2010 Zanzibar Government of National Unity. With former opposition politicians in the government, new narratives arose in the public domain, and there was an attempt to gain renewed legitimacy through processes other than the revolution.

**Conclusion**

Views of Okello vary dramatically from British reports stating that he was unbalanced “round the bend,”\textsuperscript{89} to remembrances of his friends and family in Pemba and Uganda saying he was a charismatic leader who protected those close to him. The difference between the stories in Unguja, Pemba, and Uganda is indicative of the time

\textsuperscript{85} By the “Party,” I am referring both to the pre-1977 Afro-Shirazi Party and to the post-1977 Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM).

\textsuperscript{86} Mapuri 1996: 51

\textsuperscript{87} Other than this brief acknowledgement of Okello, this book tells the Afro-Shirazi Party side of the story.

\textsuperscript{88} History of the Revolutionary Council 1964–2012

\textsuperscript{89} BNA DO 185/59, Police Commissioner Sullivan is reported to have described Okello as “round the bend.”
Okello spent in each place. In Unguja, not much is known about him personally because he was not there for very long. What people know about him is mostly drawn from his public persona. In Pemba, where he lived for five years, people knew him as a friend or workmate, which gave them a different sense of the man. In Uganda, Okello was seen as a strong, brave, fierce, even brutal and cruel man, but he was admired, which is why he is cast as a hero. In other words, he could not have overthrown an unjust government without being ferocious. The difference is that in Uganda, there is no debate or discussion about the character of Zanzibar’s government in 1963. The independent state is assumed to have been an unjust regime entailing Arab colonial rule, hence the overthrow of such a government is clearly understood as a heroic act in the eyes of most Ugandans.\(^{90}\)

Okello and many of his fellow migrant laborers worked jobs in several countries in East Africa and can be viewed as transnational African nationalists. That is, they were pan-Africanists of the “Africa for Africans” ideology. On the other hand, Zanzibari pride in cosmopolitanism honors a type of transnationalism, insofar as trade and culture are concerned.\(^{91}\) Ironically, this respect does not extend to migrant laborers, who are equally transnational. Coastal exceptionalism was about historical connections with distant lands through a sizable trade route and a “civilized” culture, \(\text{ustaarabu}\).\(^{92}\) Zanzibaris whose transnational cosmopolitanism defined them looked down upon the Okello-type of mobility.

\(^{90}\) In an interesting parallel, the only mention of the night of the revolution itself at the 50th anniversary celebrations in Zanzibar on 12 January 2014 was made by Uganda’s president, Yoweri Museveni, who thanked Zanzibaris for overthrowing a bad government.

\(^{91}\) Burgess 2009: introduction

\(^{92}\) Glassman 2011: 62
Finally, a significant point that has not been examined in this chapter but that deserves attention is the issue of religion. Okello was a Christian who staunchly believed that he was sent by God to help the Africans in Zanzibar. He had dreams and visions that guided him in his work.\textsuperscript{93} Some of his friends and followers were also Christian, but the Zanzibari political leaders and most of the other Committee of 14 members were Muslim. Okello wrote that he felt the significance of this when he received threats after the revolution telling him, “You do not belong to the Muslim religion and you are leading Muslims even though you are a Christian. Also, your activities led to the death of many people on the Island, most of whom were Muslims. So, start counting your days for a time to come when Muslims will unite to expel you from the Island.”\textsuperscript{94} Given the current Zanzibari narrative that castigates Christian mainland hegemony and recasts Nyerere as \textit{Baba wa Kanisa} (church elder) and \textit{Adui wa Taifa} (enemy of the nation),\textsuperscript{95} it is surprising that Okello’s religion did not surface during my interviews.\textsuperscript{96} Zanzibaris generally knew that he was a Christian, but that was not mentioned among the numerous character flaws that resulted in Okello’s expulsion.

Numerous sources indicate Okello’s leadership role in the Zanzibar revolution. The recent political climate in Zanzibar has allowed more open discussion about the revolutionary event and Okello’s role in it. Therefore, in spite of cultural reasons for Okello’s rejection from Zanzibari society and political reasons for his physical removal

\textsuperscript{93} Okello 1967: 132–4

\textsuperscript{94} Okello 1967: 177–8

\textsuperscript{95} Fouéré 2014

\textsuperscript{96} These revisionist names for Nyerere play on his more conventional honorific as Baba wa Taifa (Father of the Nation).
from Zanzibar, he has returned to popular debates of Zanzibar’s history. Okello’s role is vehemently debated in the media in Tanzania, but he is no longer seen as someone whose presence meant that this was not a Zanzibari revolution. Instead, he is being discussed, in part, to show that the official narrative is incomplete. This historical revision does not entail a complete rejection of that official narrative, but it points to a widening of its scope to include more details than it previously has. Many sources now discuss Okello’s role in terms of practical and logistical questions about the night of the revolution as well as in relation to the revolution’s violence and brutality.
CHAPTER 6
THE AFRICAN NATIONALIST IMPERIALISTS: THE AMBIGUOUS ROLE OF THE BRITISH IN THE REVOLUTION AND THEIR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Chapter 2 outlines the various Zanzibari narratives of the revolution, but Zanzibaris are not the only ones who have multiple narratives on the revolution. The British officers who were in Zanzibar spilled a lot of ink trying to blame someone else for what happened. Several key British officers played roles in the revolution; some on the side of the Government and some of the side of the rebels. I argue that the role British officers and officials played was inadvertently instrumental in the outcome of the revolution. Three key actions enabled the confiscation of police weapons to become an overthrow of the government, which, in turn, become a full-fledged revolution. Those were a lack of police preparation and ammunition; advising the ministers not to get on board the Salama to rule from Pemba; and not intervening militarily. Even as the revolution was taking hold, the British withheld recognition, which encouraged the fledgling government to turn to Eastern bloc countries for help.

It is important to note that I followed this path in my research because several Zanzibaris told me that they blamed the British for the revolution. Conspiracy theories abound in Zanzibar with regard to the revolution as noted in Chapter 2. Some of the theories involve other African nations (notably Tanganyika and Algeria) and some involve Britain, the United States, and Cuba. However, those who blame the British tend to do so with specific reference to actions they either did or did not take to prepare for the possibility of revolution in the heat of the moment. Zanzibaris who supported the ZNP/ZPPP government felt abandoned by the British. Several wazee in a baraza I was part of expressed this feeling of abandonment that led them to believe the British
masterminded the revolution.\textsuperscript{1} The specific questions these Zanzibaris had led me to seek answers in the British Archival records. The details I found were too numerous to discard. In addition to my interlocutors, the Speaker of the Zanzibar National Assembly, K.S. Madon, reported that:

“All the time the people of Zanzibar were very hopeful that the British help was coming. In fact, when they saw the British ships far away in the harbor there was great jubilation amongst people and they were very pleased that this help was coming; but it never came.”\textsuperscript{2}

The British brought three ships, the HMS Rhyl, HBS Hebe, and HMS Owen to the waters just off the coast of Zanzibar and considered intervention.\textsuperscript{3} However, they ultimately chose not to intervene. Moreover, the full-scale dialogue about the possibility of British intervention came in the aftermath of the overthrow when they considered taking action to bolster a floundering President Karume.

The British men who were police and members of the civil service, including those in highly placed positions such as Permanent Secretary (PS), as well as the new British High Commissioner (BHC), played a role in the revolution, whether they intended to or not. In several situations, individual Britons acted in ways that were at odds with one another. In this chapter, I argue that the actions and advice of British High Commissioner Timothy Crosthwait and Permanent Secretary of Finance Henry Hawker influenced the course of events far more than is widely recognized. I will also demonstrate that there was a sharp divide among British members of the civil service in Zanzibar at the time of the revolution that can be clearly elucidated through their

\textsuperscript{1} Interview Humud Dughesh and group of elders, 12 December 2013.

\textsuperscript{2} RH MSS. Afr. s. 1690 K.S. Madon

\textsuperscript{3} BNA DO 185/59; later BNA DO 213/130 and BNA DO 213/131: Intervention in Zanzibar
reports. One group thought that their job was to protect the fairly elected government, while the second group seemed to think it was their job not to fight an action that would be more politically popular on a world stage.

Two of the recurring questions in the British documentation is “at what point do we accept this as a revolution?” and ‘How do we interpret events?’ That is, when did British officers act on behalf of the old government and at what juncture did they give up? ZNP supporters would say the British gave up fairly quickly, mere hours after the first shots were fired when very little resistance was presented. The police fled and little help was offered by anyone. Karume and other members of the ASP felt that the British did not support them, as official recognition of the new government was withheld for more than a month.

We have to dissect these British reports carefully, being mindful of extreme bias. The most complete reports were written by various Permanent Secretaries, British policemen, Commissioners, and Superintendents who very quickly lost a battle they were forewarned about; they were also defeated by uneducated, untrained African Zanzibaris. These men lost their jobs, their homes, and potentially everything. If they were not careful with their reports, the older ones would risk losing their pensions and the younger ones risked not finding another job. Personal letters bear this out as they wrote about the details of the settlements they would work out with the government of the United Kingdom. They sought political and practical scapegoats for their mistakes. They still needed the British system to protect them and their livelihood. In much of the

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4 Two files, in particular, contain personal letters from British colonial officers to Former Deputy British Resident, PAP Robertson, who retired just before the revolution, and to Sir George Mooring, the last British Resident of Zanzibar. RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston; RH MSS Afr. t. 56 Mooring.
historiography about the use of oral history in Africa, scholars write about the “subjectivity of the African voice.” The assumed objectivity of written documents is thrown into high relief by this argument. What I found in my research was that the level of subjectivity in the written sources was equally transparent as that of the oral sources.

PS Mervyn Smithyman continuously called the revolution a communist plot. Though he was incorrect about that and about Babu’s role in it as well as a number of other factors that relate to the who and why of the revolution, he was still performing his duty as a member of the government more than any of the other Permanent Secretaries. Men like Forsyth-Thompson and Hawker not only did not defend the government they worked for, but they actively sought its end. Yet they were valorized by the expatriate community who remained in Zanzibar and who simultaneously complained about the hardships they were suffering under the new Revolutionary Government.⁵

There was a schism and these personal letters bear out the critiques they had of one another. Smithyman and the police were the only British officials who strove to assist the existing government. They were also targeted and shot at by the rebels and they all departed on the Salama and the HMS Owen. Several families who remained in Zanzibar made disparaging remarks about the rushed departure of Mervyn Smithyman while they themselves complained about how miserable life was under the new regime. The letters also point to self-centered concerns about the sailing club during a time of enormous upheaval, strife, fear, and turmoil in Zanzibar.⁶

⁵ RH, MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston
⁶ RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston
Who’s Who

The most significant British nationals still serving in the Government of Zanzibar at the time of the revolution were Mervyn Smithyman, Permanent Secretary (PS) to the Prime Minister; A.H. Hawker, the Permanent Secretary of Finance; Adrian Forsyth-Thompson, Permanent Secretary Prime Minister’s Department (in charge of security); J.M. Sullivan, Commissioner of Police (CP); Ray Speight, Special Branch Officer in Charge; Alan Bott, Special Branch; A.B.P.J. Derham, Superintendent of Police in charge of Police Training School at Ziwani; RM Misra, Acting Superintendent of Police in Zanzibar District; and Thomas Waring, Assistant Superintendent of Police. Former Commissioner of Police Roy Henry Biles, who had been in Zanzibar since 1956, departed weeks before independence as he did not trust the ZNP and felt that Ali Muhsin was weakening the police force.7 Other Britons who feature in the historical record are British High Commissioner (BHC) Timothy Crosthwait and Jack Rumbold, the Attorney General. Adrian Forsyth-Thompson was sailing at the time of the revolution. Speaker of the House Madon was at a party in Mtoni. Lorna and John Cameron, who lived near Mtoni, were briefly held by the rebels. Fritz Picard, the U.S. Charges d’Affaires, called them at 5am because he heard there was something going on at Mtoni and asked them to please check it out. When they went, they were captured. They were not hurt, but they did witness an Arab being shot and killed. They were brought to Raha Leo after Mtoni and were released from there.8

7 RH MSS Afr.s.1446 Roy Henry Biles (Biles complains about the so-called Zanzibarization of the police force. See Chapter 4 for further discussion of this issue.)

