

Dis-Trusting Human Rights: The UN Trusteeship in Late Colonial Tanganyika (Tanzania)

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Abstract

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After World War Two a new internationalism was fuelled by human rights discourses and increasing anticolonial agitation in Africa and beyond. As part of this, the newly established United Nations implemented the Trusteeship Council, tasked with preparing trusteeship territories for self-determination and implementing fundamental human rights and freedoms. Moreover, inhabitants of trusteeship territories had the unique and exclusive right to petition the United Nations directly. In 1948, Tanganyika (Tanzania) received the designation of trusteeship status with the British acting as the administering authority. Tanganyikans of disparate ethnic, racial, class and professional backgrounds seized this opportunity to write to the Trusteeship Council.

The trusteeship petitions provide an access point for shifting the focus of scholarship on international institutions to everyday actors. These diverse actors show a political consciousness of the significance of race, development, and internationalism as vehicles for making claims to rights and control over their personal and political lives. With the promise of decolonization that trusteeship status conferred, inhabitants actively engaged in imagining and negotiating their position within a decolonizing Tanganyika.

My dissertation explores the different scales and experiences of liminality embedded within the trusteeship system as envisioned by petitioners who wrote to the UNTC. I examine grassroots responses on an individual and community level. These responses were steeped in critiques of trusteeship authority and universalism. Many expressed an acute awareness of how the language of human rights and trusteeship with its claims to universalism were intimately tied to racial hierarchies of governance.

This provides a different kind of snapshot of this moment where avenues for justice lay in a nebulous landscape between empire and nation-state. It is a snapshot of a form that is liminal and in-between, where the meaning of racial categories was debated. I look more carefully at specific forms political demands took that were contained within *neither* empire *nor* the nation-state. This form allowed for powerful critiques of empire, universalism, and internationalism, yet also allowed for inhabitants – African communities facing land dispossession, Asian communities anxious about their position as minorities, interracial couples, and domestic workers unions – to engage and use a diverse array of prevailing political languages to describe the struggles they faced in their everyday lives and demand social rights such as the ability to own land, secure employment, fall in love, and more.

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This dissertation was written within and between cities, workplaces, terminals, homes, expectations, and disappointments. It is within the in-between and its demands that I got to think of the past, present and future as a process of making and unmaking. It is from within this space of not quite finished, neither beginning nor end, that I give my gratitude to those who have supported me through this journey in writing and completing this dissertation. I have been, and continue to be, the recipient of support that has come in many forms, and I am eternally grateful.

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List of Acronyms

Asian Association—AA

African Cooks, Washermen, and Houseboys' Association—ACWHA

African National Congress—ANC

District Commissioner—DC

Foreign and Commonwealth Office—FCO

Indian Association—IA

International Labour Organization—ILO

United Nations—UN

Universal Declaration of Human Rights—UDHR

United Nations General Assembly—UNGA

United Nations Trusteeship Council—UNTC

United Nations Visiting Mission—UNVM

Tanganyika African Association—TAA

Tanganyika African National Union—TANU

Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union—TDHWU

Tanganyika Federation of Labour—TFL

Tanganyika Overseas Recruited Asian Government Servants Union—TORAGSU

Third World Approaches to International Law—TWAIL

T/Pet.2—Indication of a petition from or concerning Tanganyika

T/RES—Resolution to a petition from Tanganyika

AAObs—Administering Authority Observations

T/Pet.2/1—T/Pet.2/251— Petitions and Communications concerning Tanganyika:

T/Pet.2/L.1—T/Pet.2/L.14— Limited Distribution Documents:

T/COM.2/L.1—T/Com.2/L.64— Communication from the Trust territory of Tanganyika

Wameru Citizens' Union/Meru Citizens' Union—WCU

Introduction:
“How much of a racial problem exists in Tanganyika?”: UN Trusteeship, Petitions, and Writing Authority

John Wingate: How much of a racial problem exists in Tanganyika?

Julius Nyerere: Very little. It’s boosted up, I think, for purposes I don’t understand.

In 1957, Julius Nyerere, the Tanganyikan politician and leader of the nationalist party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), was in New York to speak before the United Nations (UN) with the goal of furthering the cause for Tanganyikan independence from British rule. Since his appearance before the United Nations Trusteeship Council (UNTC) and the General Assembly’s Fourth Committee in 1955, Nyerere had gained a reputation internationally as a “reasonable” and “moderate” African politician, to the frustration of the colonial government of the United Kingdom.¹ Later, in 1960, Eleanor Roosevelt would describe him as an African politician the likes of which had been “unseen before.”² To many in the West, Nyerere did not appear to be a radical nationalist or an ardent racialist as seen elsewhere in the continent. He was a man who led a party whose vision for Tanganyika included cooperation and negotiation with its minority groups and accepted the UN as a mediating force.

Noting his popularity among UN delegates, and with Nyerere capitalizing on this attention with several appearances on American television in the summer of 1957, the UK government supplied John Wingate of *Night Beat* with what they thought would be especially difficult questions to ask Nyerere on the show. In reference to this, Douglas Skinner, a British

¹ Ullrich Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961*, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 449-457.

² Prospects of Mankind with Eleanor Roosevelt, “Prospects of Mankind; Africa: Julius Nyerere Interview (1959)”, March 6, 1960, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSmYoNmN40s&t=1483s>.

official, wrote to an attaché of the British embassy in the United States, “We had, indeed, noticed with some satisfaction that Nyerere’s performance on ‘Night Beat’ was rather less successful than usual but had not, of course, realized that this was due to your efforts in supplying the interviewer with tricky questions.”³ Many of these ‘tricky’ questions focused on matters of race in Tanganyika, questions one can assume were intended to challenge Nyerere’s image as a non-racialist African nationalist.

Beneath the studio lights, Nyerere leaned forward with confidence and poise as he sat across from Wingate, the late-night talk show host of *Night Beat*, on July 4, 1957.⁴ This was not his first appearance on American television. Just a week earlier he had appeared on NBC’s *Today* show. John Fletcher-Cooke, the United Kingdom Special Representative to the United Nations, had then appeared on the same program on July 8 to dispute much of what Nyerere had insisted upon while he was on the program the week earlier. In both appearances, American television audiences heard about Africa’s problems, Tanganyika (Tanzania), and African preparedness for independence. With an air of anticipation, Nyerere was prepared for his next television appearance.

It was important he perform well, as Nyerere represented a moderate approach to demands for self-determination and reaffirmed the international project of trusteeship as a model for success.⁵ Tanganyika was a United Nations trust territory with the British serving as the administering authority. Trusteeship had been implemented in 1948 with explicit aims and promises to prepare these designated territories for self-determination (Art.76). Unlike with other

³ D.A. Skinner to D. Williams (British Embassy), 6th August, 1957, *Nyerere Speeches at the UN*, FCO 141/ 17860, (Kew: UK National Archives).

⁴ For the full transcript of the interview, it can be found at “Julius Nyerere on “Night Beat,” (Ward, July 4, 1957), *Nyerere Speeches at the UN*, FCO 141/ 17860, (Kew: United Kingdom Archives).

⁵ See for instance, B.T.G Chidzero’s description and analysis at the time. *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

colonies and protectorates, the UNTC had been established as an international supervisory body that oversaw and encouraged the respective administering authorities of trust territories to implement universal human rights and develop the territories towards these aims. This was intended to remedy the shortfalls of the interwar mandate system,⁶ while also responding to the tragedies of World War Two. Trusteeship status was fundamental to the process of decolonization in Tanganyika and was an international experiment in political development. It was through the apparatus of the trusteeship system that Nyerere found himself in New York with the ability to speak before the UNTC, which in turn presented Nyerere with the opportunity to speak on American television to lay out his vision of decolonization in Tanganyika, as he had done before the United Nations.

Nyerere's voice was not the only one to be heard by the UN in the trusteeship period. As Nyerere waited for the cameras to roll, hundreds of petitions from Tanganyikans of disparate backgrounds, race, and status sat in the UN offices. Through the UNTC petitioning system implemented in 1948, Tanganyikans were able to voice their concerns and visions for the future, either collectively or individually, to an international audience that was obliged to respond. This marked the first-time inhabitants of trust territories were able to claim universal rights of equality. Although Tanganyikans took full advantage of this system, submitting petitions about land reform, labour, family, and more, Nyerere's speeches before the UN received the most attention from officials and the public. Meanwhile, the voices of Tanganyikans of varying social status went unheard. Their channels of communication were increasingly overshadowed by the momentum of a nationalist movement led by a charismatic young leader.

⁶ Margaret L. Bates, "Tanganyika: The Development of a Trust Territory," *International Organisation*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1955): 32-51.

This grand historical moment focused on an emerging nation-state, and the risks it posed for a waning imperial authority, became a major preoccupation for an international public, and one that has been a preoccupation of scholars.⁷ At the time, there was little discussion of the many other Tanganyikans who had, or continued to, demand attention for their concerns and experiences through the trusteeship petitioning system. They offered other visions of trusteeship that appropriated the language of anti-discrimination and focused it on their everyday experiences of racial order that occurred in the workplace, home, and social settings. These petitioners exposed and critiqued the errancy of rule experienced under trusteeship that focused on racial categories. In doing so, they chronicled the waywardness of life on the ground and the implications this had for their futures. These other representations of life under trusteeship received notices containing UN formalities that downplayed their concerns regarding the material experience of everyday racial exclusions. These petitioners fell between the cracks of formal UN responses and general reports on conditions in the territory that upheld discrete categories of rule and rendered invisible the daily lives of inhabitants.

In response, petitioners appropriated this new system to cast off the supposed silence of the subaltern subject and demonstrate the potential dynamism of trusteeship and its complicities in forms of domination. These petitions serve as an archive of refusal that centers the experience

⁷ Ullrich Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961*, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007); B. T. G. Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of International Affairs, 1961); Margaret L. Bates, "Tanganyika under British Administration, 1920–1955," D.Phil. thesis (London: University of Oxford, 1958); John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979). See Emma Hunter's book for an examination of how vernacular forms of political thought diverged and converged with the international in certain spaces: *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania Freedom, Democracy and Citizenship in the Era of Decolonization*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2015). For an exploration of French colonial uses of the UN in Africa see Jessica Lynne Pearson, "Defending Empire at the United Nations: the politics of international colonial oversight in the era of decolonisation," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45, no. 3 (2017): 525-549.

of the immediate in conversation with its potential for the future. Petitioners exposed the abject failure of trusteeship and the new international language of rights and development that imposed hardened classifications of difference. Meanwhile, they also considered how the world could be otherwise, in both harmful and liberatory ways.

It is these petitioners who gain the spotlight in this dissertation. However, this is not the story of racial relations that Nyerere and Wingate debated on *Night Beat*. Nyerere downplayed the role of race in Tanganyika, while the British authorities attempted to emphasize the benefits of their continued intervention and presence in the territory. Neither of these renderings fully capture the many ways that race was experienced in the territory or how it resonated throughout the world, yet these were the dramas that played out on American television screens.

Nyerere's rise as a nationalist figure had gained him the spotlight. The questions Wingate asked him narrowed in on issues of race within Tanganyika, rather than on matters of political preparedness, education, or the economy. During the *Night Beat* interview, Wingate remained focused on the racial politics of decolonization. Tanganyika was the largest trust territory in Africa, with prominent European, Asian, and Arab populations compared to other African trust territories. United Kingdom and United Nations officials alike frequently considered ethnic and racial diversity to be a complicating factor affecting the territory negatively.⁸ The UK government insisted that Tanganyika lacked the economic and educational standards needed for self-determination, which they argued necessitated the continued presence of British political oversight and European immigrants.⁹ Furthermore, the government interpreted trusteeship

⁸ Ullrich Lohrmann also notes this in his full-length analysis of trusteeship in Tanganyika. Ullrich Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961*, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 290. Also, see the debates and notes of United Nations Visiting Mission reports: United Nations, *Land in Transition*, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1955, p.24.

⁹ For statements against the 1954 UNVM report and opposing Nyerere's speeches, see United Nations, *Land in Transition*, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1955, 26-29. For a thorough discussion of reactions to Nyerere's speech before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, 20th December 1956, see

principles that promised equality and universal human rights as obligating them to protect the rights of immigrant populations, which often translated into preserving white minority power over an African majority.¹⁰ As a result, the British government deployed a paternalistic strategy that focused on the threat of racial tensions and potential victimization of European immigrants in the territory.

Wingate questioned demands for self-determination emanating from various parts of the world, suggesting they were spiteful rather than rational. He asked rhetorically, “Suppose a white man in one case were a better governor, Mr. Nyerere.”¹¹ In retort, Nyerere mirrored Wingate’s language, exposing his question as baseless and racist: “Supposing the Russians were better governors, would you want them to govern you here?”¹² Nyerere’s response displayed his knowledge of international politics and Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union as competing factors in decolonization, while also maintaining his politics of decolonization and self-rule as a question of national sovereignty. Meanwhile, Wingate’s UK-supplied questions affirmed liberal notions of reason and progress and the shadowy racial violence underpinning them.

For the British, equal rights meant preserving white minority power, while ignoring and committing themselves to the continued dispossession and violence against colonized subjects. This was demonstrated by Wingate’s questions concerning the multiracial politics in Tanganyika. Nyerere was asked to justify why his party only included Africans; he responded

Government of Tanganyika, *Some Comments on Nyerere’s speech at the Fourth Committee of the United Nations*, (Chiswick Press, England, 1957), FCO 141/ 17860, (Kew, United Kingdom National Archives).

¹⁰ This is also noted in Lohrmann, *Voices of Tanganyika*, 298.

¹¹ “Julius Nyerere on “Night Beat,” (Ward, July 4, 1957), *Nyerere Speeches at the UN*, FCO 141/ 17860, (Kew: United Kingdom National Archives), p.1.

¹² *Ibid.*

that at the time of the party's formation, all social and political organizations in Tanganyika had been organized on the basis of racial categories.