8 Personal files and field notes, Clyde Sanger. And in RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston (written by Adrian Forsyth-Thompson)
Hour by hour, according to British Archival Documents

Henry Hawker was among those who supported the ASP. His actions throughout the course of the first twenty-four hours of the revolution demonstrate that he was in a unique position, which he used to influence the course of events. He took charge of the outgoing government after Mervyn Smithyman swam to the government yacht, Salama in the harbor. In this capacity, Hawker counseled the Prime Minister and he also hosted the British High Commissioner at his house. As the chief civil servant of Zanzibar, he had the outward symbol of another government, the Union Jack, flying above his house during the revolution.

As early as 3:30am when Smithyman called Hawker to inform him of the trouble at Ziwani and Mtoni, Hawker called Crosthwait to let him know of the situation. He acknowledged that, “at this stage it was really nothing to do with him,” and yet he was already informing the BHC of more information than would be usual for a PS of an independent country to disclose to a High Commissioner of another country. The blurring of roles had begun. CP Sullivan and several British police officers continued to fight for the old government until late Sunday afternoon. PS Smithyman also continued to try to get help for the elected government for as long as he could. Hawker and Crosthwait, on the other hand, seemed remarkably open to allowing the existing government to capitulate.

Just before 4am, Special Branch Officer Speight called Smithyman to tell him that CP Sullivan had sent him out to check on the situation at Mtoni because Sullivan was unable to contact them. Speight had run into a group of rebels “armed with knives,

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9 RH MSS Afr. s. 2250 Zanzibar Symposium
hammers, pangas, etc." at a roadblock where they attacked his car. He shot at them and drove away and went into hiding outside Zanzibar town. The story indicates two main points. First, the rebels did not have guns yet or they would have used them. Second, the police were still not taking this event seriously. Given the break in communication and the assumption of trouble, sending only one Special Branch officer to Mtoni was clearly inadequate.

At 4:15am, cable and wireless was still functioning and Smithyman, at the behest of the Prime Minister, wired Army and Police Headquarters in Nairobi and Tanganyikan President Julius Nyerere and Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta personally to ask for help.

By 4:25am, Sullivan informed Smithyman that he had lost control of Ziwani and Mtoni and that Ng'ambo police station was under attack with firearms. By this time, the rebels had gotten weapons from Ziwani. Because of this, at 4:30am an emergency was declared and a 24-hour curfew initiated. All Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, and the sultan were told of the Emergency.

Smithyman tried to keep the radio closed so that the rebels could not get it, but by 5:10am, PS for Education and Information informed him that the radio was On Air. From the way he was talking, the engineer seemed to be in rebel hands. Smithyman ordered something broken so that the radio would not work but that tactic did not last long. By the time people woke up, the radio had become an important tool for John Okello, an early leader of the rebels (see Chapter 5).

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10 BNA DO 185/59; Smithyman report, p. 10

11 Speight was rescued from Mtoni and brought to Shangani by Eric Stiven, before 6:30 am

12 BNA DO 185/59; Smithyman report, p. 10
One of the events that raised a question from a diplomatic standpoint is that the British High Commissioner remarked to the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister, “the question now arises as to the legal government” at 5:30am on 12 January, only three hours after police weapons were seized. The Permanent Secretary, by his own report, was “amazed” and “replied that no such question arose at that stage.”¹³ There had been absolutely no indication of any new political force requesting to be recognized at that juncture.

Before 6am, Commissioner of Police Sullivan had heard from the GSU in Kenya that they would arrive by 12:30pm. Sullivan relayed this information to Smithyman who then spoke with Joseph Murumbi, Kenya’s Minister for Foreign Affairs about getting troops to restore the government in Zanzibar. Murumbi sounded sympathetic and said he would talk with Kenyatta. Smithyman then tried to charter a plane to get arms from Pemba at the request of Police Commissioner Sullivan.

There were already two factions working at odds with one another: Smithyman, Sullivan, and some others trying to shore up the government versus Crosthwait, Hawker, Forsyth-Thompson and others who thought that the old minority government was passé and it was time to negotiate with the rebels in order to make the most of the situation. The latter group succeeded, and in fact, influenced the outcome of the revolution.

Cars rushed to pick up the sultan and take him to the Salama around 7am.¹⁴ At 7:30am Smithyman reported to Hawker that the hospital had been taken over and he

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¹³ BNA DO 185/59; Smithyman report, p. 11. Shivji agrees that this was indication of a rather quick shift, on behalf of the British. (Shivji, p. 50)

¹⁴ RH MSS Afr. s. 2250 Zanzibar Symposium, Hawker report.
was no longer safe but he was talking about the possibility of a government in exile. By
7:45am, however, Sullivan told Smithyman that the situation was desperate; they
discussed that the Ministers and the sultan should go to the Salama. At this point, PM
Shamte and Smithyman still thought that the government could hold out if they were
removed from the rebel attack. Smithyman told Hawker to help get the Ministers and the
sultan to the ship. Using the telephone had become a problem. PM Shamte had been
moving around town and had not remained in any one place for too long in order to
protect himself but he did not always give Smithyman his number. Smithyman wrote
that he told Hawker that if he did not arrive at the Salama, Hawker should act on his
behalf. Hawker lost contact with Smithyman shortly after 8am and he began to take
charge as the Chief Executive Officer of the Government on the island.\textsuperscript{15} He had a very
different approach than Smithyman.

Around 8:30am, the rebels went to PM Shamte’s house and then to Smithyman’s
house. Smithyman, Jack Rumbold, and the Horsfalls escaped by boat.\textsuperscript{16} Shots were
fired as they swam out to the dinghy and Smithyman saw the rebels shooting three
young people going to Roman Catholic Mission.\textsuperscript{17} By 9:15am, Smithyman boarded the
Salama to find the sultan there, but, much to his disappointment, no Ministers.

\textsuperscript{15} RH MSS Afr. s. 2250 Zanzibar Symposium, Hawker; RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston: a letter from
Audrey Smithyman

\textsuperscript{16} Although, George Horsfall was momentarily in rebel hands because he refused to run! His wife, Robin,
and child got on the boat. Smithyman’s wife and daughter left earlier by boat. There was also other drama
to this moment, with the outboard motor falling off, so they were paddling to get away from the rebels with
guns. And a guy in a launch who took Rumbold who would not get near the shore, due to the shots being
fired, so he took Rumbold all the way to Tanga! RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston

\textsuperscript{17} These were probably the Goans that are oft spoken of as among the first innocents killed during the
revolution.
Reflecting on Hawker’s role in failing to get the ministers to the Salama, Smithyman wrote to Robertson, “I suspect that certain defeatist counsels were made.”\footnote{RH MSS. Afr. s. 2116 Patrick A.P. Robertson}

Meanwhile, the BHC had called for the British frigate, \textit{HMS Owen} to sail for Zanzibar in case it was needed and Hawker ordered the \textit{HHS Seyyid Khalifa}, a Zanzibar Government steamer, to sail back to Zanzibar from Tanga because it might be more useful than in Mombasa where it was headed. Meanwhile, Sullivan was waiting to hear if GSU from Kenya were coming. Sullivan’s report indicates that he thought the GSU had been promised as PM Shamte had spoken with Murumbi. Hawker’s report indicates that they had to get permission from Kenya’s PM first. Was the difference in impression due to the different approaches each had taken when communicating with the Kenyans?

At 11:30am, per instructions of the sultan and the last instructions of PM Shamte, Smithyman cabled Nairobi asking for help. He continued to try to get help for the government and figure out how to keep them in power. He still thought they might be able to rule from elsewhere. Numerous fellow countrymen criticized him for this, including one letter that said, “Poor Mervyn is in worst condition. He flipped, panicked and acted without due responsibility, but he believed he was doing right, poor chap.”\footnote{RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertson; letter from Bill}

After the first few days of the revolution, Smithyman was told that he was a target and that he should not come back to Zanzibar without a guarantee from BHC. He wrote to Sir George Mooring, former British Resident:

“when you first arrived in Zanzibar…you said we must try and get on a friendly basis with the Ministers, as that was the way to ease things along.
That is now one of my crimes, it seems. I protected the ASP from the ZNP in the early 1957 days, but because I refused to favour the ASP, I am now their enemy.\(^{20}\)

At 2:45pm Smithyman received a message from Hawker saying he was trying to meet with Karume, and that he was with the Ministers. Hawker said not to send any telegrams asking for assistance from the ship. The tables had turned. Hawker and Crosthwait were now trying to find the best strategy to deal with the new revolutionary government, even though they still had no idea who comprised that body. Nor did they hold any official position that made them mediators in chief; these were roles they gave themselves (not unlike Field Marshall Okello, see Chapter 5).

By 4:30pm, Sullivan and the police who had been fighting from Malindi Police Post boarded the *Salama* and transferred to the *Seyyid Khalifa*. Smithyman commended British officers for their bravery, remarking that the other police gave up. He praised the officers at prisons as well where there were only two British officers; they remained until they were ordered by the government to relinquish their posts.

In the midst of this morning of confusion, PM Shamte looked for someone with whom he could negotiate. Hawker tried to determine whom to call for the Prime Minister to negotiate with but he could not get a response from Raha Leo and he could not reach Abeid Karume or Othman Shariff.\(^{21}\) Hawker noted this in his report, explaining how Shamte asked President Nyerere of Tanganyika to intercede as a negotiator. Nyerere, in turn, asked Robin Miller, Head of UN Mission in Tanganyika, if he would mediate. Both refused because PM Shamte had not found anyone with whom he could negotiate.

\(^{20}\) RH MSS Afr. Robertson; and RH MSS. Afr. t. 56 Sir George and Lady Mooring

In such a context, how was it that Hawker counseled Shamte to give up? Does the lack of a leader not indicate that the coup was not such a coup? Perhaps there was a great deal of confusion, which means that the existing government was still a government, whereas the rebels had tenuous leadership at best.

**Capitulation of the Ministers**

Hawker, Sullivan, the Ministers, and a Mr. Frigout who was stranded at Raha Leo continued to communicate between 11am and 2pm to no avail. By 2pm when PM Shamte asked if the Ministers could board the *Salama*, Sullivan replied that as long as they could make it to port on their own, they could get a launch to the *Salama* but he did not have enough ammunition to escort them to the port. In fact, by 3pm, Sullivan was going to bring his men to the *Salama* shortly, owing to a lack of ammunition.

At this time, PM Shamte sought the advice of Hawker. Hawker reports this conversation thusly:

> I asked him what his own appreciation was and whether he thought that his Government would be able to rule again in Zanzibar. He said that they would not, but that if he and the two Ministers could join the Sultan and Smithyman on board “Salama” they would still be the recognized Government and could operate away from Zanzibar Island. I advised the Prime Minister that I did not any longer consider this to be practicable from the point of view of their present safety. I also asked him if it was his view and that of his colleagues that with a minority following they would be able to rule again in Zanzibar Island. He said that he thought that probably they would not and I asked him whether he had considered resigning in order to try to save lives and property.\(^{22}\)

That is precisely what Shamte and the other ministers ended up doing shortly after. They agreed to resign based on a guarantee of safety for the ministers and their families. Their safety was assured but these assurances were later reneged upon.

\(^{22}\) RH MSS Afr. 2250 Zanzibar Symposium; Hawker report, p. 5-6
Hawker’s own report as much as admits that he made significant overtures which resulted in the resignation of the Cabinet of the ZNP/ZPPP government. This also corroborates Smithyman’s assumptions about Hawker’s role in guiding the ministers away from boarding the Salama and the possibility of continuing to rule. When it came to rounding up the old ministers and handing them over to the new revolutionary government, Smithyman wonders how they got PM Shamte from the BHC’s place where he had been protected and acerbically remarks, “no doubt Henry Hawker will have the answer”.  

Hawker was trying to present an image of Zanzibar as stable, reporting that there was no rioting on Monday 13 January! All evidence indicates that this is an absurd claim. While the British were prepared to send in troops and had readied them, Crosthwait and Hawker were resisting, saying, “let Africans help their brothers…” This shows that British policy was to support the government but to rely on British officials on the ground for advice. It also provided them with an excuse on the world stage, a plausible explanation for why they had failed to act; they wanted Africans to show support for the government. The impact of Hawker and the new, controversial BHC was significant.

Additional Pieces of the Puzzle

Armory

Smithyman wrote to Pat Robertson (former Deputy British Resident) and reminded him that at their last meeting with PM Shamte and Ali Muhsin they discussed

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23 RH MSS Robertson
24 BNA WO 276/373
25 BNA WO 276/373
the possibility of British aid. When Robertson contacted HMG, they would not agree to help. So they decided to expand the regular police, PMF, and Specials. When this was proposed, however, Henry Hawker, (who was PS Finance at the time), turned it down saying there was no money available. They had gotten 4000 GBP for a new armory at HQ “on the grounds that Cuba boys might attack it.” They were to build a new armory soon, though clearly, not soon enough. That is the best foresight in any of the reports. Smithyman blamed Hawker for turning down the funds for a new armory and former CP Biles for spending more money on his house and not enough on the armory. Smithyman continued to think, however, that it was a Communist plot, and repeatedly remarked that others could learn lessons from this historical moment. Even though the Communist analysis was inaccurate, Smithyman’s perspective remained consistent and supportive of the outgoing Government.

Help from the Mainland?

By accident or mistaken strategy, there were two times when British officers almost went to the mainland for help, but then did not. Assistant Superintendent Waring asked Commissioner Sullivan at 4 am if he should go request help, but Sullivan was on the phone with Dar es Salaam and told Waring to join him at Malindi at that point. Could they put enough pressure on Dar from afar? Would an envoy have helped at that juncture? On Sunday afternoon, PS Smithyman says a number of officers aboard the

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26 This issue of a Defense Pact is covered in detail in Chapter One.
27 RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston
28 RH MSS Afr. s. 2116 Robertston
29 If Hawker and the BHC had shared Smithyman’s perspective, quite a different turn of events would have been likely.
Salama wanted to go to Dar es Salaam for help, but he did not want to leave Sullivan and other police behind defending Malindi. By Sunday afternoon, Nyerere and others had already decided not to help the old government, but it is hard to say what might have happened if a policeman had arrived at 4 am and asked for other police forces from Tanganyika to help.

**Decolonization and Army Mutinies**

Karume and other ASP leaders presented the revolution as anti-colonial, with the perspective that colonialism was still in force, albeit a dual colonialism of the ZNP/sultan as puppets of the British imperialists. Even though the revolution was just after Independence, nothing had changed, and the revolution was about the economic disparity and injustice that accompanied colonialism. ASP supporters did not see any changes for the good that came with the official departure of the British. First of all, the British were still there. They occupied major roles in positions of systemic power, including government/civil service, police, business, schools, ships, and so forth. This was the case in numerous colonies in the months after Independence, but it was only a handful of cases in which that situation fomented a rebellion of sorts. The role of Europeans in the Police Force and Military were particularly disturbing to newly independent African states. Famously, in newly independent Congo, the presence of Belgian officers in the military led to an army mutiny that was also one of several factors in the quick toppling of Patrice Lumumba’s fledgling government and his assassination. Army mutinies in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda happened within weeks of the Zanzibar Revolution. In fact, the success of the rebels in Zanzibar was one catalyst that led military men in the rest of East Africa to realize their bargaining power. In all three cases, the issue was that of a strike because the soldiers wanted better treatment from
the independent government. They had assumed independence would have brought higher status and, when it did not, they rebelled.\(^{31}\) The highest ranking officers were also still British in these three countries. In each of these cases, the situation might have spiraled out of control, except for British intervention putting down the revolts. In Tanganyika, President Julius Nyerere went into hiding, disappearing for days while Minister of Foreign Affairs Oscar Kambona dealt with the army mutiny.\(^{32}\) The mutinies had potential for serious political impact, and yet, they became almost un-mentioned historical events in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda. In Zanzibar, however, the revolution completely changed the political, social and economic situation of the isles.

The relationship with the previous colonial power was significant in newly independent countries. In the midst of the Zanzibar Revolution, the British did not intervene to quell the revolt and the rebels protected the British. Belgium agitated the situation in Congo and was ultimately part of Lumumba’s assassination. When the British came to the aid of former colonies in the midst of army mutinies, the governments survived (at least for the next couple years in the case of Uganda). When the former colonial power did not support the government against a revolt, a revolution ensued.

**The British and the Sultan**

**The Office of the Sultan and the Unpopular Young Man Who Inhabited It**

The British support for the sultan had an impact on independent Zanzibar. Another contradiction, however, is that although the British supported the sultan’s throne as an institution, they did not support Seyyid Jamshid, the young prince who

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\(^{31}\) Parsons, Timothy. *The 1964 Army Mutinies and The making of Modern East Africa*

\(^{32}\) Parsons, Army Mutinies, 140; Laurence, The Dar Mutiny of 1964, 135
became sultan in 1963. Jamshid’s grandfather, Seyyid Khalifa, was well liked and supported by all and the British even supported his son, Seyyid Abdulla, who was not as beloved among Zanzibaris. Jamshid, however, was by all accounts a young playboy type who was not respected. Ali Muhsin tells the story of Sir George Mooring asking Muhsin to confirm that Zanzibaris wanted Jamshid as their sultan when his father died. Muhsin and the ZNP ministers said yes, it was his birthright. The British, then, had no legitimate reason not to support his ascendancy to the throne, though it seemingly pained them. Even Jamshid himself did not want the throne; he wanted it given to his younger brother so that he could enjoy a more private life. The ZNP leaders maintained with strict rules of succession to the dismay of the British and the new sultan himself. This turned out to be an unwise decision – one of many the ZNP made – as it was much easier to garner support for a revolution against an unpopular sultan than a widely respected one like Jamshid’s late grandfather Khalifa.

**Abdication of the Sultan? Not a Concern?**

Though Hawker clearly outlines his role in persuading Prime Minister Shamte to resign, I have not found a single document that indicates that anyone instructed the sultan to abdicate or make any other formal announcement relinquishing his position. Granted, Hawker’s recommendation to Shamte was a practical matter in response to Shamte arguing that his government could depart to safety and rule from afar. Hawker replied that if Shamte thought he could rule from Zanzibar, then he should stay, but if he did not think that was possible, then he should resign so as to avoid further bloodshed.\(^{34}\)

\(^{33}\) al Barwani, p. 160  
\(^{34}\) BNA DO 185/59, Hawker Report to Karume 20 January 1964, p.2.
There were discussions with the sultan about his safety and whether or not he should flee Zanzibar at that time, but there is no documentation to indicate a formal relinquishing of his office. Perhaps this was a non-issue. Since he simply lost the battle for his territory, as it were, the act of departing was therefore the same as abdicating. However, since there are many historical examples of a leader being taken to safety during dangerous times only to return and resume power when his side is back in control, we cannot assume that his act of fleeing at that moment indicated his intention to relinquish his throne. In fact, the following week, Tanganyikan President Julius Nyerere disappeared for three days during the army mutiny in his country yet he did not relinquish power. Perhaps it simply did not matter because as a figurehead, the sultan did not have any political power. And yet, there are several arguments I will outline later that indicate that getting rid of the sultan was a significant symbolic issue to the revolution. Therefore, it should have mattered whether or not he acknowledged the loss of his power. Additionally, his position held enough symbolism that he was refused asylum when he arrived in Mombasa on 13 January. The British High Commission in Nairobi wrote that the Kenyan government was concerned that the presence of the sultan might provoke disturbances between the “large Arab community” and others in Mombasa.

**British Officers Protect Their Honor and Their Legacy through Their Written Record**

Many British officers tried to explain how such an attack succeeded. How could this have happened? How could the police have been caught off-guard and sufficiently

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35 Parsons; Laurence, *The Dar Mutiny of 1964*

unarmed and unprepared to defeat it when absolutely everyone had heard it would happen? Arguments range from practical considerations – there were only two weapons caches on the island and the armory was not fortified – to varying evaluations of the capability of the freedom fighters. The best explanation for why the warning was insufficient came from Assistant Superintendent Waring who was in charge of the Police Mobile Force based at Mtoni. Waring said that so many Arabs had warned him about an “armed invasion from Tanganyika…[that] I learned to ignore these rumors.”37 There are also analytical differences about political moves of the ZNP such as banning the Umma Party or sacking the mainland policemen shortly after independence.