Throughout the interview, Nyerere disputed that race was such a pervasive issue in the territory, and instead insisted his movement was about representation and democracy. Wingate proposed that African rule meant all Europeans should expect to be expelled from Africa. In response Nyerere argued, "We do not want to expel the white man from Africa; we want to expel white domination from Africa. We want to live on an equal basis."¹³ This response echoed his statements before the UNTC and Fourth Committee, where he employed the language of democracy to signal his progressive liberal politics to American audiences and diplomats alike. Nearing the conclusion of the interview, Wingate drew on reports emanating from colonial officials that described Nyerere as a political troublemaker, which was likely a reference to his recent ban from public speaking in Tanganyika. Nyerere refused this designation. When Wingate asked him what he would call himself, Nyerere responded, "I call myself a believer in freedom for my people. I believe in democracy, and I was taught democracy by the British."¹⁴ In this way, Nyerere reinforced his image as a liberal politician who was not an extreme nationalist or racist, but one seeking to realize the promise of democracy in alignment with the liberal principles espoused by the UN.

Nyerere had been able to petition and speak before the UNTC and have his image broadcast on television screens. However, many other petitioners had written to the UN about their experiences and fears of racial inequality in the territory, but their petitions did not achieve the same success. Nyerere's insistence on unity and non-racialism differed from more pervasive demands from groups and individuals whose seething discontent was attuned to the experience

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.2.

and material effects of racial inequality. For instance, during the final year of trusteeship, the African National Congress (ANC) submitted petitions to the UNTC insisting they be considered a proper opposing party and for their constitutional proposals to be considered in opposition to TANU, which was actively trying to repress its opposition. The ANC argued that “We want the people to decide before independence whether they want a one-party dictatorship here or full democracy.”¹⁵ However, by this time Nyerere had secured his position as the preeminent politician and president of Tanganyika, regardless of the efforts of would-be liberal television hosts and British diplomatic officials whose conception of rights was narrowly fixated on forestalling African nationalism and preserving the position of the white minority.

Unlike Nyerere, the petitioners considered in this dissertation did not write within a register of nationalism. Instead, nationalist discourses only make momentary appearances and often in very contrived ways in their petitions, after human rights discourses failed to live up to their supposed potential as a source of liberation. For instance, it is only after the failure of the Meru Land Case before the UN that individuals involved in the case began to pursue national sovereignty as a mechanism for achieving guaranteed rights. Yet as the petitions in this dissertation reveal, for many Tanganyikans racial inequality was at the forefront of their concerns, suggesting the belief that racial equality needed to come first. Within the pages of the many petitions examined here can be found pervasive critiques of trusteeship, internationalism, and claims to universalism that reflect an understanding that colour lines ran in multiple directions and often formed the very basis of the logic of the state (whether decolonized or not) and internationalism. The petitioners shared a distrust of this new political system and its attending discourses as recognizable mechanisms for managing racial differences under the

¹⁵ Michael M. Sanga, “Petition From Michael M. Sanga Concerning the territory of Tanganyika,” (New York: UN 18 April 1961) p.1-2.

rubric of universalism. Instead, a grassroots picture emerges of different grassroots political demands that were *neither* for empire *nor* the nation-state, underscoring the liminality of the trusteeship period.

Petitioners demonstrated a clear historical sensibility, recognizing trusteeship as a period of transition and opportunity. They self-consciously drew on prevailing vocabularies of power by taking up their pens to represent themselves and their experiences. In doing so, they revealed, politicized, and inhabited the contradictions inherent to claims of universal human rights. My examination of trusteeship petitioners draws on these renderings and attempts to reanimate the petitioners as historically self-conscious and diverse actors that cannot be reduced to effects of colonialism but were actors who “experimented with forms beyond and below the nation-state.”¹⁶ Adom Getachew refocuses our attention on anticolonialism and self-determination as powerful trans-regional forms of organizing and critiquing imperial systems that worked within international schemas of power alongside the evolutionary appeal of the nation-state. My intervention pushes this further by examining how those who experienced the promise of self-determination were interpreting, imagining, and thinking through their position from below and articulating it to an international body with the power to intervene.

I contend that this position of liminality, or in-betweenness, provided an opportunity to experiment with this new internationalism in the form of trusteeship and its attending language of rights. The trusteeship petitioning system allowed for a glimpse of how everyday people understood their inclusion as subjects with rights owed to them guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and how they critiqued this system as unequal and imbricated with imperial forms. As imperial governments had long proven the malleability of

¹⁶ Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The rise and Fall of Self-Determination*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 2019), 4.

rights talk to imperial aims, the petitions examined here showcase the dynamism of human rights and how people attempted to use these as a new tool for managing and critiquing the racial logic of the state and humanitarianism.

Significantly, since Tanganyika was a trusteeship territory, inhabitants were able to pick up their pens and write to new international authorities about their many anxieties and hopes, often purposefully focused on issues of race. They seized this new opportunity to critique and demand changes to benefit themselves and expose the failure of trusteeship authority. Within the many petitions submitted to the UNTC, racial inequalities emerged in various guises as the preeminent issue that defined social and political relations in the territory, which the UN and the administering authority were reluctant to confront in meaningful ways. And yet petitioners recognized the inter-imperial structure of internationalism that was born with race as its substantive logic. They were acutely aware that race was a determinant of rights-bearing status.

In this dissertation, I argue that race was an integral force in Tanganyika that defined people's expectations, longings, and fears about the future. By writing to the UNTC, petitioners exposed the enduring and pervasive tendons of racial order in an international trusteeship territory where universal human rights were supposed to be guaranteed yet were coloured by the structuring system of race. The ways in which inhabitants used the international petitioning system expresses the centrality of race as an organizing force in their life, as well as how they understood languages of universalism to be another forum for managing and reimagining racial differences. My dissertation explores how Tanganyikans used the international trusteeship system to articulate their fears and longings with regards to racial inequalities using a language of human rights and universalism that offered both opportunities and limitations. What these petitioners knew best was how race continued to be the fundamental logic behind

internationalism that could be used to enhance or diminish various structures of authority over their lives.

The petitioning system

The petitioning system emerged from the designation of Tanganyika as a trust territory and was confined to trusteeship inhabitants who could directly petition the UNTC. This was a distinct departure from the interwar mandate system, which had inhabitants submit petitions to the colonial mandate authority first, to then be forwarded to the League of Nations. Petitioners often sent their letters to the UNTC after having failed in their efforts to gain satisfying resolutions by using the existing petitioning system apparatuses offered within the colonial system. Another difference included the implementation of United Nations Visiting Missions (UNVM) that were dispatched every three years to tour the territories, collect petitions, disseminate information about the UN, meet with officials, and examine overall conditions in the territory. Inhabitants could also potentially give an oral presentation before the UNTC, and if they were still dissatisfied, they could appeal to the General Assembly's Fourth Committee, where petitioners could further their case. With an increasing number of states from the Global South peopling the General Assembly and Cold War tensions animating international politics, petitioners were more likely to find support at the General Assembly. This led some petitioners like Nyerere to take on the risk and expenses of an oral presentation before the UNTC.

One way petitioners were able to submit petitions to this new body of the UN was through the tours of United Nations Visiting Missions. These comprised a split number of administering authority representatives and non-administering trusteeship representatives. The itinerants of their tours were designed by the respective administering authority and a British official accompanied them. UNVM's were often met with some fanfare, yet they remained

representations of an elite institution, even so these became important symbols of the possibility of the UN as an institution of human rights, although it rode alongside colonial authorities.

Nyerere's ability to gain the spotlight for himself during the closing years of trusteeship also spells out a significant shift that occurred in the UN that goes towards understanding the ways that the petitioners examined here fell through the cracks. Specific shifts in the UN led to an increasing emphasis on developing the nation-state as opposed to the social rights and lived experiences within the trust territories. The presence of anti-colonial delegates from former colonized states and the specific aims of the trusteeship system towards self-determination contributed to this.

The drafting of the UN Charter in 1945 saw the confluence of fifty nations in San Francisco. This provided opportunity for various voices within the halls of the UN to agitate for specific changes that would see this new international institution move further away from its predecessor the League of Nations. The American diplomat and scholar Ralph Bunche had pushed for implementing the trusteeship system that would become the basis for the United Nations Trusteeship Council. This included specific protocols that would enable better supervisory powers to the Council, as compared to the Permanent Mandates Commission. In fact, others such as the Philippine representative Carlos Romulo also avidly agitated for changes that would not see the new trusteeship system as another guise of colonialism.¹⁷ Neither were Bunche and Romulo the only ones who worked towards having the new trusteeship system be in service to trusteeship inhabitants rather than the colonial powers.¹⁸ There was support for this among Latin American, Indian, Caribbean, and the Soviet governments. By the end of the San

¹⁷ Daniel Gorman, "Britain, India, and the United Nations: colonialism and the development of international governance," *Journal of Global History*, 9, (2014): 478-479.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Francisco conference, three specific chapters of the UN Charter attended to matters of empire and development. For the purposes of this dissertation, the most important were Chapters XII and XIII, which deal with the establishment of and protocols for dealing with trusteeship territories which would come under the purview of the United Nations Trusteeship Council. These chapters clearly articulated and required administering authorities to promote “political, social and economic advancement for the purpose of self-determination and independence,” while also respecting the fundamental human rights of inhabitants.

Responses to this varied. Jan Smuts of South Africa clung to the idea that the trusteeship system would act similarly to League of Nations, which had allowed for the continuation of empire with little disruption. Whereas the French delegation was more sensitive to the suggested changes and expressed deep concerns over the trusteeship system and the potential threat this posed to colonial territories elsewhere.¹⁹ These concerns were not confined to the potential influence of trusteeship protocols, but also the implementation of Chapter XI of the UN Charter that dealt with the “Declaration regarding Non-self-governing Territories”. This called on all colonial governments to prepare overseas territories for self-determination through development initiatives, and required the submission of annual reports to the UN Secretary-General on conditions in the territory with the aim of preparing these territories for self-government overseen by the UN Special Committee on Information for Non-self-governing Territories.²⁰ However, there was no means of monitoring this like in trust territories, where visiting missions and a petitioning system were enacted in conjunction with annual reporting on social, political, and economic conditions. Jessica Pearson’s new study of French government responses to UN supervision of colonies illustrates the ways that these international protocols served to place a

¹⁹ Jessica Pearson, p. 5-6.

²⁰ Ibid.

spotlight on the problems of colonialism on a global stage exposing the harm of imperialism.²¹

By the end of 1945, many government representatives were left uncertain what this new institution, the United Nations, and its many branches would be capable of doing.

In fact, anti-colonial actors used their access to the halls of the UN and this new international sphere to push for issues of racial discrimination and abuse onto the UN's agenda. By working alongside non-state actors and activist groups, UN members were able to get major cases before the UN. For instance, early on India was able to get South African apartheid onto the desks of UN members.²² However, as Alanna O'Malley points out in her work, this was not a straightforward or immediate process. This was one that required delegates to strategically make alliances and build on networks that would come to intersect with such movements as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the African Block, and most visibly with the Bandung Conference.²³ Through these growing networks anti-colonial activists were able to increasingly exert pressure and influence over different delegates within the UN international agendas over the years with varying levels of success and failure. New scholarship considers the ways that various UN members from formerly colonized areas of the world used the UN to amplify issues occurring in the Global South alongside various networks and alliances that were formed between and within institutional and non-institutional actors; this work challenges notions that the UN was wholly in service to imperial states.²⁴ Although my

²¹ Ibid, 6.

²² Alexander E. Davis and Vineet Thakur, "'An act of faith' or a new 'Brown Empire'? The dismissal of India's international anti-Racism, 1945-1961," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 56, no. 1 (2018): 22-39.

²³ Alanna O'Malley, "India, Apartheid and the New World Order at the UN, 1946-1962," *Journal of World History*, Volume 31, Number 1, March 2020, pp. 195-223.

²⁴ Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Bonny Ibhawoh, "Testing the Atlantic Charter: Linking Anticolonialism, Self-determination and Universal Human Rights," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 18, no. 7-8 (2014): 842-860; Carol Anderson, "International conscience, the Cold War, and apartheid: the NAACP's alliance with the Reverend Michael Scott for South West Africa's liberation, 1946-1951," *Journal of World History* (2008): 297-325; Meredith Terretta, "Cameroonian nationalists go global: from forest maquis to a pan-African Accra." *The Journal of African History* 51, no. 2 (2010): 189-212; Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, eds. *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

dissertation is less concerned with these manoeuvres among elites, lawyers, and others, who at times were able to shift the focus to pressing issues concerned with the colonial world, we must not lose sight of how the UN was a vibrant and dynamic center of diplomatic and human rights appeals over the years.

How the UNTC processed petitions would come to reflect this growing preference for nation-state form as an endpoint. Under Articles 87 and 88 of the UN Charter, the United Nations Trusteeship Council (UNTC) was established as the organ of the UN, and thus under the General Assembly and Security Council, with permanent representatives that included those who were administering authorities of trust territories, non-administering authorities, as well as all permanent members of the Security Council. The UNTC was required to examine all petitions it received and would make recommendations and observations regarding these. In some cases, when resolutions could not be found, the matter would come before the General Assembly's Fourth Committee, which dealt with, and still reviews, issues relating to colonialism and decolonization. The Committee would review and debate the issue and would either give its own views and pass on its own recommendations or support those views the Council sponsored. A petitioner could only potentially appeal their case to the Fourth Committee if it first appeared before the UNTC.²⁵ Structural changes concerning how the UNTC accepted and categorized petition also affected the reach of certain petitions. At first, the UNTC accepted all written communications submitted to its offices or United Nations Visiting Mission members, as long as it was not an appeal against a local court's judgement. This led to an overwhelming number of petitions, so that by the mid-1950s its prior openness to all correspondence pertaining to trust territories was modified. An ad-hoc committee was devised to review petitions, and eventually emerged as a permanent arm of the UNTC called the Standing Committee on Petitions. New rules of procedure were implemented that required this committee to meet between UNTC sessions and for administering authorities to submit reports on each petition. The General Assembly passed the resolution on the Standing Committee in 1951 without requiring the recommendations of administering authorities regarding this new petitioning

²⁵ Chidzero, 29-31.

method. As Ullrich Lohrmann writes, they were invited to submit their opinions on this new Standing Committee, but by no means was the General Assembly willing to compromise on this new institutional infrastructure.²⁶ This stands as a just one example of the shifting ways that the structure of the UN and the UNTC underwent during the period under study in this dissertation. Although these shifts are not central to the petitions examined in this dissertation, it does go towards explaining how some petitions were considered. Those deemed to be dealing with general conditions or a matter already resolved by the UNTC were therefore determined as not requiring further investigation, thus minimizing the number of petitions that received in-depth attention. Although these shifts are not central to the petitions examined in this dissertation, it does go towards explaining how those petitions that dealt with more everyday matters were filed as pertaining to general conditions in the territory.