Commissioner Sullivan’s report outlines how well trained and organized the freedom fighters were, citing the communist materials on revolutionary tactics that had been in bookstores in Zanzibar, further explaining how they enacted a “textbook revolution,” taking key targets, such as the hospital, broadcasting system, and airfield. He points out that they did not need to cut off “essential services” because it was evident that they would accomplish their goal.38 Interestingly, they did not take the hospitals or the airfields right away, nor did they limit communicating through cable and wireless until Monday, 13 January. Additionally, they did not take the sultan or his palace, nor any ministers. So this was not a “textbook attack,” but Sullivan was the Commissioner of Police; he was in charge of internal security on the island. This happened on his watch and he needed to explain how untrained men with primitive weapons overtook his entire police force. So his report portrays a far more formidable

37 BNA DO 185/59, Waring, p. 2
38 BNA DO 185/59, Sullivan, p. 11
force of rebels than was the reality. This is compounded by other reports which point out how long it took for the revolutionaries to take those exact targets, how they fired uncontrollably, how many paid more attention to looting than to the coup, and finally, how ridiculous it was that they did not shut down electricity, telephones, and water. Forsyth-Thomson goes so far as to say, “thereafter they did nothing that even an incompetent revolutionary would be expected to do.”\textsuperscript{39} Granted, he used a great deal of sarcasm in his report, making fun of people on all sides of the situation, but Sullivan had to present an impressive rebel force or he would come across looking completely incompetent losing to a ragtag group of looters with weapons. In fact, almost every other author uses the word “thugs” or “hoodlums” to describe Okello’s group. But Sullivan details how well-planned and executed the revolution was while Forsyth-Thomson talks about the disorderliness of the fighters and says the killing was “pointless (and some was undoubtedly accidental),” as “a large number obviously had very little idea of how to use a rifle.”\textsuperscript{40}

It is unclear from Forsyth-Thomson’s report what his actual physical vantage point was for witnessing these events, but his perspective on the situation is obvious. He also dismisses a number of issues out of hand that seem relevant and that others take more seriously. For example, with the great disdain he seems to have for the ZNP, he says that they banned the Umma party “without consulting anybody.”\textsuperscript{41} Not that it was a smart move, but being an independent government they had every right to do it without consulting anyone. More relevant to the point, however, is that Smithyman was

\textsuperscript{39} BNA DO 185/59, Forsyth-Thomson, p. 4
\textsuperscript{40} BNA DO 185/59, Forsyth-Thomson, p. 4
\textsuperscript{41} BNA DO 185/59, Forsyth-Thomson, p. 1
present at the Cabinet meeting at which it was discussed and says the decision was based on reports provided by Special Branch.\textsuperscript{42} Smithyman also says that Forsyth-Thomson was “the senior official concerned with security and intelligence in British Resident’s office” who Smithyman had assigned “special duty for the specific task of ensuring that security services and intelligence were placed on the most efficient possible basis before his departure in February.”\textsuperscript{43} Forsyth-Thomson’s motive for making the ZNP look incompetent is fairly clear. Smithyman seems to disagree with a number of Forsyth-Thomson’s points, even going so far as to agree with the ZNP that mainland police were untrustworthy and the plan to sack them was a good one, arguing that the coup was so well-planned and executed that the sacked policemen and loss of senior expatriate officers would not have made a difference anyway.\textsuperscript{44}

One last example of Forsyth-Thomson’s glib remarks is his comments about the “ancient fear of the Arabs” of invasion from the mainland. He points out that no weapons or people came from outside as had been reputed. The “Cubans” were Zanzibaris who had spent time in Cuba and he jokes that even the Field Marshal “for a long time past has been painting our houses.”\textsuperscript{45} Interestingly, Smithyman seems to find some truth to the theory of outside influence and his reasoning is Mr. Mischa Fainzulbur, a businessman who used his glass-bottom boat to ferry people like Babu, Hanga, and other Zanzibari leaders back and forth to Dar es Salaam in the immediate aftermath of

\textsuperscript{42}BNA DO 185/59, Smithyman, p. 6. It is worth noting that the Special Branch was also headed by British officers.

\textsuperscript{43}BNA DO 185/59, Smithyman, p. 1

\textsuperscript{44} BNA DO 185/59, Smithyman, p. 6

\textsuperscript{45} BNA DO 185/59, Forsyth-Thomson, p. 4
the revolution when no one was allowed to arrive or depart the island. He says that this man’s source of income is a mystery and his boat could carry up to 30 people. He speculates that as early as the 1961 riots, mainlanders could have been brought in for political activity with no record of their travel. He reports that Fainzulbur himself bragged to Smithyman’s wife about being an ASP member and ferrying people for “a long time.”46 It may be a bit of a stretch, however, to take this as an indication of the “invasion” from outside theory. Forsyth-Thomson is right that this was a locally sponsored coup, particularly insofar as the communist support theories go. However, there has been plenty of interaction with the mainland for a long time as well. I think the difference is in how ZNP made it conspiratorial and labeled it an “invasion,” when its nature had been much more fluid prior to the “time of politics” in the 1950s and even prior to independence when the ZNP started removing mainlanders from the police and public service and banning opposition political parties.

Finally, there was a bit of a battle between western (British and American) media sources and government officials, both diplomatic and intelligence. There are references to specific newspaper and magazine articles and authors in the administration documents, as well as numerous references to more general inaccurate reporting. Journalist Keith Kyle is mentioned by name several times, and in one of his articles he points out that some of the police informants told the police they thought they wanted to hear about Babu’s whereabouts during the revolution.47 He did not have access to the police report, however, which indicates that the police knew they were

46 BNA DO 185/59, Smithyman, p. 8-9
getting false information about that detail. Kyle additionally refutes the legend of a battle at the Malindi Police Station by saying that the windows remained unbroken. Kyle also seems to think that it took the revolutionaries a long time to take over certain key points and a long time for the sultan to leave “hours later” when most other sources remark on the speed with which the entire government fell. Finally, Kyle reminds us that the ZNP was founded by African peasants as part of a protest of mandatory cattle immunizations in the Protectorate.\(^4\)

The contest, then, was about who was able to gather the most and the most accurate information.

Evacuation and its Implications

Starting on 12 January, the British brought three frigates to the waters near Zanzibar in the event they were needed. The question of evacuating British subjects became a diplomatic issue for BHC Crosthwait. Karume pressured him not to evacuate because it would indicate that the new government was not stable and reliable. Crosthwait went to lengths to explain the departure of the HMS Owen with women and children as a routine departure bringing children back to school. The fact that there were also former police and others onboard was overlooked in order to make the explanation plausible.\(^5\)

The HMS Owen departed on Friday, 17 January. The Americans, on the other hand, simply evacuated all of their citizens almost as a matter of course when they were not able to reach anyone in the revolutionary government on Monday 13 January.\(^6\)

\(^4\) Kyle, Keith. “Gideon’s Voices.” The Spectator. 7 February 1964. Burgess (2001) noted the peasant basis of the National Party of the Subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar, but he remarked that it did not have one race as the basis. He also says it was anti-colonial in nature. (p. 108)

\(^5\) BNA Do 185/59; Petterson

\(^6\) Petterson, p. 72
Thursday: Foreign Journalists and U.S. Consul Expelled

On Thursday, 16 January 1964, a series of events involving Western journalists and the American Consul vividly demonstrate the vulnerability of Karume and the new regime. On Wednesday night, seven journalists from the U.S., Britain, and Canada took a dhow from Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar to report on the events of the revolution. They reached the waters off Zanzibar at night and were told by those aboard the HMS Owen that there was a curfew and they should try to disembark the following morning. They journalists stayed on the HMS Owen before coming ashore Thursday morning. Not only was there a curfew in place, but there were severe restrictions on travel to and from the islands. When the journalists eventually reached Zanzibar, they were questioned by revolutionary guards. Don Petterson, the American Vice-Consul was called to assist with the situation. He joked around with the journalists, among whom were Clyde Sanger of the Guardian newspaper and Robert Conley of The New York Times. Sanger thought it unwise to write anything down; other journalists took notes only to have their notebooks confiscated. Their notes angered Karume, who later that day berated them for writing lies about Zanzibar. However, the issue that seemed to cause the most significant concern for the revolutionaries was that Robert Conely had a press pass from the Department of Defense. This raised the idea that the journalists were CIA.\textsuperscript{51} The newsmen were also taken on a drive and lined up against a wall while guns were waved around. Some of the journalists wrote dramatically about this event, fearing they

\textsuperscript{51} Interview with Clyde Sanger, August 2009 and Petterson, p.98-100. Sanger pointed out that his press pass had never been related to the Defense Department; he said that was unusual and he still is not sure why Conley had that. Petterson, on the other hand, did not recognize a problem with a journalist having a pass from DOD. He commented that it was Conley’s name that someone got confused and thought there was a “colonel” amongst the newspapermen.
were going to be executed. In fact, their pictures were taken and they returned to “house arrest” at the hotel.

Later that night, one of the more telling experiences of Karume’s vulnerability at this early juncture took place at that hotel where the journalists were staying. The U.S. Consul, Fritz Picard joined Othman Shariff and the journalists for drinks when Karume “stormed in,” upon his return from Dar es Salaam. Crosthwait seemed to have less gumption than the rest and clearly wanting Karume’s approval, ducked down behind the counter when Karume stormed in in order to stay out of the fray. Angry about what the journalists had written and likely not thrilled to see Picard with his political rival Shariff, and undoubtedly feeling susceptible to rapid political change, he yelled at Picard, “Why don’t you recognize us?” I will address this concern in the next section on unintended consequences of this lack of recognition. At that moment, however, Picard was the target, and he was deported from Zanzibar the next day.

**Communist Threat, the Lack of British Recognition, and the Impact**

The British had been concerned about A.M. Babu and his ties with Communist China for several years. When the Government of Zanzibar was overthrown, many British sources assumed it was Babu’s revolution. They found similarities between documents they had confiscated from Babu and the Umma Party offices on 4 January and what had transpired on 12 January. These similarities only helped to exacerbate the level of concern the British and Americans had about Babu and the Umma Party. Thus, they attributed many acts and intentions of revolutionaries to Babu and found

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52 Petterson says Nugent thought so, p.101-2.

53 Interview with Clyde Sanger, August 2009 and Petterson, p.99-100
purported communist influence everywhere they turned. Later in January, both the Americans and the British were worried about the impact Babu might have on Karume, whom they felt was easily influenced and had been “cut off from intelligent African opinion in Zanzbar” due to his clashes with Othman Shariff.\(^{54}\) The focus of the British and the Americans on Babu and the purported Communist threat led their analysis astray and caused them not to recognize the new Revolutionary Government until late February 1964. By this time, numerous countries had recognized Zanzibar’s new government (see Appendix A Political Timeline), and many had offered support and assistance. Britain and the U.S. were only able to see these actions through a Cold War lens and they lost an opportunity to influence Karume and the fledgling government.

One of the early false assumptions was that the Cubans had led the revolution. This is humorous when we learn that, upon hearing about the revolution in Zanzibar, the Cuban ambassador to Tanganyika rang Babu, who was in Dar es Salaam at the time because the Umma Party had been banned, and asked him what was going on! Babu did not even know himself!\(^{55}\) The rumor of Cuban involvement stemmed, in part, from some of the Umma Youth (mentioned in Chapter 2) who had been trained in Cuba in 1961. They were mostly Zanzibaris of Arab descent walking around in fatigues and berets, waving weapons and saying “Venceremos!”\(^{56}\) (see Figure 3-1). The U.S. Vice Consul Don Petterson’s wife was Mexican and she mistook them for Latinos and spoke to them in Spanish. The accent of their reply led her to believe that they were Cuban.

She shared that misinterpretation with other Americans who were waiting to be

\(^{54}\) BNA DO 185/59, Sec of State for Commonwealth relations report, p.9; Petterson, p. 160

\(^{55}\) Interview with Adam Shafi.

\(^{56}\) Clayton, 70.
evacuated from Zanzibar, which is how Petterson claims the first rumor of Cuban involvement began.57

A State Department report called “Communist Spectre Looms in Zanzibar” (13 Jan 1964) demonstrates the Cold War fears. Several articles in *The New York Times* claimed Cubans were involved and called Zanzibar “Africa’s Cuba” (January 14, 15, March 28, 1964). A *Time* magazine article on 24 January 1964 says, “Cuban-trained “freedom fighters sporting Fidelista beards and berets stalked the narrow twisting streets.” In addition to the mistaken assumption that Cubans were involved in the revolution, Okello raised legitimate concerns with his extreme and violent rhetoric on the radio (see Chapter 5). He spoke of ordering his soldiers to “kill every living thing there,” and “extinguish you from the face of the earth” and mentioned how many weapons he could make, “not less than five hundred guns per day.”58 However, other revolts in the militaries of Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda made people see connections where they did not exist. The U.S. suspected Okello of stirring up revolution all over East Africa. Several articles in *Time* magazine indicated, “In Africa—Zanzibar, like Cuba, is now a jumping-off place for further penetration of that great continent” (April 17), and from “Who Is Safe?” March 13, 1964, that what happened in Zanzibar “reverberated up and down the length of East Africa’s Great Rift,” linking the revolution to the military mutinies of the three East African countries.59 These were separate incidents, however, and none of them had any relation to the Cold War.

57 Petterson, p. 73.
58 Petterson, p. 65, 95
59 Petterson, p. 117
All of these misunderstandings, the Cold War paranoia in Washington, and the unwritten rule that the U.S. should follow Britain’s lead in matters relating to their former colonies led the U.S. government to delay recognition of the new revolutionary government of Zanzibar. President Karume wanted a non-alignment policy, but the lack of recognition by the U.S. and Britain made it difficult for him. He was recognized by and offered aid from other countries. Being more concerned with economic development for Zanzibar, he accepted aid from whatever sources offered it. The British stalled on recognizing Zanzibar and the United States continued to wait for the British.\(^{60}\) This was a situation in which the field, both the U.S. Ambassador to Tanganyika, William Leonhart and the U.S. Vice Consul in Zanzibar, Don Petterson, agreed that the U.S. government should recognize the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, but the Department of State continued to delay.\(^{61}\) This delay was in part what pushed Karume to the left. Babu was pulling him that way but so were other governments on the left who recognized Zanzibar. If the United States had recognized the new government, it could have had more influence on Zanzibar. As it was, Cold War fears made the United States stall on the recognition issue, which not only deepened the rift between the United States and Zanzibar but was at the root of further misunderstandings.

In April 1964 when Karume’s position was still tenuous and American and British diplomats were complaining about the amount of support Zanzibar was receiving from Eastern Bloc countries, Tanganyikan President Nyerere blamed the UK and U.S. for the situation, saying it resulted from the delay in recognition.\(^{62}\) Oscar Kambona also gave a

\(^{60}\) Petterson 2002: 123; LBJ documents

\(^{61}\) Wilson 1989: 45; LBJ docs

\(^{62}\) BNA FCO 141/14055; Nyerere also said this in a radio interview. British Library.
radio interview in which he claimed that the revolution happened because the British did not leave Zanzibar in a way that made sense for the Africans, and that support from Eastern Bloc countries was accepted because western countries had disappointed Zanzibar (both by the process of decolonization and then by non-recognition).  

Karume then received military and development aid from the Soviet Union, China, and East Germany, among others. He remained non-aligned but the policies of the new government had a decidedly socialist bent even as early as March 1964. Additionally, other observers speculated that Karume might also have been able to stop or significantly reduce the massacres in the aftermath of the revolution if Britain and the U.S. had recognized the regime and provided assistance.

**Conclusion**

There were numerous unintended consequences of the actions of various British officers during the Zanzibar Revolution. My contention is that some of these actions and their consequences were significant to the outcome of the events of the night of the overthrow. This is further evidence that the revolution succeeded due to the surprise nature of what happened despite the numerous warning signs. The details of this revolution are relevant to the analysis as well. Those who argue that the British were involved in the revolution have a point. Not that it was a planned conspiracy on the part of the British, but their actions did impact the course of events.

Secondly, this chapter puts into sharp relief the difference between written sources and oral sources. I show how biased the written British sources were and why. I

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63 Kambona interview, 1964-12-30, British Library radio archives.

64 The speech that was given on 8 March 1964 outlined the new regime’s policies. See Kweupe, 10 March 1964.
provide the usefulness of the timeline the British sources offer us while showing how much variation of interpretation is embedded in these sources. I overturn the assumption of objectivity of written sources. "Kila moja ana wazo lake" applies equally to British written sources as it does to Zanzibari oral and written sources.

The motivations of the authors of these reports were significant. For these civil servants, their livelihood, their job, and their entire career and/or pension depended on them. If they were found to have acted inappropriately, they could face dire financial consequences. The police and others had no jobs left in Zanzibar but they no longer worked for the British government either. They had worked for the government of Zanzibar at the time of the overthrow. The British government, therefore, had no obligation to place them in a new position, pay them, or provide them with a pension. It was also clear that the Zanzibar government would not honor pensions or posts held previously. The men, therefore, had to write in a way that demonstrated that they acted in good conscience and to the best of their ability in the circumstances so that the British government might offer them employment elsewhere.

Third, I show the unintended consequences of Britain insisting on non-recognition of the new Karume government. The irony, as was shown in this chapter, is that many British officials wanted this new ASP government and, in point of fact, helped a chaotic burglary of weapons morph into an overthrow of the ZNP/ZPPP government.
CHAPTER 7
REFLECTIONS ON MY PROCESS, MY LUCK, AND MY CONTACTS

This was the first post-colonial revolution in East Africa. As such, it disturbs the narrative of an orderly transfer of power, which is how decolonization is generally portrayed. The word “revolution” did not have cultural or social meaning in the context of 1964 East Africa the way it did in Algeria or Cuba.\(^1\) We, therefore, see this event in high relief. It stands in stark contrast to the commonly held beliefs and assumptions about the end of colonial rule in British East Africa.

In the days and weeks after the initial overthrow of the government, there were not only massacres in the streets of Stone Town, but also brutal pogroms, of predominantly Arab and Indian Zanzibaris, in the rural areas. The estimates vary dramatically, from the absurdly low ASP Press Communique claim of “17 deaths, 347 casualties, 30 patients still in hospital” as of 12 March 1964\(^2\) to Okello’s own, rather high, figure of 13,635.\(^3\) In the months after the revolution, thousands of Zanzibaris of Omani origin were “repatriated” to Oman. The violence and the exodus of Arab and Indian Zanzibaris are the subject for another study.\(^4\) The brutality was also, understandably, central to the social memory of many Zanzibaris whose communities were in danger, which is partly why so many people have written about these topics. In addition to the bloodshed, much has been written on the significance of the Zanzibar

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\(^1\) Thanks to Luise White for drawing my attention to this point.

\(^2\) ZNA AK 10: 9 Press communiqué and ZNA AK 17: 72 Revolution

\(^3\) Okello, Revolution, 160

\(^4\) I am considering a future study on the Omani Zanzibari who returned to Oman in 1964. The British Red Cross Archives were a wealth of information on that process. The debates in these archives revolve around whose responsibility these refugees were. Who should be part of the communications and decisions and who should contribute financially? The parties involved were HMG, BRC, ICRC, UNHCR, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Sultan of Muscat/Oman, and Karume (reluctantly).
Revolution and the ways in which it influenced and continues to influence the justice system, the economy, politics, and social relations. Ranging from the formation of the Union, government by decree, the evacuation of Zanzibaris of Arab and Indian descent from the islands, forced marriage, disastrous economic plans, and attempts at land redistribution and housing developments, the revolutionary era in Zanzibar brought about dramatic change in all areas of life. Western scholars, “homespun historians,” bloggers, non-government organizations working in Zanzibar, and others have written about the amount of trauma, displacement, detentions, and assassinations associated with the revolution and the revolutionary era of government. The dramatic transformations in political structures, as well as socio-economic and demographic changes, make it quite clear how truly revolutionary this period was. Due, in part, to the ample work on the impact this revolution had on life in Zanzibar, I chose not to address the results of the revolution, but rather to deconstruct how it happened. In order for me to accomplish my task of an operational history of the overthrow, I knew it would not be possible to also research and analyze the violence. The emotional response to the violence remains so potent in contemporary individual and social memory in Zanzibar that I concluded that coverage of that portion of the revolution would cloud or dominate the other aspects if it were part of the discussions.

This dissertation is the first scholarly attempt to write an analytical and tactical history of the revolution with both archival sources and interviews of those involved. The continued political sensitivity of the topic is well known and has made it difficult to

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5 See Bakari, Shivji, Martin, Clayton, Burgess, among others.

6 For research on contemporary social memories, see Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle: Remembering the Revolution in Zanzibar
conduct such research. In fact, at the outset of my research, several Zanzibaris told me that I would not get anywhere studying this topic and that I should change topics. However, having visited Zanzibar countless times over the last twenty-eight years, I was fortunate to tap into long-standing networks using my significant knowledge of the language and culture in order to connect with relevant historical figures, many of whom have not previously told their stories.

**My Contribution: Sources**

I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to conduct this research at the time I did. Archival material was available in Zanzibar as well as the UK, and I was able to interview people who had not spoken publicly. The political tensions in Zanzibar have eased slightly since the 2010 coalition government, which meant that people felt more comfortable opening up about stories that differed from the traditional narrative of the ruling party.\(^7\) I write from the non-normative position of a researcher who has a long, well-developed relationship with the community in which she is working, and yet as a novice to academic research and scholarship.\(^8\) This has influenced my work in many ways and has been both a benefit and a challenge. The benefit is the depth of research I was able to conduct, in spite of the political salience of the topic and the interpersonal, as well as cross-cultural, navigation that entailed. The challenge has been how to most effectively write about the research in a way that serves my academic audience.

\(^7\) The ASP merged with TANU in 1977 to become Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) (the Party of the Revolution), and has been in power ever since. CCM has continued ASP’s narrative about the revolution.

\(^8\) Writing on life histories as a genre of oral history, Corinne Kratz addresses the “political negotiations of research,” and recommends waiting to write life histories until a scholar’s relationship with community is well developed. Kratz fn 18, p. 153 in *African Words, African Voices*
One of the strengths of my research is that I spoke with the last two living members of the Committee of 14, Ramadhan Haji Faki and Hamid Ameir. Ameir was reluctant to speak with me at first, but eventually ended up spending close to three hours with my taxi driver-cum-research assistant, Jamshid, and me. (I still have a lot of information from that interview that did not make its way into this dissertation.) Interestingly, however, Ameir told us that he had not been asked about his story until recently. I had been asking about him in Zanzibar for a couple of months before I was able to get an audience with him. In the meantime, one other person had come to ask him to verify information about the revolution. There had been one other time when he and Said Natepe were together and Natepe told his version of events. After that, Ameir felt that he could not say anything more. He has been in and out of favor with the political leadership in Zanzibar over the last thirty years, and that has most likely influenced what he says publicly about the revolution.

Due to the generosity of Jamal Adi, I was able to talk with Ramadhan Haji Faki and several other people who were involved with the revolution. Adi was a policeman in 1980 when then-President of Zanzibar, Aboud Jumbe, decided that he wanted more details on the operational history of the revolution. He did not know what had transpired but he wanted to find out. Jamal Adi conducted the research for the government so he was given access to the Committee of 14 and known revolutionaries in order to interview them and write a report on his findings. The people he introduced me to paved the way to a new pool of respondents, many of whom were low level participants in the revolution, as opposed to the more well known leaders.

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9 He left this point open-ended in the interview, but the impression was that he could not say anything, lest he contradict Natepe.
Other important sources were members of the first Revolutionary Council and former policemen. There are five living members of the original Revolutionary Council and I interviewed four of them plus the first Secretary of the Revolutionary Council, Salim Rashid. The political leaders had less to tell me than those who have not been in the limelight for the past 50 years. I also interviewed three men who were policemen at the time of the revolution. One requested that I cite him as “anonymous” but then allowed me to take his photograph at the end of the interview. These men had not previously been consulted about their experiences during the revolution.