These unique attributes of trusteeship and the documentation amassed in this time offers a vital window onto the lives, thoughts, and emotions of Tanganyikan inhabitants during this late period of colonization, with its promises of self-determination. The connection to international law and human rights provided a language to inhabitants to articulate their desires and fears to a body that presumably superseded the authority of the colonial power. In the early years of trusteeship—the primary focus of this dissertation—we do not see the nation-state form capture the imagination of petitioners. Nor do we observe a willingness to work within the confines of empire. Instead, universal human rights became the new vessel for experimentation and pushing back against authority to expose its unevenness. The petitioning system that emerged with trusteeship brought local inhabitants and their experiences into focus on an international scale. In this way we encounter the experimentation, fits and starts, and imagined possibilities and limitations that certain groups or individuals saw within human rights discourse and trusteeship.

²⁶ Lohrmann, 29-31.

My work asks that we turn a discerning eye to the practices and appeals emanating from trusteeship subjects in the post-war period who were critiquing the system while also using it as a mechanism for asserting or renegotiating their place. My work also critically examines how people of varying status attempted to use the system as both a tool of liberation and domination over others in often contradictory ways. Within these petitions we see a critical engagement with this new language of rights from below.

Notably, the language surrounding belonging also shifted throughout this period in important ways. Unlike under the League of Nations mandate system, the paramountcy of native interests and what constituted “native interests” shifted throughout the trusteeship years. No longer were native necessarily about protecting and preserving local African peoples and traditions. This policy shifted and merged with discourses on development. For the British administering authority as trusteeship continued and political pressure from delegates that were non-administering authorities insisted on UN principles of development and progress, local peoples became a more expansive term that included the betterment of all permanent inhabitants. This shifting designation, which was once exclusive to Africans, would later inform policies that would see European immigrants’ rights and privileges as fundamental to the development of the territory. Among African and Asian inhabitants this term was also in flux. Asian inhabitants interpreted this term in ways that reflected their status as in-between colonizer and colonized. For some Asians this meant attempting to affiliate themselves as Europeans or distinct from Africans, whereas at other times it shifted towards a claim to indigeneity. Various African petitioners and politicians, too, would interpret indigeneity in conflicting terms. As the nationalist party TANU gained in momentum as the pre-imminent party to take over power with decolonization they would come to embrace all races as part of the nation. Yet, opposing groups such as the African National Congress opposed this and confined their interpretations of indigeneity to black Africans.

Trusteeship is often an overlooked aspect of this final decade of colonial rule. My dissertation shines a light on this underexamined characteristic of Tanganyikan life and politics.

When scholars do write about the trusteeship years, they tend to explore the actions of Julius Nyerere before the UNTC, or to chart how the nationalist movement intersected with, and was elevated through, use of the trusteeship apparatuses and rights talk.²⁷ I depart from this inclination; I am not interested in recuperating nation-state leaders as visionaries, nor do I fixate on the failures of the period. Instead, I am drawn to trusteeship status as a unique political experiment of in-betweenness, and how it was perceived by inhabitants who chose to engage with an international audience on issues that pertained to their everyday lives. One contention I work with in this dissertation is that trusteeship provided a unique opportunity for inhabitants of various backgrounds and status to engage directly with human rights and situates trusteeship subjects as early human rights practitioners, whose stories of trusteeship and human rights express their interpretations of the political world with its possibilities and limitations. A blend of optimism and pessimism for universal human rights emerges as inhabitants confront this new language and its many slippages that managed hierarchies of difference while claiming to replace these with equality.²⁸

Scholars such as Mark Mazower, Susan Pedersen, Antony Anghie, and many others have usefully and critically examined the shortcomings of international institutions as mechanisms for liberation and achieving national equality.²⁹ Meanwhile, other scholars such as Meredith

²⁷ See for instance, Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961*, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007); Paul Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere*, (Athens: Ohio University, 2017); For a perspective from the period see, B. T. G. Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of International Affairs, 1961).

²⁸ For a discussion of anti-colonial discourse and its connections with mastery, as well as notion of mastery as a defining force of dehumanism see Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*, Durham: Duke University, 2018. For a discussion of universalisms as a tool for managing difference see Darryl Li, *The Universal Enemy: Jihad, Empire, and the Challenge of Solidarity*, (Stanford: Stanford University, 2019).

²⁹ Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, (London: Oxford University, 2015); Mark M. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Terretta, Alanna O'Mally and Vineet Thakur have explored the ways that the UN served as an important platform for anti-colonial actors for discussing colonial injustices.³⁰ They have charted the ways that international organizations were imagined by colonial powers as useful for managing anticolonial movements and as a tool for preserving or even gaining power. Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL) has gone a long way to furthering our understanding of the pervasive inequalities and imperial legacies contained in international law. This scholarship has helped trace the imperial genealogy of international institutions with an eye to the limitations these have posed (and continue to pose) for liberation due to their intimate connection to exploitative mechanisms of capitalism.³¹ Yet, the unique characteristics of trusteeship status and the experiences of this international legal status has been largely overlooked in these scholarly accounts and explorations regarding the failures of international law.

Other historians, like Jessica Pearson, have shown how colonial powers, such as France, carefully navigated the potential intrusiveness of international structures like the UN and the World Health Organization. She argues that the threat of the international gaze posed many risks to colonial powers, leading to anxious diplomatic maneuvers. This confirms Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga's contention that in the post-World War Two period the position of the UN was

³⁰ Terretta, "Anti-colonial Lawyering, Postwar Human Rights, and Decolonization across Imperial Boundaries in Africa," *Canadian Journal of History*, vol.52 Issue 3, (Winter 2017), pp. 448-478; Alanna O'Malley and Vineet Thakur "Introduction: Shaping a Global Horizon, New Histories of the Global South and the UN," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, Volume 13, Number 1, Spring 2022, pp. 55-65; Alexander E. Davis and Vineet Thakur, "'An act of faith' or a new 'Brown Empire'? The dismissal of India's international anti-Racism, 1945-1961," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 56, no. 1 (2018): 22-39.

³¹ For a selection of seminal and new TWAIL scholars see the following works, by no means is this list comprehensive: Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Balakrishnan Rajagopal, *International Law from Below: Development, Social Movements, and Third World Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003); Luis Eslava, *Local Space, Global Life : The Everyday Operation of International Law and Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2015); Ntina Tzouvala, *Capitalism as Civilization: A History of International Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2020).

occasionally bound to the operations and logics of nation-states, while at other times proving useful in challenging dominant powers. They argue this tension is most noticeable in its treatment of racial inequalities, writing:

The UN's involvement with the "race question" clearly illustrates the profusion of contradictions that the UN has always had to face, the limits upon its ability to shape an international intellectual and moral- political agenda. Thus, the UN was critical to the international status of the postwar challenge to racism, at the same time as its operations remained shaped by racial assumptions and racial prejudice.³²

The petitions examined here confirm this statement in some ways. Trusteeship subjects were focused on the issue of racial inequalities and indeed wrote to the UNTC about these issues, which it claimed to stand against, but the institution was not equipped to address these as long as it cleaved to imperial epistemologies and understandings of progress tied to the nation-state.

Importantly, these scholars have mapped out the ever-shifting contours of the international sphere and urged people to understand that it was not a static entity. They also urge us to consider how the UN during the early post-war years was an emerging institution that, although tied up in its own histories and legacies, was also in a state of formation.

Meanwhile, scholarly examinations of human rights and the colonial question disproportionately focus on the interwar period of the mandate system compared to the post-World War Two moment of trusteeship. Although the trusteeship period emerged from the interwar mandate system, it differed in important ways. The mandate system had largely retained the privileges of the colonial administrators and served as more of a bulwark against criticisms of empire. By contrast, the trusteeship system heavily emphasized self-determination and human rights.³³ In some ways, the interwar period and the League of Nations is a natural starting point

³² Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, "New Histories of the United Nations," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 19, No. 3, New Histories of the United Nations, (Sep., 2008), 257.

³³ B.T.G Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 23-29, or see Chapters XII and XIII of the Charter of the UN, Article 7.

for scholarship on the topic as it was a period of emerging transnational organization amidst the conflagrations of imperial power and was the first institutional form of the international sphere as an entity. However, my work and that of others who write about the post-World War Two trusteeship period fills an important gap and encourages others to critically examine the changes implemented with the trusteeship system, including the petitioning machinery and increasing circulation of news about the UN. This was imperialism with subjects who could write back and make claims based on their very humanity, and who regarded this new human rights language, and its potential uses critically.

Importantly, I draw on and contribute to scholarship that situates Africans as important agents in human rights histories. Most recently, scholars have written back against positivist historians whose interpretations of human rights rely on presentist definitions of the term, which privileges the rights of the individual over collective rights. These historians tend to date human rights to either the 1960s or 1970s, which inevitably ignores early human rights practices as they were being formed and institutionalized.³⁴ The positivist argument leans on the enforceability of

³⁴For those who argue human rights became global once it broke from anti-colonial liberation movements and indicate this rupture as occurring either in the 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s see the following authors: Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, (Harvard University Press, 2012); Randall Williams, *A Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Robert Meister, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Jan Eckel, "Human Rights and Decolonization: New Perspectives and Open Questions," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 1, no. 1 (2010): 111–135; For an opposing view that centers the Third World as fundamental to the breakthrough of human rights as an international system, yet still dates this to the 1960s see: Steven L. B. Jensen, *The making of international human rights: the 1960s, decolonization, and the reconstruction of global values*, (Cambridge University Press, 2016); For a discussion of diplomatic manoeuvres and strategies of Third World states in ensuring that human rights were an important political agenda in the international sphere, and thus challenging notions that human rights were imposed on these states see: Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2010); For another variation of this see: Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, (New York: New Press, 2007). For a discussion of this with a focus on Africans and the African diaspora see Bonny Ibhawoh, *Human Rights in Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2018); Meredith Terretta has also written extensively on how United Nations trusteeship inhabitants also practiced human rights. See her work, specifically "'We Had Been Fooled into Thinking that the UN Watches over the Entire World': Human Rights, UN Trust Territories, and Africa's Decolonization," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Volume 34, Number 2, May 2012, pp. 329-36; Terretta, "Anti-colonial Lawyering, Postwar Human Rights, and Decolonization across Imperial Boundaries in Africa," *Canadian Journal of History*, vol.52 Issue 3, (Winter 2017), pp. 448-478.

human rights and contends that anticolonial movements agitating for self-determination do not fall within the parameters of human rights.

Scholars writing against this position have fleshed out the ways that Africans and other Global South actors were central to influencing the contours of international human rights and have argued that self-determination was, indeed, a question of human rights that centered on issues of global inequalities.³⁵ This has led scholars such as Meredith Terretta and Bonny Ibhawoh to highlight the many transnational networks and activism that African people and the African diaspora have led and engaged in over the years. Their work centers African people as important agents in shaping our understanding of human rights and corrects a longstanding gap in the literature.

Similarly, my work hones in on how people on the African continent, and specifically in Tanganyika, were early participants in human rights discourse and interpreters of universalism. Although my work is less focused on the broad networks of anti-colonial lawyering and activist organizing that Terretta has skillfully addressed, I narrow in on how select individuals and groups used petitioning, human rights, and trusteeship to express their hopes and fear about racial inequalities that pervaded their experiences of colonial rule. My work uses a smaller scale that reveals the interstitial spaces within which human rights were interpreted and came to be entangled with people's visions of their future selves.

Furthermore, in asserting the importance of the trusteeship period, I am contributing to scholarship that has returned to examining the dynamism of the post-World War Two political imaginaries in the Global South. Scholars have increasingly reevaluated this moment by emphasizing the globality of political movements and the serious experimentation towards

³⁵ Bonny Ibhawoh, *Human Rights in Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2018).

reimagining the world.³⁶ What many of these works share is an attention to political imaginaries, possibilities, and moves towards worldmaking that sought to correct prevailing global imbalances. These authors peel away at the global as a teleological space and unpack how it offered what Frederick Cooper adeptly calls possibilities and constraints.³⁷ Scholars have examined the range of ways intellectuals of the period imagined new political forms of organizing that included federation to transcontinental alliances and movements focused on the international sphere. This work tends to focus on educated elites or politicians as the visionaries and players in these landscapes of imagination and political experimentation and are helpful in reminding readers that the period of decolonization had its fits and starts as it unfolded. I would suggest that universal human rights in trust territories was an additional political imaginary at this time that occasionally intersected with these other movements but was also a unique form of integration to the inhabitants. The petitioning system provided a platform for experimenting with political claim making. On offer to colonial subjects for the first time was the potential to rework racial inequalities by drawing on human rights discourses about equality.

My work shares in this critical vantage point and contributes in many ways to these conversations about decolonization, racial inequalities, and the UN, except from the perspective of everyday people on the ground. The petitions I examine are not the success stories one may

³⁶ For a sample of literature that attempts to get at the political imaginings of this period as an opportunity for worldmaking see, Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 2019); For an examination of transnational political alternatives see, Christopher Lee, *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010); Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, (New York: The New Press, 2007). For a look at the political possibilities posed by empire, particularly the French empire see: Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization and the Future of the World*, (Durham: Duke University, 2015); Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship Between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

³⁷ Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *The Journal of African History*, vol. 49, no. 2 (2008): 167-196.

crave. Indeed, the following chapters chart the ways that trusteeship machinery relegated these voices to the background, where their stories and visions of possibility were shelved.

Nevertheless, these failed visions tell their own stories about Tanganyikan life in the early period of trusteeship, when people were learning of international trusteeship and deliberately practicing human rights. These stories convey a certain disquiet that forces a confrontation with how universalism and human rights were seen by Tanganyikans as paradoxes that demanded to be exposed. These petitions are reflective of Ibhawoh's assertion that human rights history "is more a narrative of tensions and paradoxes than one of certainty and teleological progress."³⁸ By departing from studying the works and words of elites to seek out the muffled voices of those Tanganyikans whose experiences are less likely to be attributed to human rights concerns, I bring forth alternative interpretations of how universal human rights were viewed as a possible tool for upholding, shifting, or challenging racial hierarchies. In doing so, I shed light on the many ways that human rights and universalism could be molded to articulate political imaginaries and desires, often in contradictory and unexpected ways. This is also revealing of a period when international human rights were still being formed and managed within a flimsy matrix of national sovereignties. Petitioners engaged in conversations where they claimed rights and revealed racial gaps while experimenting with, and testing ideas of, equality and potential mastery over others.