The last major group of relevant historical actors I had access to was the former Umma Party members. Thanks to Ahmed Rajab, I was able to interview Ali Sultan Issa and two of the men who had gone to Cuba for training in 1962. Additionally, I joined Humoud Dugheish’s baraza, and was part of numerous conversations with several men of varying ideas about the revolution over the course of five months. Humoud was at Mtoni on the night of the revolution (see Chapter 4), but his brother, Amour Dugheish, was one of the Umma youth who went to Cuba and fought in the revolution with his Umma comrades. I was fortunate enough to interview both brothers. My contribution to this history is due to the numerous Zanzibaris who were willing to sit with me (often for two hours or more) and tell me their experience of the revolution.

**Reflections on the Use of Living Sources in Writing History**

Given my interdisciplinary background, I arrive at the topic of how we should approach interviews and living oral sources differently than many historians. In addition to academic work in religious studies, cultural anthropology, and political science, I taught field research techniques, including the ethics of field study, to undergraduates who were conducting basic field study. This was a cultural anthropology course, and we
taught it with that literature and ethnographic method in mind. History, as a discipline, has come to oral sources much more recently than cultural anthropology, but modern historians are using oral sources more and more. There are several types of oral histories: from the epic stories like Sunjata to conducting interviews, but they are more and more present in our discipline. The historiography on the use of oral sources is more epistemological than methodological. By methodological, I mean the way the social sciences view method: how we obtain the data, as opposed to what we do with it once we have it. It seems to me that the more our discipline uses oral sources, the more we should consider the approaches of other disciplines, like anthropology and political science, to further develop an historical discourse on the use of living sources that is both humanistic and more complex in terms of the process of obtaining data from human sources.

Barbara Cooper writes about the performative nature of oral evidence, which she sees as public, even when “it appears most private and intimate.” She comments on how she allowed her informants to guide her in what was acceptable to discuss, including the recognition that sometimes silence was part of the construction of the informant’s narrative.¹⁰ She also reflected on her style of interviewing, not wishing to pry too forcefully, and contrasts her style with another scholar she respects. She then perceptively remarks:

One intimidating dimension of doing oral history research is the rather constant fear that one is doing it wrong. When working with documents, the fear that one might be doing violence of a sort is attenuated because the violence one might inflict has the appearance of at least being indirect and impersonal. Similarly, any meditations surrounding absences in the documentary evidence appear somehow as hypotheses rather than as

¹⁰ Cooper, (Philips, ed) Writing African History, p. 202,204
I agree with her about being afraid of doing it wrong and I think that is a pressure all scholars should feel: we are writing about people’s lives and we can impact them or their living family or descendants. Indeed, when we have met our sources, it forces us to rethink how to phrase our arguments and how to present our evidence. I think this is a benefit of our discipline. I think it helps force us to be even more conscientious and concerned about reliability of our evidence and interpretation. We feel (and we should feel) obligated to getting the story as accurate as we can because it is people’s lives we are writing about. We are humanists writing about what it is to be human, and that includes the potential for social interaction that we should honor. David Henige argues differently, that the only way to maintain the legitimacy of our discipline is to have complete verifiability; that is, full accessibility to all sources of evidence so that others may interpret the data for themselves. My reaction to that is that if we feel that what we are doing is merely an academic exercise and we have no connection to the people we write about because we did not meet them, then we need Henige’s view to keep ourselves honest by providing everyone with access to the same information. But if we connect with the people we write about, there is additional pressure to “get it right.”

Citations and some level of “verifiability” are indeed necessary. But the idea that citations provide everyone with access to the same information is based on inaccurate and outdated assumptions. That idea comes from a time when the canon was manageable and sources were fewer. Today we cannot always go back and read

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11 Cooper, *Writing African History*, p. 207-8

12 Henige, *Writing African History*, p. 173
everything. This is also based on an inaccurate assumption of a level playing field. Each researcher does not have the same playing field or the access to the same information. An example might be that one person can read certain documents in an archive that a later scholar cannot read because those documents are now lost, damaged, or purposefully hidden from view. In terms of living sources, however, there is an entirely different set of processes that can give one scholar access to sources another scholar cannot access. These may be personal connections, interpersonal communication, or timing, for example. By personal connections, I mean identifying and locating the individual or community who was part of an historical event. In terms of interpersonal communication, I mean a source agreeing to speak with a scholar due to language issues, how the source was addressed, whether s/he felt respected or not, or social or political assumptions a source may have about a scholar. Finally, it is important to address timing. There are certain historical moments when people are ready to discuss matters that they may not have been at another moment. What one scholar may access may be inaccessible to another. Even the same scholar might have access one day to a source who then changes his/her mind the next day and no longer wishes to tell his/her story. I had one informant who spoke with me about his father’s personal papers; he said he would find them and show them to me as I furiously took notes. We seemed to be on good terms with one another and he was fairly forthcoming. Then I asked him if I could record our interview because I could not write fast enough. I explained that I would keep it for myself to make sure I had the story accurately. I went through my entire IRB script but he shut down. He said he would have to think more about whether or not he should share these documents with me; he said he needed to consider what
impact they might have on his family and others. He did not return my calls after that. If I had not asked to record, I might have obtained other information. Do I think it would have changed what I am writing? In small ways, perhaps. The point is that thinking that one scholar can retrace another scholar’s academic footsteps and then interpret for him/herself is insufficient. The idea that what keeps me honest as a historian is that other scholars have access to all my sources is not a holistic view from my perspective. Providing explanation about who the person was in the context of my study makes sense, but not necessarily providing access to that person or to the interview I conducted with him/her.

I am also intrigued by Cooper’s reflections on the public versus private nature of oral evidence. I found interviews to be both public and private. Often we needed to meet in private locations where my interviewees felt comfortable speaking openly, yet I was still given permission to record most of the interviews. Some of my interviewees felt no qualms about being recorded because what they were saying was already public. Others would say, “turn off the recording for a moment” or would ask me to stop writing. Some could not decide if they wished for their name to be used at the outset, and seemed a bit uncomfortable, but as the interview progressed, they began to enjoy talking and told me things they said they had not told anyone before. Some of those same people who were not sure if they wanted their name to be used agreed to being photographed with me at the end of the interview. Some saw the process as public, others as partially private. Some did not want to sit in public and talk even though they understood that what they said might eventually be in a book. There was a liminality to the process, as performance (public) and intimate memory (private). I have kept all of
the recordings private, as I promised, and will not release them. But in the end, almost all of my interviewees agreed to have their names cited in my dissertation; only a few demurred.

**On Institutional Review Boards and Obligations to Our Sources…**

I believe that the IRB process needs to be reconstituted at many universities because it is still conducted primarily from the disciplinary lens of psychology and behavioral sciences. The process needs to be revisited in a more interdisciplinary way so that the process honors the background and interests of varying disciplines. I have some experience with that process, as we created our own Review Board while I was Assistant Director of African Studies at the School for International Training.\(^\text{13}\) Our system utilized local academics in the countries in which our students were studying abroad so that we were honoring local academic cultural concepts of ethical study. We created this system in order to partially mitigate the hegemony of western systems in places where the colonial experience was vividly remembered and oppressive.

Having said that, as part of this reflection, I will write in dialogue with the AHA’s statement on IRBs. AHA’s website reads:

> “Yet historians’ deepest responsibility is to follow the evidence where it leads, to discern and make sense of the past in all its complexity; not to protect individuals from the possible repercussions of past mistakes or misdeeds. In this we are akin to journalists and unlike medical professionals, who are indeed enjoined to do no harm.”\(^\text{14}\)

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\(^\text{13}\) For the local review board and SIT IRB process, see [https://studyabroad.sit.edu/how-it-works/undergraduate-research/sit-institutional-review-board/](https://studyabroad.sit.edu/how-it-works/undergraduate-research/sit-institutional-review-board/) (accessed 28 January 2018)

One of anthropology’s central tenants is to do no harm.\textsuperscript{15} Journalists often promise to protect their sources. While I am not claiming that if we find out that someone was a mass murderer, we should not consider reporting him or her to the authorities, I do think we should weigh the potential consequences of what we write. We are not infallible; we do not have a privileged relationship with the truth. The truth is murky and the grey area is far more abundant than the black and white. Lee Ann Fujii’s work delineating categories of “participation” in the Rwandan genocide shows us this in eloquent detail.\textsuperscript{16} There were not merely perpetrators and victims: on the same day, the same person could be a rescuer at noon and be forced at gunpoint to kill someone at 5pm. We should recognize the risk we are taking and have more discussions in our discipline about what our role is and what our ethical obligations are. For example, I think we have an ethical obligation to do what we told our interlocutors we would do. That is, if I promised to use a pseudonym for someone, then I should do that. If the agreement to record an interview was contingent upon the sole use of that interview being for my reference (and not transcribed or translated or in any way made available more widely), then I should do that. Making that interview available for others does not, in that situation, bring any greater validity to my work. Nor does refusing the interview on the premise that if I cannot transcribe it for others, it is not a valuable contribution to the historical process. In the end, only a few of my sources did not want me to include their names, so most of the people who provided me with their stories are listed in the


\textsuperscript{16} Fujii, Lee Ann, “Categories and Profiles of Local Participants in the Rwandan Genocide”
bibliography or cited in the chapters. I remain most grateful to them for their time and thoughtful contributions to my project.
APPENDIX A
TIMELINE OF KEY DATES IN THE 20TH CENTURY POLITICAL HISTORY OF ZANZIBAR: FROM THE FOUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES UNTIL THE FORMATION OF THE UNION

1926
- British colonial government established Legislative Council

1932
- Young Arab Union (YAU) formed

1934
- African Association founded

1938
- Shirazi Association founded

1940
- Shirazi Association formed on Pemba
- African Dancing Club founded by Abeid Amani Karume

1943
- YAU requested and was granted recognition from Britain

1946
- Ali Muhsin Al Barwani resigned from government job to become editor of Mwongozi (nationalist newspaper)

1949
- Karume's African Dancing Club became Zanzibar Youth African Union (ZYAU)

1951
- Young African Union (YAU) formed by African intellectuals in Zanzibar town (unofficial youth league of African Association)

1953
- Colonial government prohibition of civil servants engaging in politics

1954
- Karume became President of African Association
- Sir John Rankine, British Resident, proposed plan for appointed representation on the Legislative Council (equal numbers for each of three communities, not equal ratios of representation)

1955
• Formation of anti-colonial party, National Party of the Subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar
• Ali Muhsin Al Barwani to London to put his case for common-roll elections to government of Britain, on behalf of Arab Association

1956
• British chose Coutts Commission, toward “democratic constitutional monarchy”, in lieu of Rankine proposals
• Change of National Party of the Subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar to the Zanzibar National Party

1957
• Arab Association and YAU members join National Party of the Subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar, now ZNP, led by Ali Muhsin Al Barwani
• Babu appointed Secretary General of ZNP
• 5 February: Afro-Shirazi Union (ASU) formed by merger of African Assoc and Shirazi Association
• ASU became Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP)
• 21 July: ASP won elections, 5 out of 6 seats, Muslim League won last seat, ZNP did not win one seat
• Karume elected to National Assembly (served as Minister of Health)
• ZNP case against Karume, saying he was from the mainland, not Zanzibari
• 27 July: Youths’ Own Union (YOU), ZNP’s youth wing, formed