Analysts and Authorities of their Position

Petitioning the UNTC in 1950s was a practice that illustrated how people in Tanganyika used human rights, universalism, and trusteeship as an intersecting system. For many, it was an act of engagement whereby the petitioner, or petitioners, positioned themselves as authorities and

³⁸Bonny Ibhawoh, *Human Rights in Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2018), 22.

analysts of their situation. A pervasive analysis and critique of authority emerges from within these petitions, one that can complicate the perception of petitioners as individuals who readily accepted and envisioned themselves as liberal subjects. Yet the UNTC's position as a supervisory body that espoused a language of equality and anti-discrimination invited engagement from a diverse group of petitioners who claimed liberal rights in the face of oppressive forces. The UNTC represented an additional tier of authority, as an international supervisory body of colonial authorities, which made petitioning the institution a form for exposing the depths of inequalities that underscored life in Tanganyika.

This did not always entail critiquing imperial authorities, however. People petitioned the UNTC claiming authority over their life in opposition to the whims or will of state authorities, local authorities, employers, merchants or neighbours. In doing so, petitioners not only exposed the many hierarchies that informed life in the territory, but also expressed a clear understanding of universal human rights as a mechanism for managing differences and inequalities, not so much as a means of eradicating them. Petitioners did not naively believe in the infinite emancipatory possibilities of human rights, but rather viewed them as an additional instrument for managing differences in subtle ways that advanced their position or exposed power disparities, as the chapters in this dissertation explore.

Petition-writing to the UN also entailed a previously unparalleled degree of contact with authorities. This initiated a process of encounter whereby petitioners, the colonial government and the UNTC interacted as analysts of the issues brought forward. For each petition received by the UNTC, the British government was expected to submit observations and comment on its contents. The UNTC also issued documents directly to petitioners regarding the progress of their case and any related resolutions and documentation. Tanganyikans were not limited in the

number of times they could petition the UNTC, either. Often petitioners submitted their petition to a UNVM after securing a meeting with them through the administering authority, while others wrote directly to the UNTC.³⁹ The petitions examined in this dissertation studies how inhabitants viewed their social and political situations through a lens of human rights which promised to correct violations against racial discrimination. Evidently, the UN captured the affective imagination of an increasing number of Tanganyikans who petitioned the UNTC either individually or as a group, but it failed to take seriously concerns regarding racial inequalities on the ground that impacted people's personal and everyday practices. Instead, it favoured an approach that depended upon statistical analyses and notions of measuring political and economic development that mirrored Western development ideals and constitutionalism, rather than the material and social inequalities of people's experiences.⁴⁰ Yet petitioners inserted themselves as experts on the history of, and present situations described in, their claims in ways that directly addressed authorities and critiqued various levels of officials. They asserted their authority and knowledge of a situation or circumstances to come.

Trusteeship and Liminality

Fundamental to my thesis is the consideration of the function, uses and effects of liminality. Trusteeship status imposed a liminal status on Tanganyika as it was not quite a

³⁹ Lohrmann, p. 26-27. Lohrmann notes that one obstacle petitioners faced was that the UNVM decided whether or not the materials submitted to them by inhabitants were worth passing on to the UN Secretary-General.

⁴⁰For a discussion of the coercive and interventionist nature of development initiatives in early post-World War two Tanganyika see Michael Jennings, "Building better people: modernity and utopia in late colonial Tanganyika," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3, no. 1 (2009): 94-111. For a critical discussion of how post-colonial Tanzania also deployed the same rhetoric of development and modernity to target specific groups of individuals under the guise of neutrality, yet was also specifically aimed towards everyday habits see, Leander Schneider, "The Maasai's new clothes: A Developmentalist Modernity and its Exclusions." *Africa Today* (2006): 101-131. Also see Andrew Ivaska's cultural history of this in his book *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam*, (Durham: Duke University, 2011). For critical analysis of the harmful effects of development discourse see: James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, (Berkeley: University California, 2002).

colonial territory nor a sovereign state. Importantly, trusteeship status obligated the trust authority to prepare the territory for self-determination, which created increasing pressure as other colonies within Africa and around the world were gaining and agitating for independence.⁴¹ This was predicated on evaluations of modernity as defined by international and imperial powers, whose ideas of progress included improving education levels, introducing constitutional processes and political practices that mirrored European institutions, and large-scale economic development plans involving extensive use of lands, executed by the administering authority and applauded by the UNTC.⁴²

The agenda of development was not only infused with racial understandings of modernity but was also deployed by the administering authority in an effort to delay territorial sovereignty and preserve the liminal form. In the case of Tanganyika, commissions and committees drawing up five-year plans were a marker of trusteeship and colonialism more broadly. As Ann Laura Stoler states in *Reading Along the Archival Grain*, commissions and reports were tools to further empower the imperial state. As she describes it, “They mirror even as they produce the prevailing idioms of colonial common sense. The phrases are stock and formulaic—faithful to

⁴¹ B.T.G Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 23-29, or see Chapters XII and XIII of the Charter of the UN, Article 76.

⁴²For early support of the Groundnut Scheme see: UN Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Ruanda-Urundi and Tanganyika, 1948, “United Nations Visiting Mission to East Africa : report on Tanganyika and related documents,” T/4S/Supp.3, T(01)/R3, T/RES/107(V), Lake Success, N.Y. : UN, 1948, p.1-3. United Kingdom See for instance the UNTC’s 1952 report, whereby they acknowledge the glaring failure of the scheme, yet approve further funds towards it and enumerate various benefits accrued such as “training” of Africans in agriculture. UNTC, “Report of the Trusteeship Council covering its 4th special session and its 10th and 11th sessions, 18 December 1951 to 24 July 1952,” (New York: UN, 1952), p.44. The Groundnut Scheme was a failure and scholars have commented on or discussed these aspects of it. For detailed studies see: Rizzo Matteo, "What was left of the groundnut scheme? Development disaster and labour market in Southern Tanganyika 1946–1952," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 6, no. 2 (2006): 205-238; Michelle Bourbonniere, "Ripple effects: the groundnut scheme failure and railway planning for colonial development in Tanganyika, 1947–1952," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 47, no. 3 (2013): 365-383; Jan S. Hogendorn, and K. M. Scott, "The East African groundnut scheme: lessons of a large-scale agricultural failure," *African Economic History* 10 (1981): 81-115.

the truth-claims of racialized rule.”⁴³ The many papers reporting on conditions in the territory and drawing up of plans cleaved closely to racial ideas and prescriptions of Western modernity that could be used to justify the deferral of self-determination. The UNTC commented on annual reports describing progress in the territory by urging for the quicker implementation of certain measures, yet it was not in a position to do much more.

For example, the 1954 UNVM report on Tanganyika included recommendations for establishing target dates for self-determination. Nyerere, the president of the newly formed nationalist party TANU, supported the findings of this mission. However, the UK representative and other administering authorities, such as Australia, adamantly denied the usefulness of establishing target dates that would see Tanganyika achieve independence in twenty to twenty-five years. They argued that such an action would discourage foreign investors from investing in the territory and that it was better to trust the administering authorities, who had intimate knowledge of the territory and its true conditions.⁴⁴ I highlight this incident, which created significant debate and led to Nyerere’s first appearance before the UNTC, to demonstrate that unlike under the mandate system, which remained a preserve of empire, trusteeship was oriented towards a future beyond the grasp of imperial power. Administering authorities attempted to delay this eventuality using their preferred tools of deferral: commissions, reports, committees, investigations and other bureaucratic and administrative practices.

Petitions were also subject to this politics of deferral as well, which attempted to preserve the liminal status of the territory. Responses to petitions from the UNTC were often slow. Before a petition could be discussed, the administering authority would have to respond to its contents

⁴³ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Commonsense*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 2010), 145.

⁴⁴ UN, *Land in Transition*, 20-21.

and send the response for review to members of the committee in due time for the next session. Often this was not achieved, and the deliberations of a petition would be pushed back to the next meeting. In fact, petitioners would occasionally submit follow-up petitions inquiring about the status of their case.

The administering authority also had a sway over time in other ways too. In some instances, authorities would speed up projects that faced protests from local inhabitants who had submitted petitions to the UNTC in opposition. This occurred in the Meru Land Case, which features as the first chapter of this dissertation. In this case, a commission suggested a meat and dairy industry should be implemented in and around the hills of the Northern Province. This involved the removal of the Africans living the area. Wameru organizers petitioned the UNTC in protest. Once the authorities learned of this, they sped up the implementation of the project before the UNTC could suggest otherwise. This instance, and the slow processing of petitions more generally, exemplifies what Lisa Ford and Lauren Benton described as slow and fast justice processes. This strategy, which they ascribed to early nineteenth century colonial administrators or slaveholders, involved delaying or deliberately stalling or appealing court procedures and decisions to allow for the space and time to commit acts; alternatively, justice could be sped up, as with the summary punishment of slaves, before the courts could make a judgement.⁴⁵ Ford and Benton argue that this power over the temporal was an important attribute of law in the colonies. They also describe how the use of this strategy created difficulties for the imperial project and arose from the actions of individual administrators rather than as a deliberate tool of imperial authority in England.⁴⁶ However, in the case of trusteeship a clear deployment of

⁴⁵ Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford, "Legal Panics, Fast and Slow: Slavery and the Constitution of Empire," in *Power and Time: temporalities in Conflict and the Making of History*, edited by Dan Edelstein, Stefanos Geroulanos, and Natasha Wheatley, (Chicago: Chicago University, 2020), 295-316.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 297-299.

temporal power by the government is apparent, as it attempted to delay the self-determination of Tanganyika and preserve the position of Europeans and imperial control over the territory. Nevertheless, the government could not exert complete control in this way, as there was considerable risk of public outcry from petitioners and pressure for intervention from international authorities. Additionally, petitioners brought to surface the many laws and rights that overlapped trusteeship, or were once dominant in the lives of inhabitants, as a mechanism to demand redress for their concerns. This is what Natasha Wheatley calls a “reminder that the establishment of the state was not a totalizing phenomenon, that rights could evade its transformative grasp and puncture its pretension to seamless jurisdiction and seamless sovereignty.”⁴⁷ In this way, petitioners exercised their agency by drawing on past and present legalisms to make their claims and calling for an expansive temporality.

Petitioners experienced liminality in other ways too. As they waited for news on their petitions, they were still charged with the responsibility of earning a living, caring for family, maintaining a household and other obligations. In the Meru Land Case, this left many landless as they refused relocation efforts and demanded the return of their land. In another case, domestic servant Marita Salim was described as destitute, wandering the territory seeking aid from missions and others. Meanwhile, Asian petitioners seeking to reside in Tanganyika or migrate out wrote with questions of uncertainty about their position in the territory. In the case of domestic servants, the precarity of their work meant they consistently inhabited liminal spaces and places as they constantly sought out work in case of a sudden dismissal. In all of these cases, the petitioners agitated against the liminal. Tanganyikan inhabitants were acutely aware of

⁴⁷ Natasha Wheatley, “Legal Pluralism as Temporal Pluralism: Historical Rights, Legal Vitalism, and Non-Synchronous Sovereignty,” in *Power and Time: Temporalities in Conflict and the Making of History*, edited by Dan Edelstein, Stefanos Geroulanos, and Natasha Wheatley, (Chicago: Chicago University, 2020), p.53.

their liminal status and questions of precarity loomed large. Their experience of liminality occupied their imaginings of futures as they described potential future outcomes and the perceived detriment these posed. For some the liminal form of trusteeship aggravated anxieties, while for others it was a space of resistance against colonial power. And so, through these petitions we can observe the many liminal spaces of political life under trusteeship.

My interest in the liminal also extends to my choice of petitioners to examine. Those featured in this dissertation occupied a range of statuses and exercise various degrees of power in terms of authority, influence, or responsibility. However, their stories all share one unifying characteristic: they all existed in a state of transience. Their position and place were questioned by themselves and others. For this reason, the liminal featured more prominently in their lives. Some occupied an obvious position of privilege and advantage compared to others, such as with European migrant Anton Weber. Those featured in this dissertation play on the liminality of trusteeship as a means of potentially exerting some sway or authority over their own position in life. Their petitions often center on matters of home, family, and work, which stands in contrast to what is imagined to be liminal. In other words, these petitioners were writing against and with liminality. They recognized their position and the opportunity or restraints that result from existing in a state of transience. Yet their demands and claims narrowed in on the ubiquity of racial hierarchies that provided the scaffolding of their lives. It is within the petitioning form that these individuals, whose sway or roles were under- or unrecognized, sought an audience whose standing was rooted and fixed, and attempted to demonstrate how central race was to these conditions.

Human rights and their intersections with the everyday

Universal human rights and trusteeship posed as an additional tool for negotiating the liminal. My work pays special attention to the petitions invoking human rights and universalism to address matters of race that impacted petitioners' daily lives and were viewed as having the potential to determine their fates. These petitions explored both the obvious and less noticeable ways that racial hierarchies defined life in this period. This was intensified as politics in surrounding territories also focused on issues of race. Race relations in South Africa were worsening under apartheid rule; the formation of the Central African Federation in 1953 that preserved white dominance and access to copper mines and labour was also a specter that haunted Tanganyikans. Meanwhile, in the 1950s increasing tensions between white settlers and landless Kikuyu in Kenya led to severe violence. In these neighbouring territories, issues of racial inequalities saturated political discourses about the future. Meanwhile, anticolonial organization was ramping up throughout much of the continent and the Global South. This political spectrum, I argue, led to intensified concerns among inhabitants for their immediate futures as well as for the futures promised by trusteeship and being brought ever closer by political action on the continent. In this way, these petitions support what Sally Engle Merry described as one of the limitations of human rights practices, which is that "structural violence is usually concealed within the hegemony of ordinariness, hidden in the mundane details of normal life..."⁴⁸ These petitions, which include petitioners of various racial backgrounds and positions, constellate around matters of future-making and injustices of the past and present. In doing so, these petitioners forced their inclusion in universal human rights, even while issuing critiques of it.