1958
• Babu and Ali Muhsin at All African People’s Conference in Accra
• Nkrumah and Nyerere suggest that Karume and Muhsin work together
• November 28: ASP and ZNP sign pact to push for self-government

1959
• John Okello moves to Pemba
• Babu travels to China and is then imprisoned for two years on charges of sedition
• Formation of Zanzibar and Pemba People’s Party (ZPPP)
• Formation of Afro-Shirazi Party Youth League (ASPYL)

1960
• Report of the Constitutional Commissioner Zanzibar, 1960, by Sir Hilary Blood (in which he suggests that the constituencies be changed to better represent the population of Zanzibar)
• Sultan Seyyid Khalifa bin Haroub bin Thuwein al Busaid died

1961
• January elections: stalemate between three parties: ZNP, ASP, ZPPP
• ZNP and ZPPP form coalition
• Okello becomes Secretary of ASP youth wing in Pemba
June elections: ZPPP seats divided, ASP/ZNP stalemate
Violence at elections, colonial government declares Emergency
Okello sees revolution as necessary, due to defeat in polls

1962
- 19 March-6th April: constitutional conference in London, ZNP/ZPPP alliance and ASP present
- June: British colonial government put Babu on trial for planning arson
- 22 June: Ali Sultani Issa expelled from ZNP Executive Committee for allegations that party leadership got Babu imprisoned

1963
- January: Babu’s release from prison and 18 youth return from military training in Cuba
- May: ZNP split, June: Umma Party formed, under Babu’s leadership
- June: Okello moves to Zanzibar from Pemba
- 24 June Internal self-government
- 1 July Sultan Seyyid Abdallah bin Khalifa died
- 8-12 July elections: ZNP and ZPPP merged to win 18 out of 31 seats, ASP won 54% of the popular vote
- December: Babu back from three months in China
- 10 December: Zanzibar independence from Britain: constitutional monarchy, sultan head of state

1964
- 4 January: Umma Party banned
- 6 January: Babu’s house searched, documents from China on how to overthrow a government by violence
- 8 January: Babu fled to Dar es Salaam
- 11-12 January: Night of the Revolution, the overthrow of the sultan and ZNP/ZPPP government
- 12 January: early morning, Karume fled to Dar es Salaam
- Committee of 14 formed
- Babu disbands Umma Party, he and his followers join ASP
- January: Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanganyika, Ghana, Guinea, Soviet Union, East Germany, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, North Vietnam, North Korea, Yugoslavia, and Israel recognize the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar
- 23 February: United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, Malaysia, and Pakistan recognize the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar
- 20 February: John Okello traveled to Kenya
- 8 March: Karume and Babu refused John Okello re-entrance to Zanzibar at the airport
- 11 April: Nairobi talks on East Africa Federation (EAF) end unsuccessfully
- 19 April: Karume secretly traveled to Dar es Salaam
• 22 April: articles of Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar signed, forming United Republic of Tanzania
• Karume is Vice President of Tanzania
• 26 April: announcement of Union
• 27 April: new ministers of Tanzania announced

1967
• Execution of Abdallah Kassim Hanga

1972
• Abeid Amani Karume assassinated

1977
• 5 February ASP and TANU merge to form Chama Cha Mapinduzi (‘party of the revolution,’ CCM)
APPENDIX B
TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF ETUKU JOHN GIDEON OKELLO

6 October 1937
- Born at Anino Village, Aloi, Lira, Lango District, Uganda

1944
- Tried to run away to join army

1948
- Parents died
- Went to live with cruel uncle

1952
- Standard IV at Aloi primary school
- Took brother to Uncle Opala at Abako Gombolola, Moroto County

17 December 1952
- Left for Soroti
- Otuboi Cotton Ginnery, strike and then work with District Labour Officer

September 1953
- 16 years old, starts own business

December 1953
- Went from Soroti to Mbale

February 1954
- Mbale

July 1954
- To Kisumu

October 1954
- Went to Nairobi

Feb 1955
- Began evening classes in Nairobi

Late 1955-Early 1956
- Sent to prison for two years for sexual offense
- Machakos

9 February 1958
- To Mombasa
2 June 1959
  • Peter Oloo (Luo mason) told him about Pemba and jobs

11 June
  • To Shimoni, small island Mukwire

21 June 1959
  • On to Pemba

Mid 1960
  • Joined ASP

4 February 1963
  • To Unguja

11-12 January 1964
  • MAPINDUZI!

19 January
  • To Dar es Salaam

21 January
  • Back to Zanzibar

22 January
  • To Pemba and back

28 January
  • Second trip to Pemba

19 February
  • In Pemba for third time

20 February
  • Left Zanzibar to Uganda and Kenya

9 March 1964
  • Returned, kicked out of Zanzibar for good

June 29, 1964
  • He was in Nairobi, was told he is not prohibited immigrant

10 October 1964
  • In custody at Mwanza, being moved to new facility Butimba Prison, 5 miles from town with “Lumumbaists.” On his way to Congo, but his visit coincided with Nyerere.
23 June 1965
- Detained in Kenya for 18 months

1966
- Nairobi, wrote book

3 July 1967
- Detained in Uganda

8 September 1968
- Released from prison in Uganda (had been in jail 14 months)

3 January 1969
- Arrested on Kenya-Uganda border, Bungoma, on bus for Nairobi

1972-73
- Idi Amin’s security forces came and took him away; he was never seen again
Abeid Amani Karume: Karume was the first President of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. He was born to a Malawian father and a Rwandese mother. Whether he was born in Mwera or arrived there on his mother’s back is contested, but he spent his childhood in Mwera, 10 kilometers east of Zanzibar Town. (One source pointed out that Karume had to have been vetted in order to run for office, so he must have been born in Mwera.) Karume left to become a sailor at an early age and with little primary education. Speculation about his reasons for leaving states that he was being raised in the house of an Arab in Mwera, and while playing one day, he cut an Arab boy by accident; he was afraid and ran away (Interview Denge Makame Mkali, in Mwera). Karume became active in football clubs in the 1950s and then became leader of the Afro-Shirazi Union and the Afro-Shirazi Party. From 1964-1972, he was President of Zanzibar and Vice-President of the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. He was assassinated in 1972.

Abdulla Kassim Hanga: Hanga was a primary school teacher prior to becoming a full-time politician. Together with Karume, Ibrahim Saadalla, Thabit Kombo, Ameir Tajo and Othman Sharif, he was a founding member of the ASP in 1957. He studied for his A levels in London, and then, after being rejected for a visa to study in the USA, accepted a scholarship to study Political Science at Lumumba University in the Soviet Union. He met and married Lily Golden, the Russian daughter of an African-American father and an American Jewish mother of Polish descent. Golden’s parents had become Soviet citizens. He was an avowed Marxist, like Babu, but with Soviet rather than
Chinese connections. He was also an ASP stalwart, while Babu was ZNP until he formed his Umma Party. Both men had plans for revolution after the ZNP won the elections in 1963. Hanga returned to Zanzibar in 1961 to become Deputy Secretary General of the ASP. He then became the Vice President of the Revolutionary Council and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. He was humiliated by Nyerere and then, in 1969, repatriated to Zanzibar, only to be executed by Karume after an alleged coup attempt.

**Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu:** Babu was of Comorian descent, and studied at Makerere and in London. He was a leader of the Zanzibari community in London, and upon his return to Zanzibar, he served as the Secretary General of the Zanzibar National Party (ZNP). Babu was an avowed Marxist with long-lasting connections in Cuba and China. He established the ZNP youth wing, the “Youth’s Own Union,” and arranged scholarships in East Germany, China, the USSR, and Czechoslovakia. In 1963, he and Ali Muhsin had a disagreement about electoral strategy that caused Babu to break away and form his own Umma Party. (See Chapters 3-4 for the role of the Umma Youth in the Revolution).

**Aboud Jumbe:** Jumbe earned a Teaching Certificate from Makerere University, and had an illustrious teaching career in Zanzibar. He was the first African secondary school teacher, and Vice Principal of a secondary school. He retired in order to join the ASP in 1961. He was a member of the Revolutionary Council, served in Karume’s government, and became President of Zanzibar in 1972, after Karume’s assassination.

**Ali Muhsin al Barwani:** Ali Muhsin obtained his degree from Makerere University, where one of his fellow students was Julius Nyerere. Muhsin was an
assistant agricultural officer prior to becoming involved in politics at the end of World War II. He was the editor of *Mwongozi* newspaper, and became the leader of the ZNP after Babu left the party. Muhsin believed in Islam as a connecting influence, and proclaimed a desire for multiracialism. He served as Minister of Education in the Government of Zanzibar prior to the nation’s independence as well as during the month between independence and the Revolution. Ali Mushin was detained for ten years after the revolution by his former schoolmate, Julius Nyerere.

**Jamshid bin Abdullah bin Khalifa:** Jamshid was the last sultan of Zanzibar, deposed by the 1964 revolution. He was only 33-years-old at the time. His father Abdullah had only been on the throne from 1960-63. Jamshid’s grandfather, Seyyid Khalifa, served as sultan from 1911-1960 and was beloved by many.

**John Okello:** Okello was a Ugandan born itinerant laborer who worked in Kenya, then Pemba, where he was an active member of the ASP, before going on to Unguja. He was not well known in Zanzibar Town, but he had worked there for a few years as a house painter. (See Chapter 5 for more detail).

**Julius Kambarage Nyerere:** Nyerere was the head of TANU and President of Tanganyika. He supported the ASP and Karume since the late 1950s. He was also respected by the British, and was able to mediate well between the British and Karume in the early days of the Revolution. Nyerere supported the idea of an East African Federation, as he was a PanAfricanist, and his vision included more considerable African political cooperation. (See Chapters 3-4).

**Oscar Kambona:** Kambona was the first Tanganyikan Minister of External Affairs under Nyerere, and then served as Minister of Defense in 1964 during the
Zanzibar Revolution. He was not only very popular, but also extremely influential. Just after the Zanzibar Revolution, Kambona helped calm the situation with the army mutiny in Tanganyika. Kambona is the key figure in the conspiracy theory that the revolution was an invasion from outside.

**Mohamed Shamte**: Shamte was born in Pemba. He was a well-educated Shirazi who, along with Ameri Tajo and Ali Sharif, broke away from the ASP to form the ZPPP. The ZPPP continued to be split over whether to support the ASP or the ZNP in order to break electoral stalemates. Shamte joined the ZNP coalition and became Prime Minister of the Government of Zanzibar. He served in this position for only one month.

**Othman Shariff**: Shariff was one of the founding members of the ASP. He was educated at Makerere University and served as an assistant veterinary officer and assistant agriculture officer. Shariff left the ASP in early January 1964 because of frustrations with Karume’s leadership. However, Shariff rejoined the ASP and was one of the original members of the Revolutionary Council in January 1964. In April 1964, Shariff was appointed Tanzanian ambassador to the United States. Both he and Abdulla Kassim Hanga were executed in Zanzibar in 1969 for having taken part in an alleged coup.