Universal Human Rights as a Practice

⁴⁸ Sally Engle Merry, "Introduction: States of Violence," in *The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law Between the Global and the Local*, (New York: Cambridge University, 2007), 43. Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997), 3.

For many petitioners who were not writing with specific ambitions for the nation-state and its formation, the international sphere offered an alternative space where injustices could hopefully be claimed and analyzed, and where authority could be asserted and critiqued to varying ends. Petitioners used the newly available rubric of universal human rights to make demands against racial inequalities and recite their experiences and fears of injustices, while also posing powerful critiques of the contradictions that resided within this new system of universal human rights and trusteeship. What emerges is a practice of universal human rights as a form of political aspiration, while also critiquing its limitations as a liberatory tool. Those who petitioned the UNTC to describe their experiences claimed universal human rights while also deliberately expressing a distrust of various authorities, including the UNTC. Petitioners in Tanganyika were acutely aware of universal human rights as another tool for managing differences, and so they hoped to use it to their benefit as much as they could.⁴⁹

Drawing on literature that situates Africans and people from the Global South as early human rights practitioners, as well as Darryl Li's important analysis of universalisms, I provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the multitudes contained within these petitions. The petitioners' apparent appeals for human rights were accompanied by a distinct distrust of the system and even the authorities expected to uphold or implement human rights. On the pages of the petitions and the responses received, many voices interact. Most often the UNTC replied to petitioners by bringing their attention to previous resolutions that related to the case, or statements made by the administering authority regarding the issue, which seemed to validate the imperial authority. Another common response to petitioners who raised issues like political representation, land, education, and standards of living, was to note that this was a general issue

⁴⁹ Darryl Li, *Universal Enemy*, 12.

that both the UNTC and administering authority were working to improve in a generalized manner.

Through petitioning the UNTC, some petitioners attempted to trouble racial inequalities that underwrote their everyday lives, while others tried to use the opportunity of trusteeship to solidify their racial privileges and power. Many wrote against pervasive power relations, and in doing so pierced a hole in the character of these race relations that, even when named, "...are never as transparently clear as the names we give them imply. Power can be invisible, it can be fantastic, it can be dull and routine."⁵⁰ However, what will become increasingly clear to readers is that these petitions, which cluster around issues of landownership, home, love and labour, to various degrees of intimacy and remove, were subsumed by colonial and international authorities under the ordinariness of reports and data that charted economic and political growth. With the exception of one petitioner's concerns, none of the petitions in this dissertation achieved the resolutions or redress they were seeking. Race relations remained a haunting presence undergirding life in the territory as statistical analyses were collected and discussed. Hence, in the following chapters each petitioning group or person, while obliquely describing racial inequalities, also asserted their authority on Tanganyikan life.

Chapter One takes on the well-known Meru Land Case. This case centered on the violent eviction of Wameru people from their lands in order to introduce a racially segregated dairy and meat industry. In opposition to this, the Wameru petitioned the UNTC and eventually got the opportunity to orally make their case before the UNTC, and subsequently the UNGA Fourth Committee. Unfortunately, even though the Wameru were able to have their case move through all the trusteeship apparatuses afforded to petitioners, their case still failed and the British were

⁵⁰ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p.3.

able to go ahead with their dispossession schemes. This chapter serves to familiarize readers with the trusteeship system as an apparatus of international supervision and its many limitations. It reveals how petitioners were acutely aware of racial discrimination as an arm of administrative order and life in Tanganyika. The case also brings to light the pervasive fear of racial violence. Tanganyika was the trust territory with the largest white settler population, and therefore the threat of racial violence loomed over discussions of land issues. This played into the administering authority's efforts to reinforce its position as a protector and trust of all inhabitants, including the white minority who were cast as the purveyors of development. In sum, this chapter introduces the major issues that affected the territory and the half-hearted commitment of the UN to uphold its mandate in the face of imperial schemes.

The remaining chapters move on to examine other failed petitions, ones which have generally been ignored by scholars. While failing, these petitions are nonetheless important windows onto the ways individuals or communities who occupied liminal positions in society used the trusteeship system to critique colonial authorities, trusteeship, and racial regimes of order in the territory. These critiques took many forms and included petitioners attempting to appropriate the language of universal rights, trusteeship, and development to gain or reassert their own authority. From these uniquely liminal positions, these petitioners provide a close-up view of life in a trust territory and the issues they felt demanded international attention. They also cast a light on trusteeship as a vibrant period of possibilities and limitations.

Chapter Two focuses on petitions from East African Asian inhabitants of Tanganyika. The chapter opens with a discussion of multiracialism, which was a new political system introduced under trusteeship that used race-based categories of representation to preserve undemocratic white minority rule. Multiracialism was key to the way trusteeship operationalized

and extended discrete racial categories and loomed large in the petitions from Asians, who were the largest minority group in the Territory.⁵¹ In this chapter, we see how Asian petitioners recognized the operationalisation of race as a means of constructing shifting social, political, and economic borders of inclusion and exclusion in the territory. Asian petitioners, although heterogenous in many respects, express a shared perception of how British authorities continued to exploit their liminal position in the territory. These petitioners described how this imposed limits on their possibilities for life-making in Tanganyika, and tried in various ways to appropriate the terms of trusteeship to alleviate the uncertainty of their position.

Chapter Three narrows in on an interracial romance and a child. In returning to focus on a single case, it probes more deeply into the emotional lives of a selection of inhabitants. The case traces the story of the Swiss petitioner, Anton Weber, on his quest to be reunited with his African love and their child. Easily misconstrued as a love story, I aim to show how a white resident successfully used the trusteeship system to “shop” for an African bride. More importantly, this chapter highlights how the trusteeship system both promised to allow the voices of all inhabitants to be heard, and yet saw the voice of an illiterate African woman subsumed under the many demands of various male authorities who speak on her behalf. We see in this case the privileging of male patriarchs and patrons. Interestingly, in this chapter the issue of race relations and the threat of racial violence emerges under a different guise. No longer does it come as the specter of anti-colonial violence, as was suggested in the Meru Land Case. Instead, the threat of racial violence is redirected towards accusations of having crossed the colour line or aggravating

⁵¹ I will be referring to this group as Asians since this was the prevailing legal term at the time. This referred to generations of people who were born and raised in the territory who were Arab or whose ancestors were from the sub-continent of India. It also refers to migrants from Pakistan, India, or Goa (then a Portuguese colony).

traditional modes of life and authority. This chapter brings us even closer into the intimate entanglements of race in the everyday lives of inhabitants.

Lastly, Chapter Four examines petitions from domestic servants whose visions of Tanganyika express a poignant understanding of hierarchies within and outside the home and throughout the territory. Engaging these petitions in their fullness, I take seriously their critiques and calls for authorities to fulfill their promises. Even though the trusteeship authority and the UNTC portend to be committed to economic and political development in the territory, domestic servants were deliberately erased from official reports and considerations. Their petitions express an awareness of this fact and enact a refusal of this condition by organizing labour unions and petitioning the UN Trusteeship Council to have the issues affecting their personal and public lives addressed. We get a fine-grained picture of the precarious life of the domestic servant, and how they agitated for issues of class and race to be considered together. We see them give trust authorities a chance to fulfill their mandate and turn towards local African elites who promise to take seriously the labour of domestic servants. In comparison to the petitions highlighted in previous chapters, the many appeals from domestic servants pose the most radical critiques of authority.

Together, these chapters delve into how Tanganyikans engaged the international sphere and the promises of human rights, calling upon the UN and its forms of governance to intervene in defining features of their everyday life. Petitioners took up their pens against various authorities and tried to harness the power of the UN's stated ideals. In the name of the universal, they situated themselves as rights bearers who could not only challenge authorities, but also order their futures. In doing so, they simultaneously expressed their reservations and distrust of this imposed universalism that was marketed as a liberatory channel for overcoming difference.

Chapter One:
A Case of Land Dispossession: Development, Segregation, and the Meru Land Case

It seems clear from the votes which have been taken so far on granting oral hearings that, in its present mood, the Fourth Committee will decide to grant a hearing to anybody under the sun who may be proposed.

G.T.C. Campbell, October 28, 1952

G.T.C. Campbell's statement was connected to the granting of an oral presentation to Kirilo Japhet and his advocate, the West Indian lawyer Earle Seaton, concerning the forced eviction of Wameru from their lands in Ngare-Nanyuki and Lenguriki, known as the Sanya Corridor, in the Northern Province of Tanganyika.⁵² Campbell's consternation reflected how inhabitants of trust territories used the new petitioning system that distinguished trusteeship from the former mandate system of the interwar years. Not only could inhabitants circumvent the colonial administration by directly petitioning the United Nations Trusteeship Council (UNTC), but they could also speak before the Council. Then, if still dissatisfied, they could appeal to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)'s Standing Committee to have their case considered and heard before the Fourth Committee.

In 1952, Japhet and Seaton went before the UNTC and General Assembly Fourth Committee to argue for the return of Wameru land, where three thousand⁵³ Wameru people had been forcibly removed from their homes. The removal resulted in the destruction of Wameru

⁵² United Kingdom Government, "Fourth Committee Meetings: Report of Meeting on 22nd October, when delegates were asked for proposals re. requests for oral hearings of petitioners, Confidential", FCO/101397, National Archives, Kew, UK.

⁵³ B.T.G. Chidzero, cites 1,000 Wameru deported from the area as the official figure. See B.T.G. Chidzero, . *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

land, homes, animals, and churches to make land available for settler purchase. Often referred to as the Meru Land Case, their violent eviction from the fertile slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru opened up approximately 78,000 acres of land to settlement. As a result, thirteen farms were created for European occupation to allow for a sanitary meat and dairy industry.⁵⁴ This included implementing a physical barrier of barbed wire fencing to demarcate European and African lands.⁵⁵

The Meru Land Case is a valuable starting point for bringing to light many attributes of trusteeship status. Trusteeship territories were the site of UN Visiting Missions (UNVM) whose members toured the territory, distributed information about the UN, met with elites, and accepted petitions from inhabitants. This provided a direct access point for people to declare their political and social grievances. Trusteeship status also offered an exclusive opportunity for inhabitants to travel to New York to describe social and political relations on the ground and contest colonial policies affecting their everyday lives and futures. In Tanganyika, this often took the form of pronouncements of human rights violations based on racial discrimination. Petitioning the UNTC provided the opening for the Wameru, and others like them, to experiment with this new trusteeship status and its attendant promises of human rights and self-determination. In doing so, petitioners used universal human rights and trusteeship status in an effort to exert control over their past and present experiences with a view to shaping their futures.

It was this petitioning apparatus that led to the Meru Land Case making it into the halls of the United Nations. Yet the Wameru did not win their bid for the return of their lands in the Sanya Corridor, even though it had significant support within the UNGA among delegates and they had a robust transnational network of aid and legal representation. The UNGA was unable

⁵⁴ Kirilo Japhet and Earle Seaton, *The Meru Land Case*, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), p. 63.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

to garner the required two-thirds verdict on the various proposed resolutions condemning British actions taken against the Wameru, and so the British were not forced to return the lands.

Although the Wameru failed to win their case, they continued to agitate for their land throughout much of the trusteeship period. They finally reacquired some of this land in 1962, after national independence, as the settlers who had failed to develop the property no longer wanted it.⁵⁶

Although the Meru Land Case gained significant public attention, it was not the only land case the UNTC and the British Administering Authority had to contend with in the territory. Land disputes were a persistent issue for UNTC, even after the Meru Land Case was closed. In 1954, the UNVM report on Tanganyika observed that land remained the most important issue in the territory. According to the report, the governor of the territory had remarked: “Land is probably the most sensitive subject in the African’s mind.”⁵⁷ Land rights and land dispossession represented the weight of past and future injustices for many Africans. The report also stated the memory of the Meru Land Case lived on among Africans as “a symbol of the worst of the widespread fears about the future of the land.”⁵⁸ Therefore, it is important that the Meru Land Case, the attending fears surrounding it, and its failure be examined.

While trusteeship status is often overlooked in the historiography of Africa, this case has not escaped the attention of scholars. Conventionally, scholars examining the Meru Land Case have emphasized the potential of the struggle and not the case’s failure. Thomas Spear’s book *Mountain Farmers* provides a detailed history of land dispossession that includes an extensive

⁵⁶ This selection of petitions shows some of the remonstrations they made via the petitioning system over the years: “Petition from Mr. Gamaliel Sablak concerning Tanganyika,” T/Pet.2/143, (New York: UN, 8 Oct. 1951); “Petition from the Meru Citizens Union concerning Tanganyika,” T/Pet.2/164, (, (New York: UN, 12 Oct. 1953); “Petition from the Representatives of the Meru Citizens' Union concerning Tanganyika,” T/Pet.2/ 197, (New York: UN, 2 Nov. 1955). European settlers found the land to be unsuitable for cattle grazing, and so piece by piece the Wameru reacquired the land from the government with settler support. Thomas Spear, *Mountain Farmers: Moral Economies of Land & Agricultural Development in Arusha & Meru*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1997), 232.

⁵⁷ *United Nations, Land in Transition, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1955*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 7.

focus on Wameru settlement, organization, and interactions with European settlers and colonial governance. He takes an expansive look at the local values of family, land, and authority the Wameru upheld and deployed to retain their autonomy in the face of colonial exploitation and enclosure.⁵⁹ In his analysis of the Meru Land Case years, Spear emphasizes how, while they were unsuccessful at regaining their land through protest to the UN, the Wameru did manage to gain important local political concessions.⁶⁰ These included the resignation of Chief Sante, the adoption of a new Meru constitution, and formal recognition of the Meru Citizen's Union as local representatives of the people.⁶¹

Unlike Spear's account, Ullrich Lohrmann's study focuses on the international scope of the case.⁶² He examines how Tanganyikans used the international sphere as a forum to articulate political demands and how the case became a model for Julius Nyerere, the leader of the nationalist party in 1954, in his efforts to gain popularity and support for the nationalist party Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). Lohrmann shows how this case informed Nyerere's own conduct and use of appeals in the halls of the UNCT and UNGA to gain international and local support for national independence.⁶³ Both scholars underscore this case's connection to growing nationalist calls for independence and the successes that resulted from it.

Literary scholar Fawzia Mustafa's analysis of the novel *Blood on Our Land*, Ismael R. Mbise's 1974 fictional portrayal of Wameru responses to land expropriation by Europeans,

⁵⁹ For another example of this see James Giblin's work, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania*, (Athens: Ohio University, 2006).

⁶⁰ Thomas Spear, *Mountain Farmers: Moral Economies of Land & Agricultural Development in Arusha & Meru*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1997), 229-235.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Ullrich Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 389-392. For a consideration of the Meru Land Case's failure in relation to the trusteeship territory of Cameroon's land cases see, Meredith Terretta, "Claiming Land, Claiming Rights in Africa's Internationally Supervised Territories," edited by Steven L.B. Jensen and Charles Walton, in *Social Rights and the Politics of Obligation in History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University,) 264-286.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

examines how this case and the events of Engare-Nanyuki emerge as important historical moments for critiquing the moral authority and power of rulers, European and African alike. Mustafa argues that the novel, which includes historical documentation and excerpts from the case, was written not only to critique the villagization efforts implemented in the territory after independence, but also to emphasize the persistent violence that comes attached to land development projects specifically.⁶⁴ This serves as a reminder of the deep importance of land rights and land ownership to power relations and inequality in the territory.

While most scholars have assessed the successes that emerged from the Meru Land Case, my interest rests with how this case was a failure. Similarly, Meredith Terretta takes up the thread of social obligation and social rights offered by Thomas Spear and examines the Meru Land Case in conversation with similar land disputes in the British trusteeship territory of Cameroon. She brings to light the colonial racialized logic that underpinned land rights in trusteeship territories that prevented petitioners from being viewed as individual landowners and shifts the focus to how this case failed.⁶⁵ Notably, Terretta's work builds on the important contribution of Brenna Bhandar's work *Colonial Lives of Property* which examines how legal forms of property ownership were intimately tied to colonial measures of oppression.⁶⁶ It is within its failure that we see how the new trusteeship system was incapable of overcoming, or even adequately dealing with, issues of racial discrimination, which so often defined rule in these territories. This chapter is an account of the unfolding of this case as it reached the uppermost rung of appeal that offered trusteeship inhabitants to voice their protests.

⁶⁴ Fawzia Mustafa, "The Triple Play of Violence in Ismael R. Mbise's *Blood on Our Land: History, Law and Development*," *Matatu*, 49, 1 (2017): 109-144.

⁶⁵ Meredith Terretta, "Claiming Land, Claiming Rights in Africa's Internationally Supervised Territories," *Social Rights and the Politics of Obligation in History*, editors Steven L.B. Jensen and Charles Walton, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2022) p. 264-286.

⁶⁶ Brenna Bhandar, *Colonial Lives of Property: Law, Land and Racial Regimes of Ownership*, (Durham: Duke University, 2018).

The Wameru deployed a triple strategy of argumentation. First, they positioned themselves as the legal property owners of the land. If the settlement scheme were to be imposed on the Wameru, it would expose how the administering authority was arbitrarily ignoring Wameru land ownership and rights. Second, the Wameru challenged the administering authority's assertion that the scheme was a necessary step to develop and modernize the territory. Instead, they argued that the affected Wameru were made vulnerable without their land and questioned the logic of the plan as a modernizing and progressive project. Finally, they argued the eviction revealed a racial regime of land ownership that mirrored the worst racial colonial abuses occurring in surrounding settler territories and was an extension of imperial forms of rule within a territory that was supposed to be distinct from this.

In each stage of the case outlined below, Wameru interpreted human rights as intimately tied to the material experiences of unequal land rights defined by an imposition of racial rule. However, the UNTC failed to take up this issue, and instead clung to an abstract interpretation of racial inequalities that did not deal with the pervasive material and political consequences of such a regime. Contained in the Wameru appeals is a pointed critique expressing how land dispossession was fundamental to, and evidence of, a persistent racial order in a trust territory under international supervision, one that ultimately maintained individual property rights and development projects as a preserve of white settler subjectivity.

There is a significant body of scholarship examining land rights and the role of enlightenment liberalism in preventing Indigenous groups from acquiring and maintaining sovereignty over land. This literature is increasingly turning to questions of how this is tied to the continued maintenance and management of racial subjectivities, and how Indigenous people

living in settler colonies manage and agitate against these efforts.⁶⁷ Though my contribution is not focused on the settler state, this chapter draws on this scholarship by considering land as a space and place where individuals and communities invest in land rights as an important pillar of individual and collective identity, which also served as a latent critique of liberal values as universal. This case is an instance where promises of human rights and legal international institutions ultimately upheld racial inequalities as defining terms for determining land use and rights and reveals an important historical continuity of racial order. The language of rights for all and land optimization became mechanisms for the continued alienation and production of racial subjectivities that effectively denied the property rights of the Wameru.

Land rights and obligations of trust

The disputed land was located in some of the most fertile and promising areas of the territory, which had long been a point of contention between the colonial administration, settlers, and Wameru people.⁶⁸ The Wameru relocation project stemmed from new and old imperial ideals of development. First, it resonated with the mandate period of the interwar years, when development focused on large infrastructure projects.⁶⁹ It also intersected with the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act, which led to increased investment in colonial economies in an attempt to encourage a sense of colonial legitimacy in the face of increasing anti-colonial agitation that had followed mandate period projects. By drawing on the need for meat and dairy in the territory as well as emphasizing modern methods for the optimization of land utilization,

⁶⁷ See for instance, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*, (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota, 2015); Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Brenna Bhandar, *Colonial Lives of Property: Law, Land and Racial Regimes of Ownership*, (Durham: Duke University, 2018).

⁶⁸ Spear, 194-195.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of this in a mandate territory see Jacob Norris' work *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905-1948*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013). For a discussion on development practices in Africa see, Frederick Cooper, "Writing the History of Development," *Journal of Modern European History*, vol.8, no.1, (2010):9-11.

British authorities in this early post-World War Two period attempted to quietly secure approval for its displacement of thousands of Wameru to create land for white settlers.

Before the Wameru were forced off their land, the Meru Citizen's Union organized and petitioned British authorities, urging for the scheme not to be implemented and reminding them of Wameru ownership of the land.⁷⁰ When these efforts failed, the Wameru sent their first petition to the UNTC on August 23, 1951. In this first petition, the Wameru insisted they had not been consulted and their removal would be forced. This suggests the Wameru were aware that under trusteeship the administering authority was obliged to consult the people affected by development schemes that involved land transfers.⁷¹ Previously, the obligation of consultation under the mandate system had been restricted to "A Mandate" territories. However, under the trusteeship system this applied to all trusteeship territories and specifically dealt with the transfer of lands.⁷² The Wameru informed the UNTC the scheme would result in the displacement and subsequent homelessness of three thousand Wameru families. This early petition signalled an awareness among the Wameru of the shifting parameters of their title and freedom to use land under international trusteeship and the terms on which this was likely to be considered.⁷³

The petitioning Wameru argued that the land scheme was part of a larger historical experience of land expropriations, which seemingly conflicted with the obligations of a

⁷⁰ Lohrmann, 329.

⁷¹ B.T.G. Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International trusteeship*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 28. Also see *Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of Tanganyika*, Art. 8.

⁷² Ibid. 'A' Mandate territories included those from the present-day Middle East. This was contained in Art. 22 (4).

⁷³ German petitioners were some of the earliest and most prominent petitioners in the early trusteeship years. The first petition received by the UNTC was from German petitioners, see for example: "Tanganyika: Petition from Germans residing in Tanganyika," T/PET.2/1, (New York: UN, 24 Feb. 1947) They wrote with concerns over their own eviction and separation from family during the war years, and often requested to be allowed to return to Tanganyika. The UNTC resolution on these petitions had urged the Administering Authority to consider cases with compassionate grounds those who may be refugees from the former German Nazi state. UN. Trusteeship Council, "Petitions presented to the Trusteeship Council by residents and former residents of Tanganyika of German nationality," T/RES/5(I), (1st sess. : 1947 : Lake Success, N.Y.), p. 4.

trusteeship government. They described how under the German administration their land had been illegally taken up by German settlers. The Wameru asserted that during the mandate period under the British administration, an interwar agreement was made between the Wameru and British authorities concerning this same land. After much urging, the British government had allowed the Wameru to purchase two expansive German farms for their use—the same lands the British intended to lease to European settlers. This agreement allowed Wameru to pay for the land through community collections and a seven-year poll tax, which was fulfilled and ratified with a signed agreement. However, after fulfilling these agreements, the British were now presuming to expel the Wameru from the same lands they had purchased. The Wameru stressed that this legal agreement declared them to be the rightful property owners which gave them the authority to refuse to give up the land.⁷⁴ Twice they cited a document in Dar es Salaam that titled the land to them. In this way, the Wameru attempted to assert a legibly “modern” land ownership.⁷⁵

This argument for their legal land ownership was combined with assertions that British authorities were obligated to consult and receive approval from the inhabitants of the land before implementing any land schemes. The narrative structure of the petition and its references to German expropriations of land insinuated that as trusteeship authorities, the British government was expected not to repeat imperial traditions of violent land expropriations. In the early petitions and addendums from the representatives of the Wameru (Wameru Citizens’ Union [WCU] also referred to as the Meru Citizen’s Union), they clearly indicated their disapproval

⁷⁴ WaMeru, “Petition from the representatives of the Wa-Meru tribe concerning Tanganyika, Addendum 1,” T/PET.2/99/Add.1, (New York: UN, 20 Sept. 1950. Also see Spear for detailed account of this transaction and period of Wameru and the British administration. Iliffe’s text is also an important seminal work that discusses early colonial interactions in Tanganyika regarding land disputes.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of how modernity and race are read into land titles as a form of discerning modernity see the work of Brenna Bhandar, *Colonial Lives of Property: Law, Land, and Racial Regimes of Ownership*, (Durham: Duke University, 2018).

and lack of consent to relocation as property owners. This narrative of land ownership reinforced the need for consent from Wameru people and sought to put into question the actions of British authorities who were supposed to be trusted authorities, breaking from traditions of arbitrary imperial authority.

The Wameru described meetings with officials where people openly opposed the relocation project. However, their appeals to remain on the land were rejected, and so too their authority and rights on these matters. Submitted with their petition was a document containing a dialogue exchange with District Commissioner (D.C.) Troupe on June 7, 1949. D.C. Troupe was described as having attended a public meeting with over six thousand Wameru in attendance, thus including those Wameru who were not directly affected yet who were invested in the cause. At this meeting, the Wameru were told they had to relocate against their expressed protests and emphatic urging for their land rights to be recognized. When asked why they had to move, they were told it was due to “government orders.”⁷⁶ The Wameru described how government officials arbitrarily ignored the will of the people and their political appeals, while the Wameru strictly followed procedures. In this way, the Wameru represented government officials as purposefully evading the legal rights of Wameru and their land.

This document also traced the many shifts in government representatives who came and went on leave and who collectively asserted the Wameru must leave the area and be relocated.⁷⁷ This suggested the project had been decided regardless of Wameru appeals and political representations. It also underscored the ongoing vulnerability of Wameru life and their tenancy on land depending on which official governed the area. They explained that when D.C. Troupe

⁷⁶ “Petition from the representatives of the Wa-Meru tribe concerning Tanganyika, Addendum 1,” T/PET.2/99/Add.1, (New York: UN), 20 Sept. 1951, p.1

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p.4.

went on leave for eight months, his successor, W.A. Forbes, also declared that they had to leave. This highlights once again how they were not consulted as per trusteeship principles. At the meeting with Forbes, the Wameru explained: “We are not going to shift as it has been proved that we paid a great deal of money and waitnessed [sic] at Dar-es-salam that Eng. Nanyuki is ours also a signed document which was signed on our behalf by the late Chief Sambage and 12 Delegates (Elders) can be found at DC’s Office Arusha, Dar-es-salam and Chiefs. Sante has in his possession One copy.”⁷⁸ The Wameru reinforced their authority over the land while simultaneously emphasizing the significance of elders and traditional authorities who had agreed and formalized this purchase. Upon learning of this, Forbes reportedly agreed that the land was theirs.⁷⁹ However, when Troupe returned from leave, he informed the Wameru they were still being moved. At a subsequent meeting, they were ordered to “list our huts, Cattle, Sheep, Goats, and Plantations, etc. As we are going to be carried to Kingori.”⁸⁰ By including these descriptions of events in their communication to the UNTC, the Wameru representatives attempted to cast the land scheme as part of a larger history of colonial expropriation and oppression while simultaneously indicating their removal would be forced and that their political appeals were being ignored.

One of the grounds on which the Wameru contested the removal from the land they purchased was that the proposed relocation area was not suitable for life. First, they argued that it was a false representation of land regimes to suggest this was a fair land exchange and one that was agreed upon. According the Wameru, the relocation area was already rightfully their property, which they had never settled due to the dry conditions and the presence of dangerous

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

tsetse flies. Hence, there was no actual “exchange” of land at all. Wameru indicated that their own land regimes did not align with British notions of land ownership to a much greater extent than realized. In doing so, they attempted to portray the resettlement scheme as evidence of the instability of rights, and land rights in particular, under British trusteeship.

Due to trusteeship protocols, British officials were obligated to submit reports in response to these petitions. They responded that they had consulted and obtained approval from Chief Sante of the Wameru and the Legislative Assembly. In this respect, the British administration was clinging to increasingly outdated forms of colonial governance that promoted the use and installation of native authorities as representatives and spokesmen for groups. As Spear outlines in his work, Wameru petitions to the UNTC reflected a refusal to acknowledge the British appointed Chief Sante as their representative and describes how the WCU (Wameru Citizen’s Union) had emerged out of protests against his appointment.⁸¹

The Wameru quickly replied that the British had only received consent from a British-appointed chief and support from a Legislative Assembly that was led by Europeans with only four appointed Africans as unofficial members. Instead, they referred to the many public meetings where people protested and petitioned against their removal as the will of the Wameru.⁸² However, the British persisted and questioned the legitimacy of the petitioning body, the WCU. British officials suggested the uncooperativeness of the Wameru in relocating was the result of the influence of a few isolated dissidents. They also sought to cast doubt on the WCU and its many claims, rejecting the assertion that three thousand Wameru inhabitants had been affected and insisting that only 512 taxpayers had been impacted.

Meru Eviction: a development project promising precarious futures

⁸¹ Spear, *Mountain Farmers*, 205-209.

⁸² “Petition from the representatives of the Wa-Meru tribe concerning Tanganyika, Addendum 1,” p.1-4.