**Ramadhan Haji Faki**: Ramadhan Haji was a member of the Committee of 14 who were injured the night of the revolution. He had retired from the police force with a large pension of 4360 shillings, making him the wealthiest of the group. He also proudly told me that he was the only member of the group who had passed eighth grade. He served on the first BLM (Revolutionary Council), and is one of only two of the
Committee of 14 who are still alive today. (See Chapters 3-4 for more detail about his role in the revolution).

**Seif Bakari:** Seif Bakari, a tailor with little education, served as chairman of the ASP Youth League and continued in this function after the revolution. Bakari was a member of the Committee of 14 and of the first Revolutionary Council. He was also head of intelligence and security in the Revolutionary Government, along with Ibrahim Makungu. Okello claims to have consulted Seif Bakari about plans for revolution. Karume favored Bakari, in part due to his lack of education. Many hold Bakari responsible for much of the violence of the early revolutionary era.

**Yussuf Himid:** Himid was a member of the ASYL and a Public Works Department lorry driver. He was a member of the Committee of 14. It was his job to carry weapons in the lorry so that the revolutionaries would have access to them on the night of 11-12 January. This allowed youth to travel from rural areas without carrying weapons themselves, which would arouse suspicion. Himid was a member of the first Revolutionary Council. He also became the Brigadier General of all the armies in Zanzibar after the revolution. When he went to the mainland, Nyerere kept him in a high position in the army. (Interview with Fatma Jinja, 13 January 2014).

*For more detailed mini-biographies, see Roman Loimeier, “Memories of Revolution: Patterns of Interpretation of the 1964 Revolution in Zanzibar” in *Social Memory, Silenced Voices and Political Struggle.*
APPENDIX D
LISTS OF PEOPLE DISCUSSING REVOLUTION

Committee of 14 (see Kweupe, Figure 4-2)

1. Seif Bakari
2. Yussuf Himid
3. Said Idi Bavuai
4. Said Wa Shoto
5. Khamis Darwesh
6. Ramadhan Haji Faki
7. Abdalla Said Natepe
8. Hamid Ameir
9. Pili Khamis
10. Hafidh Suleiman
11. Mohamed Abdalla Ameir (called Kaujore)
12. Mohamed Mfaranyaki
13. Khamis Hemed Nyuni
14. John Okello
   • not in photo: Yussuf Himid, Khamis Hemed Nyuni
   • Edington Kisasi?

Okello’s group, leadership

• Jaha Ubwa
• Ali Lumumba
• Mohamed Abdalla Mfaranyaki
• Absolom Amoi Ingen
• Mzee Kenya
• Matias Simba
• Mzee Mohamed

Also claims:
• Seif Bakari
• Said Idi Bavuai
• Ramadhan Haji Faki
• Yussuf Himid

Jimmy Ringo’s group discussing revolution

• Jimmy Ringo (Juma Maulid)
• Yussuf Himid
• Ibrahim Makungu
• Said Idi Bavuai
- Said Wa Shoto
- Khamis Darwesh
- Jamal Ramadhan Nasibu
- Muhina Seifu
- Juma Abdulla Saadala
- Shamis
- Ali Lumumba
- Jaha Ubwa

**ASP district meetings where plans for revolution were discussed**

Ghana (Unguja)

Kirembero (North B Unguja)

Mijini (Wilaya Magharibi Unguja)

**Venn Diagram of Some of the Groups Discussing Revolution**

![Venn Diagram of Some of the Groups Discussing Revolution](image_url)

Figure D-1. Venn diagram of some of the groups discussing revolution.
Umma Youth who went to Cuba for training

(did not discuss the revolution ahead of time with the rest of these groups)

Led by Ali Sultan Issa

- Hamed Hilal
- Shaaban Salim
- Amour Dughesh
- Salim Saleh
- Suleiman Sisi (Suleiman Mohamed)
- Ali Mshangama
- Abdulrahim Mahmoud ("Handsome")
- Mohamed Issa
- Ali Abdallah
- Abdul Gidem
- Ali Amran
- Hashil Seif Hashil
- Ali Yussuf Balawy
- Haji Othman
- Said Seif
- Abdalla Juma
- Ahmed Bajabir (Toni)
APPENDIX E
REPRODUCED LIST OF REVOLUTIONARIES WHO NEEDED HOUSING

WATU WALIOKUWA FMF MTONI (People who were FMF Mtoni)

WENYE WAKE NA WASIO NYUMBA (who have wives but do not have houses)

1. Tomas Suweya
2. Husseini Mosi
3. Bakari Khims
4. Bakari Mwinyi
5. Petro Pembu
6. Iddi Ali Rajab
7. Ali Abdalla
8. John Jakob
9. Kassim Mtawa
10. Selemeni Haji
11. Saidi Seif
12. Salum Abdalla
13. Issa Saidi Ali
14. Yossi Olingi
15. Ali Juma
16. Mohumedi Hassani Mohumedi
17. Nickolassi Daringiri
18. Kassika Tumbo
19. Adu Ame
20. Saleh Kassakara
21. Kitwana Gulanga
22. Timati Mwimiko
23. Juma Mrisho
24. Jumaane Juvili
25. Juma Hupira
26. Iddi Shaabani
27. Abdulla Khamisi
28. Saleh Ali Suweyi
29. Hassani Abdalla
30. Trensio Tomasi
31. Paulo Lakwizi
32. Mamboleo Kiratu
33. Salum Saleh
34. Bakari Selemani
35. Pandu Ismaili
36. Jume Suma
37. Mesubi Nrejussi
38. Swndia Tomassi
39. Salehe Loziozao
40. Bakari Maulid
41. Salum Jabiri  
42. Saidi Othmani  
43. Iddi Omari  
44. Ali Ame  
45. Kassim Suleimani  
46. Ali Slemani  
47. Perinado Selevestia  
48. Omari Ali  
49. Sheri Mohamedi  
50. Shari Kombo  
51. Haji khamissi Haji  
52. Daudi Paulo  
53. Mohamed Salum  
54. Massakija Massalu  
55. Matinee William  
56. Selemani Kassim  
57. Mohamedi Abdalla  
58. Ali Mgeni  
59. Khamisi Mussa  
60. Selemani Hadiki  
61. Tomasi Buhas  
62. Talati Anderey  
63. Ali Othmani  
64. Ahamada Ali  
65. Sabu Kamwezi  
66. Antony Paskali  
67. Mohamadi Alimassi  
68. Matinee Paulo  
69. Mwinyuu Chapa  
70. Aleyi Ali  
71. Abdalla Nassibu  
72. Mtumwa Mussa  
73. William Juma  
74. Tajo Tufuta  
75. Mohamedi Yussuf  
76. Amari Mohaendi Mkupa  
77. Andereya Massanja  
78. Seif Juma  
79. Omari Mgeni  
80. Selemani Yussuf  
81. Mohamedi Omari
82. Abdalla Brahim
83. Lazalo Suiman
84. Faizi Khamis
85. Bakari Slemani
86. Takishi Palum
87. Maburuki Maraski
88. Sariboko Mlekwa
89. Myassi Mbuko
90. Salum Hamadi
91. Paulo Kayamda
92. Issa Mohamedi
93. Salum Juma
94. Rajab Uledi
95. Skirini Muapi
96. Shaabani Magaga
97. Toto Kazi
98. Ahmed Khalfani
99. Lobat Sooli
100. Alifayo Manazoo
101. Ibrahim Bakar
102. Juma Mgusali
103. Ali Khamis
104. Masanjo Said
105. Mli Khamis
106. Kishiba Miabi
107. Endereyo Domenik
108. Mussa Saleh Othman
109. Mwarabu Tokona
110. Raman Yusseph
111. Masarja Machin
112. Maruzuku Soedi
113. Siman Myangage
114. Isaya Johana

*houses is misspelled: najumba should be nyumba

Source:

ZNA AK 17: 10 District Administration: Revolution
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Amina Issa Ameir, 9 July 2013
Amour Dughesh, 17 September 2013
anonymous, 10 October 2013
anonymous, 20 November 2013
anonymous, 28 August 2013
anonymous, 30 October 2013
Atia Otim, 28 January 2013
BiAsya Abdullah, 16 August 2013
BiUbwa Amour Zahor, 28 August 2013
Captain Mohamed Mzee "Badi", 27 September 2013
Denge Makame Mkali, 14 January 2014
Enzi Talib, 2 September 2013
Erin Akao Okello, 20 January 2014
Faruk Barwani, 2 July 2013
Fatma Barwani Jinja, 27 September, 30 November 2013, 13 January 2014
Haji Gora, 2 July, 5 July, 10 July, 13 August, 18 November 2013
Hamed Hilali, 10 September, 28 September 2013
Hamid Ameir, 25 November 2013
Harith Ghassany, 12 July 2013
Hassan Nassor Moyo, 17 November 2013
Hon. Ismail Jussa, 31 August 2013
Hon. Saleh Nassor Juma, Hon Mohamed, Hon Rufai, 23 October 2013
Humoud Dugheish, several times a week, July 2013 - January 2014
Ibrahim Mohamed Hussein, 30 September, 2 October 2013
Jamal Nassor Adi, 1 August, 7 August, 22 September 2013
James Brennan, 11 August 2013
Jesper Kirknaes, 30 July 2013
John Nottingham, 21 June 2013
Kalatus, 26 September 2013
Khamis Abdullah Ameir, 29 November 2013
Lord Fadhil, 24 October 2013
Maisara Mahoukum Iddi, 2 November 2013
Masoud Juma Bwana bin Khatib bin Omar al Shirazi, 3 November 2013
Mgeni Khalifa Mbaye, 13 September 2013
Mke wa Victor Mkello, 30 August 2013
Mohamed Jiddawi, 28 July, 4 August 2013
Mohamed Said, 29 July, 29 August 2013
Moses Onyok, 20 January 2014
Mussa Kijogoo Venedi, 1 October 2013
Mzee Ghulum, 3 November 2013
Mzee Kala, 29 October 2013
Mzee Mkwawa, 29 August 2013
Naila Majid Jiddawi, 27 September 2013
Ogwang Nasuru, 26 January 2014
Okello Ajoka and Jonathan Opio, 23 January 2014
Owani Matin, 24 January 2014
Petro Andrea Tumka, 26 September 2013
Rajab Hakim Mrisho, 3 November 2013
Ramadhan Haji Faki, 27 August 2013
Said Mohamed Seif, 30 September 2013
Said Natepe Jr, 5 September 2013
Salim Mohamed Abeid and Mohamed Aley Abdalla, 2 November 2013
Salim Rashid, 31 October, 6 November 2013
Sauda Barwani, 23 August 2013
Shaaban Salim Mbarak, 28 September 2013
Sir Mohamed Salim Ali AlRiamy, 5 September 2013
Titus Abura Opio (Abura Jago), 21 January, 25 January 2014
Yeko Okello, 22 January 2014

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ann Lee Grimstad received her Ph.D. from the University of Florida in the spring of 2018. She is currently a professor of history at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, CA. She teaches African History and World History survey courses. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia and a Master of Arts in African Studies from Ohio University. She has taught at various schools in the U.S. and in Eastern and Southern Africa, and directed study abroad programs in numerous countries in Africa. She conducted her research with the help of a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award. She has received other US Department of Education grants, including the Foreign Language and Area Studies Award to complete her master’s degree, and she was a participant on a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad in Tanzania for Swahili language. As a World History professor, she is currently a participant in a US Department of Education Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program at the East-West Center in Honolulu, HI, whose aim it is to develop undergraduate Chinese area studies courses.