Once the eviction occurred, the Meru Citizens' Union persisted with their petitioning efforts, adding important updates on the material conditions of Wameru life and suffering. These documents alerted their readers to the human suffering of the Wameru, as they were oppressed in the name of imagined futures that rendered invisible Wameru conditions of life. No longer was their focus exclusively on interpretations of land agreements and procedures of governance. WCU members increasingly emphasized the harm, vulnerability, and racial inequalities that formed an integral part of this land scheme. These petitions questioned the rationality and validity of a development scheme that resulted in the dispossession of Wameru from their land, leaving them in precarious conditions to the benefit of European settlers. The petitions also interrogated how "knowing" was bracketed off as a preserve of officials, and one which rendered Wameru life abstract and un-lived, thus posing a critique of development and its claims to knowledge.⁸³

One petition document entitled "Report on Forced Removal of Wameru People in Tanganyika", from Munya Lengoroi, stands apart from the rest in its form and style and demands we reflect on knowledge production as a form of abstraction that pushes Wameru needs, fears, and material conditions to the background in favour of an imagined economic development. Lengoroi expressed a firm awareness of international petitioning culture and drew upon this in the petition document. He seems to mock the colonial administration's authority and position with his own supposed performance of objective expertise. Mimicking a UNVM observer, British annual reports, and British petition observations, Munya Lengoroi submitted his own observations regarding Wameru life in the aftermath of their expulsion from their land.⁸⁴ The

⁸³ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2008) ix.

⁸⁴ Although there remains to be some uncertainty as to whether or not he actually penned this letter, as there is reference to not being Meru and there has been some question with regards to the language used. I suspect that

submission of this unusual document enacted a performance that upheld the knowledge and rationality of the Wameru as equally important to that of UN officials and colonial authorities, and incisively recounted the depredations experienced for the implementation of modern systems that cordoned off the Wameru from modernity.

In this document, Lengoroi situated himself as a dispassionate, yet knowledgeable observer of the events that transpired. He began with underscoring his authority as a barrister and as an expert on Wameru life who was submitting a detailed report on the condition of Wameru after their eviction. He described how he performed detailed fact-checking, visited the site under contestation, and consulted numerous other materials:

I checked and counter-checked all the statements made to me, as far as possible and have visited the site under consideration, taken Photographs and spoken to Africans long resident in the area. [S]ources of other material are the Tanganyika Gazette and the Tanganyika Standard of a local, and contemporary periodicals. I do not attempt any recommendations and hope that this factful report includes only sufficient material particulars to give a complete picture up to date [sic].⁸⁵

This submission to the UNTC by Lengoroi operated in two ways. It seems Munya Lengoroi was aware of the need to assert his credentials and methods in order to claim an authoritative position and credibility. He was also ostensibly posing as a supposed impartial observer, although he was obviously an advocate with a clear position and objective. This was a pointed critique of British officials who submitted their own observations on petitions with presumed impartiality and authority.

The contents of this report highlighted the legal and moral problems that undergirded the eviction in an attempt to place the project's planning and initiatives in question. First, he urged

Lengoroi is cleverly undermining the trusteeship system with this document, hence the attachment of his name, and is likely reflecting on the failure of the UNTC to properly intervene as it is so taken up with reports.

⁸⁵ Wameru Representatives (Munya Lengoroi), "Report on the Forced Removal of Wameru People, 14 January, 1952, T/PET.2/99.Add.6, p.3.

the UNTC to uphold ideals of anti-discrimination and safeguard Wameru people from what were racial injustices imposed on them by the state through the eviction of the Wameru from their land. He began by reaffirming that three thousand Wameru had been deeply impacted by their forced removal, not 512 taxpayers as British authorities had asserted, thus challenging the administration's misrepresentation of the full extent of people affected. According to Lengoroi, first among Wameru objections was: "We do not believe it is in our best interest. On the contrary we think it is a sinister mo[v]e by the British Government to create in Tanganyika another White Highlands similar to that in Kenya."⁸⁶ Writing this at the beginning of the document, Lengoroi argued that the land scheme was unquestionably racially motivated. He disputed interpretations of the project as intended for development and for the benefit of the territory and suggested it reproduced settler violence by reducing and ignoring the full racial ramifications of this project. This statement reflected the fears and thoughts of the Wameru regarding racial hierarchies and injustices of land rights and discrimination occurring under British governance within and outside Tanganyika.

Moreover, he unequivocally equated the racial subjugation of the Wameru to their dispossession of land. He wrote: "The very old perished in the trucks as our askaris removed them forcibly from the shadow of Meru. We are forbidden to return except as servants to the new masters in our old homes."⁸⁷ The evocation of servitude and slavery, which human rights were intended to combat, worked to convey the failure of human rights practices in the territory for the Wameru.⁸⁸ Taken with his earlier statement regarding a White Highlands, Lengoroi implied that

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ "Trusteeship Council official records 11th session (held at Headquarter, New York) 3 June-24 July and 20 November-3 December 1952: annexes," T/11S/Annexes, (Lake Success, N.Y.: UN, Feb. 1953), p.129.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of popular discourses in Tanganyika/Tanzania that drew on slavery and servitude in the creation of group identities and state identity see James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania*, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012); And for a similar study that looks at local inflections and interpretations of this language in terms of racial and ethnic divisions see Jonathon Glassman's work *War of Words, War of Stones:*

the Meru Land Case bore a strong resemblance to how the Kikuyu in Kenya were being treated, as they increasingly lived in congested areas or as squatters, and lent awareness to the peril and alleged disposability of Africans under British trusteeship. Thus, Lengoroi provocatively questioned the trustworthiness of a colonial authority in managing and directing a trusteeship territory as racial logics determined land ownership, emulating the worst of settler colonialism in a territory under UN supervision that promised universal human rights. This line of questioning would prove to be a salient point in the debating halls of the UN later.

Other objections he included was the breach of trust committed by this same government, which misrepresented land ownership regimes in favour of European settlers. The Wameru argued the government offered them inferior land and compensation. He reiterated the Wameru already owned the land being offered to them in compensation and preferred to accede this land for European use. In doing so, he reinfused Wameru land regimes with authority, once again reinforcing how the Wameru dislocation from their land promoted the well-being and interests of European settlers over the will of the Wameru people.

Furthermore, Lengoroi brought to the attention of the UNTC the disparity in the administration's approaches to land compensation to further emphasize the racialized character of the land scheme and cast British claims of development into doubt. He informed the UNTC that the law entitled European inhabitants who had lost land in this scheme to allow for the resettlement of Africans to the lower slopes and to negotiate terms of compensation before the High Court, which many of them did. Meanwhile, he wrote, "No similar privilege exists when land is taken by force from Africans. Compensation is payable, if at all, only as a matter of grace

Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2011). For a discussion of race making within the continent that challenges notions of racism as a foreign import to the continent see Bruce S. Hall's work, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960*. African Studies Series, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011).

and its terms and amount are in the discretion of the Government.”⁸⁹ Africans were not treated as individuals with rights owed to them, but merely as an undifferentiated group, unlike white settlers. Sparing no subtlety, he expressed how British authorities protected and developed the territory for the benefit of European residents, not Africans. Accordingly, Lengoroi suggested that trusteeship was being used to maintain a racial hierarchy that went against the clearly demarcated grammar of rights contained in the trusteeship agreements and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that promised antidiscrimination. Instead, Africans were subjects who could be moved, threatened, and killed, while settlers were considered individuals with rights and negotiating power.

He also underscored the racial violence Wameru experienced during the eviction. He wrote that during the eviction the Wameru were non-violent and merely watched as their houses were ransacked and burned, their crops destroyed, and their cattle slaughtered or milked in front of them.⁹⁰ He added that during the eviction an old man died, as well as a woman’s baby. These individual experiences were joined by a list of names of those who had been imprisoned for allegedly “interfering” in the removal. By cataloguing these acts and losses, in detail, Lengoroi drew upon a language of individual personhood and universal human rights that was supposed to guarantee individual protections against state violence. For Lengoroi, Wameru passive resistance against racial imperial violence proved the government was uninterested in protecting the rights of all and, instead, forced the will of the state on inhabitants. In the wake of World War Two, human rights emerged as a powerful international discourse to check the power of the state

⁸⁹ “Petition from the representatives of the Wa-Meru tribe concerning Tanganyika: Addendum 7,” T/PET.2/99/Add.7, (New York: UN, 24 Apr. 1952) p. 7.

⁹⁰ “Petition from the representatives of the Wa-Meru tribe concerning Tanganyika: Addendum 7,” T/PET.2/99/Add.7, (New York: UN, 24 Apr. 1952) p. 7. For another copy of this petition that was published and circulated among UNTC members see, “Trusteeship Council official records 11th session (held at Headquarter, New York) 3 June-24 July and 20 November-3 December 1952: annexes,” T/11S/Annexes, (Lake Success, N.Y.: UN, Feb. 1953), pgs-128-130.

against individuals; Lengoroi pointed the finger squarely at the British for ignoring this. In sum, Lengoroi adeptly provided a counter discourse of Tanganyika as a trust territory that allegedly provided protection to all of its inhabitants. Lengoroi's report asserted his knowledge of trusteeship principles and sought to expose the inherent contradictions embodied in the violence of the eviction of Wameru people by the administration.

The British Acting Member of Lands and Mines and the Acting Provincial Commissioner were compelled by the Secretary of State to respond in defence.⁹¹ They claimed the losses of cattle and the two individuals who died were an unfortunate circumstance, yet by no means the fault of the government, as the Wameru refused to assist in the eviction.⁹² In his communication, the Acting Provincial Commissioner concluded, "As it was the plans and good intentions of the Government were defeated by the attitude of resistance."⁹³

In response, Gamaliel Sablak, leader of the Meru Citizens' Union, wrote that "The action of removal caused awful feelings in the mind of each Meru and culculated [sic] to nothing but sorrow. Each of us puts the whole blame on the officials of the Government who conducted this inhuman act." While acknowledging the Secretary-General's statement that the decision to remove the Wameru was final in order to allow all inhabitants to benefit from a cattle industry, Sablak asked:

[H]ow about our cattle? Aren't the Africans after a rich livestock as well? Is milk, butter, and meat only food for the whitemen and not the Africans? If the new lands where we are being pushed good for agriculture, why didn't you occupy them then instead of coming to take ours? Grateful your clarification on this point.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Lohrmann writes that these submissions from these officials were forced by the Colonial Office, p...

⁹² From the Acting Member of Lands and Mines, the Secretariat to Gamaliel Sablak, Acting PC to Gamaliel Sablak, in Annexes to T/Pet.2/99, Tanganyika, April 3 1952, (UN: New York), p.1.

⁹³ Ibid, p.2.

⁹⁴ To Member of Lands and Mines From Umoja Wa Raia, Gamaliel s/o Sablak 12 May, 1952, p.2.

Similar to Lengoroi, Sablak's comments reflected how rights, ownership, and modernity were seemingly a preserve of white subjects under trusteeship. His skepticism towards British assertions about assisting Africans is palpable, reflecting the WCU's unwillingness to relinquish the issue of the everyday welfare of Wameru to British authorities. For the Wameru, it was obvious their forced eviction reflected a racialized political landscape that devalued the wellbeing of individual Africans and collective African futures. These are just some examples of how the Wameru responded to their eviction with a pointed critique of British assertions that attempted to defend their eviction as part of efforts to bring modernity and development to the area.

Oral presentations and government reactions

Both Seaton and Japhet testified, urging the Council to acknowledge and redress the violence and material losses experienced by the three thousand Wameru who were affected by the eviction scheme. They outlined the material losses, which included burnt homes, along with cattle, sheep, goats, fowls, dogs, cats, and donkeys.⁹⁵ They also reiterated that in 1925 and 1931 Wameru people were made to compensate two German farmers in order to inhabit the land they had now been evicted from, even though German settlers had freely taken the land in the first place.⁹⁶ In this way, they emphasized the double loss they experienced historically as well as the threats this posed to their present and future.

The Wameru's hopes to be considered legal property owners who were subjected to a racialized state that ignored the harmful material and psychological consequences of its

⁹⁵ Kirilo Japhet and Earle Seaton, *The Meru Land Case*, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967)p. 42-43. For the official record of these proceedings see, "Trusteeship Council official records 11th session (held at Headquarter, New York) 3 June-24 July and 20 November-3 December 1952 : annexes," T/11S/Annexes, (Lake Success, N.Y. : UN, Feb. 1953),p.156.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

development scheme were dashed before the UNTC. Instead, the UK representative Sir Alan Burns was able to convince fellow trusteeship authority of New Zealand to put forth a resolution written up by British officer Sir Joh Lamb. The American delegate proposed minor recommendations that were incorporated, at which point the resolution passed by four votes in favour against one. The UNTC accepted an interpretation of race relations as a more abstract issue that was not intimately tied to material conditions on the ground. The UNTC's vision focused on issues of distant political and economic development embodied by various institutional mechanisms and abstract notions of progress. This was in line with what Burns had argued, which was that their removal allowed for new techniques of agricultural land use that promised future benefits for all.⁹⁷

This can be seen further through the UNTC's failure to take seriously the severity of Wameru suffering and loss as a result of the eviction, and merely asked that the administering authority compensate the affected individuals and educate them on the benefits of the scheme. The Dominican Republic's representative, Enrique De Marchena, had urged for an independent investigation into the lands offered to the Wameru in compensation. This was supported by the representative of El Salvador who said the plan should not proceed any further until this investigation was concluded. While these suggestions did propose to consider the material exchange of property, this was dropped as representatives asserted that the project was in the best interests of all.⁹⁸ As a result, the UNTC decided to uphold the eviction as a *fait accompli* which demonstrated their belief that it was a decision not worth reversing. The UNTC argued that the long-term benefits of the scheme were sound, although they encouraged the government to not

⁹⁷Japhet and Seaton, *The Meru Land Case*, 44.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 44-45.

pursue the removal of Indigenous populations from land in the future if it could be avoided.⁹⁹

This reflected the UNTC's investment in the colonial government's promises of potential economic prosperity in the future against the present realities of the Wameru.

Yet there existed no provisions to ensure that in fact a meat and dairy industry would be established. Meanwhile, the Wameru struggled to rebuild their lives. Unsurprisingly, and to the consternation of some officials, it was found that many Europeans who had bought Wameru land made no effort in investing in the necessary material to establish such an industry.¹⁰⁰ This never emerged as point of investigation.

The UNTC concluded that while the forced eviction of the Wameru was regrettable, they believed that the creation of a meat and dairy industry resulting from the scheme would benefit the majority of the inhabitants of the territory. The council chose to recognize the supposed territorial benefits of the scheme as one of improvement. For the UNTC, although the British had undertaken the project with serious missteps, the Wameru eviction was necessary for developing the territory and was an effort towards fulfilling trusteeship obligations. Meanwhile, the historical and current material conditions of inequality experienced by Wameru remained unaddressed.

The UNTC resolution expressed a preference for viewing race relations in vague terms that did not consider the material forms racial inequalities took in terms of land regimes. Rather, the administering authority was urged to educate the Wameru on the benefits of the scheme and encourage them to relocate to the allocated areas, which the Wameru argued were unsuitable for habitation. The council asked the British to ensure any future projects of this nature received the consent of the people and that the British make lands available to the Wameru as well as lands

⁹⁹ United Nations Trusteeship Council, *International Organization*, vol. 6, no.4, (nov., 1952), 610-611.

¹⁰⁰ Lohrmann, 409.

for future expansion.¹⁰¹ Such a statement failed to take seriously Wameru histories and experiences with the government, which altered land regimes at will. This resolution did not attend to the many remonstrations the Wameru had outlined in their petitions, which criticized British authority as ignoring their property rights and interests, nor the real material inequalities that defined entitlements to land and concurrently impacted conditions of life on the ground. The UNTC's resolution failed to address the precarity of land ownership and promises of land the Wameru faced.

Unsurprisingly, as Seaton returned to Tanganyika and informed people of the UNTC resolution of their case, he intimated that there was a widespread sentiment of disillusionment among the Wameru towards the promises of the UN, and that among some members there were murmurings to enact an active resistance akin to the violent oath-taking occurring in Kenya.¹⁰² This alluded to the racial tensions in the area and recognition the Meru Land Case reflected a common experience of colonialism rather than of trusteeship. It also signaled a more resilient commitment to underscoring the racialized aspects of the case which would emerge prominently before the Fourth Committee.

For the Wameru representatives, their ideas of development initiatives did not include land evictions and the mimicking of land policies in settler states. Japhet and Seaton therefore decided to appeal their case to the Standing Committee of the General Assembly which referred the case to the Fourth Committee. This included all members of the UNGA, and this committee was tasked with examining matters dealing with Trust Territories and Non-Self-Governing territories. After lengthy deliberations, the Fourth Committee voted to allow the case to be heard.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 404. Lohrmann has written extensively on this particular episode. See his work, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961*(Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007).

¹⁰² Ibid.

On November 29, 1952, the hearing of the Meru Land Case began once again, now with the attention of the UNGA, which included representatives from states that had formerly experienced colonialism.¹⁰³ Wameru representatives used the entire trusteeship machinery and its affiliate apparatuses to its full extent in an attempt to reacquire their land and challenge British authorities and the racial regime that defined property relations in the area.

Oral Presentation before the Fourth Committee and the Spectre of Race

Japhet's oral testimonies to the Fourth Committee spurred substantial debates concerning land expropriations, trusteeship principles, and human rights. These debates centered on questions of race relations rather than property ownership. As to be expected, the oral hearings and the line of questioning revealed the undercurrents of cold war and anticolonial tensions. The stalwart anticolonialism of certain members of the UNGA such as the Philippine, Indonesian, and Haitian delegates, as well as Soviet Bloc members, concentrated their questions on the racial dynamics of British colonialism outside and within Tanganyika. These delegates underscored how this conflicted with the ideals of trusteeship. The question of racial discrimination was the ground on which British claims to the benefits of development through land expropriation proved most unstable and which threatened to open up the British administration to intense international scrutiny of its rule of surrounding territories too.

After reiterating many of the points contained in prior petitions regarding Wameru suffering and rights to the land, Japhet's testimony moved to demonstrate how the development scheme only benefitted a select number of already wealthy European farmers. It shed light on economic disparities and how race determined land ownership as well as participation in development schemes. He explained that those who benefitted from the eviction were wealthy

and highly influential Europeans (in this case, the term European referred to South Africans). He named Mr. M.S. Du Toit, Mr. W.T. Malan, and Mr. W.W. Jacobs, whom he said owned land “which would take two hours to walk around.”¹⁰⁴ Japhet also reminded the committee that the development of a meat and dairy industry was confined to European participants only. He insinuated that although Wameru were cattle ranchers and farmers they were not considered as viable participants, thus casting suspicion on who was meant to benefit from this scheme. Japhet recognized and explained how this was a racialized land scheme that did not seek to benefit Africans or the community, but rather further entrenched racial inequalities and bitterness.

To further underscore the racial logic of the scheme, he suggested the administration’s claims to administering the territory with a view to universal human rights was disingenuous since the British deliberately evaded and ignored the authority of the UN. As evidence of this, he pointed to how the eviction plans were enacted as soon as the UNVM left in September 1951, when the government was made aware the WCU had submitted a petition to the UNTC concerning the eviction. He restated that all appeals directly made to the administering authority to delay the eviction, even with a note from the UNTC stating its consideration of their case, were deliberately ignored. Thus, he argued the British were aware they were breaching important protocols and principles that would have seen Wameru people’s rights to the land preserved. In this way, Japhet painted British officials as deliberately evading UN authority to cement control over property.

In order to obtain approval from Wameru, Japhet argued, the government relied on British-implemented institutions and local African officials who were appointed by government

¹⁰⁴ United Nations General Assembly, agenda item 12, “Statement of Mr. Kirilo Japhet, representative of the Wameru made before the Fourth Committee at its 286th Meeting, on November 29th, 1952,” A/C.4/221, FCO 371/101397, National Archives, Kew, UK, p.5.

officials. He argued that although the Legislative Council in Dar es Salaam passed a bill allowing the eviction, this council was comprised of a majority of Europeans, with only four seats of unofficial members reserved for Africans, all of whom were appointed by the administration and could only give recommendations.¹⁰⁵ Thus, Japhet intimated that the government never properly consulted the Wameru people or the UNTC. In so doing, Japhet depicted the British government as administering the territory as though it were a colony while skirting trusteeship principles and authorities.

Japhet challenged British claims and political logic that this scheme was invested in the future of the territory and the benefit of all people, instead indicating how Wameru lives and livelihoods were rendered disposable in order to implement the project. He described the events of November 17, 1952, which included the arrival of 120 police officers, seven European officers, and several members of the Kikuyu tribe, who worked as labourers for the British in the Northern Province. Under government direction they violently dispossessed the Wameru of their land and belongings. Japhet recalled the suffering that occurred in the following terms:

When they saw that people were not going to assist them at all in removing their things, they began to burn the houses without removing anything. They removed all of the cows, sheep and goats and took them to a dip in Ngare-Nanyuki area. Then they began to chase people about. They did this until November 24. Then they took all of the cattle to Kingori area. In some houses there were goats, sheep, cats, and chickens inside and they did not bother to remove them, but they burnt the houses with these inside. During this time our people were prevented from taking water from the Ngare-Nanyuki river, even if they wished to drink it. The road leading from Meru into the Nzare-Nanyuki area was closed. There was a barrier there. There was no permission for anyone to come from the main Meru area to see what was going on in the Ngare-Nanyuki area.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ United Nations General Assembly, agenda item 12, "Statement of Mr. Kirilo Japhet, representative of the Wa-Meru made before the Fourth Committee at its 286th Meeting, on November 29th, 1952," A/C.4/221, FCO 371/101397, National Archives, Kew, UK, p.5.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations General Assembly, "Statement of Mr. Kirilo Japhet, representative of the Wa-meru made before the Fourth Committee at its 286th meeting on 29 November 1952," Fourth Committee Agenda Item. 12, A/C.4/221, FCO 101397, p.6.

His testimony attested to how the British orchestrated the interruption of the Wameru's everyday life by destroying their homes, cattle, and food, all of which necessitated that it be shielded from prying eyes—suggesting the British were fully aware of the injustices being enacted.

Moreover, Japhet relayed how some people strategized by hiding in the “bush” to bring food to relatives, while people were chased about day and night. If they cooked their food they were found by police, their pots destroyed, and violently removed. He stated how in other areas such as Ngabo and Ngare, people tried to hide food, but when found their food and houses were burned. He also argued that most of the people relocated to Kingori had left, since the area was not suitable for habitation.¹⁰⁷ In this way, Japhet relayed how the administration viewed the Wameru life as disposable and that the administration was not invested in quelling a violent uprising of Wameru but intervened destructively to ensure the implementation of the project at the cost of the wellbeing of the dislocated Wameru people, who passively resisted the administration's plans.

Japhet explained that the affected Wameru were intent on having the expropriated land returned. He informed the committee that people refused the compensation offered to them and were either staying with family or with others in surrounding districts, which exacerbated already congested areas. This showed how the Wameru were committed to maintaining their own moral authority.¹⁰⁸ Others, he said, had become squatters on European farms or had allied with Maasai or Mbulu peoples and had temporarily been allowed to settle on their lands.¹⁰⁹ All of this, he

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 7.

¹⁰⁸For works that examine this issue see the following: Thomas Spear, *Mountain Farmers: Moral Economies of Land & Agricultural Development in Arusha & Meru*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1997); James Giblin, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania*, (Athens: Ohio University, 2006); and Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania*, (Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1990).

¹⁰⁹ United Nations General Assembly, “Statement of Mr. Kirilo Japhet, representative of the Wa-meru made before the Fourth Committee at its 286th meeting on 29 November 1952,” Fourth Committee Agenda Item. 12, A/C.4/221, FCO 101397, p.10

reminded the committee, was a disruption of family life and local economy as there was now a food shortage and inadequate means to feed what remained of the cattle.¹¹⁰ His report on the conditions of Wameru people described them as dismembered and steeped in precarity that, according to the Wameru, only a return of their land could remedy.

After describing these conditions, Japhet indicated his displeasure at how the administering authority could so easily “frustrate” petitioning efforts to the UNTC.¹¹¹ He argued the suffering and loss Wameru people were experiencing under trusteeship only reflected the incapacity of the UNTC as an instrument of justice and guardian of rights. He insinuated this would influence future perceptions of the UN. For Japhet, it was obvious Wameru rights were violated for settler benefit, yet the UNTC was unable to demand their lands be returned to the Wameru and failed to address racial discrimination in the territory.

In sum, Japhet urged the UNTC to restore the basic principles and ideals of the trusteeship system by returning the lands to the Wameru. Powerfully, after having stressed Wameru passive resistance and loss of faith in UN principles and trusteeship, and emphasized that this scheme was unequivocally racially inspired, Japhet closed with the following statement:

Crush the head of the serpent of racial segregation or “apartheid”, which has dared to show itself in a United Nations Trust Territory. Save the peoples placed in your trust from the misery, frustration and bitterness which such policies have produced in Kenya and South Africa, and inevitably will produce. Restore to us our lands for the resettlement of our 3000 homeless tribes people. Revive in us our confidence and our faith in the United Nations.¹¹² (underlining original emphasis)

¹¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly, “Statement of Mr. Kirilo Japhet, representative of the Wa-meru made before the Fourth Committee at its 286th meeting on 29 November 1952,” Fourth Committee Agenda Item. 12, A/C.4/221, FCO 101397, p.7-8.

¹¹¹ Ibid, .8.

¹¹² United Nations General Assembly, agenda item 12, “Statement of Mr. Kirilo Japhet, representative of the Wa-Meru made before the Fourth Committee at its 286th Meeting, on November 29th, 1952,” A/C.4/221, FCO 371/101397, National Archives, Kew, p.10

Thus, he reminded the council how the mismanagement of land rights, and specifically the Wameru eviction, were leading towards futures that were reflected in surrounding territories where racial order defined property ownership. This statement underscored how the denial of land rights was fundamental to racial relations, and that this was not confined to the worst settler territories.

British authorities acknowledged the potential impact of Japhet's statements before the UNGA. W.G. Wilson (the UK delegate in New York) sent a secret telegram to W.A.C. Mathieson of the Colonial Office before Japhet's testimony in front of the UNGA. In this telegram, he expressed concern regarding the Meru Land Case leading to unwanted international attention to the anticolonial Mau Mau rebellion occurring in Kenya. He wrote, "It is difficult to believe that some members of the Fourth Committee will not seize the opportunity presented by this situation to have a searching debate on Mau Mau and its implications, especially since they can now do so in full freedom so long as they purport to talk about the situation in Tanganyika."¹¹³ Wilson wrote that if the handling of Mau Mau insurgents surfaced, then it would be best to "throw the anti-colonials off the scent by employing some Charterology in the shape of impassioned references to the full powers of the administration assigned to the Administering Authority, the impropriety of Fourth Committee efforts to intervene in what is a matter of day to day administration, etc. etc."¹¹⁴ Unlike the UNTC, as British officials had correctly predicted, members of the United Nations General Assembly took seriously allegations of racial discrimination and abuse regarding land matters. This was likely in part due to the anticolonial voices of member states such as India, Haiti, and even the Soviet Union in some respects, as well

¹¹³ "Secret Telegram from WG. Wilson to W.A.C. Mathieson ," (UK delegation to UN), FCO 371/101396, November 15, 1952.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

as other former colonized states who now had membership status.¹¹⁵ This led to increased anxiety among British officials as well as a hardening of their position against outside interference in matters relating to Tanganyika.

Critics of British colonial policy honed in on the issue of land dispossession as a practice of racial discrimination, as Japhet's testimony had clearly demonstrated. For instance, Jose Ingles, the Philippine delegate, reinforced that trusteeship status entailed protecting its "inhabitants", which indicated African interests should take paramountcy,¹¹⁶ not those of Europeans living in non-self-governing territories.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Ingles openly critiqued the British administration for having a general colonial policy of upholding racially biased practices benefitting white settlers. He drew on the example of the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia who, in reference to the Central African Federation, remarked: "We do not pretend there is any equality present."¹¹⁸ Ingles also cited the emergency situation in Kenya, which stemmed from racial policies of discrimination in terms of land leases.¹¹⁹ Ingles took up the strand offered in the Wameru protests against their eviction, and interpreted the Meru Land Case as a manifestation of racial discrimination that was occurring in other British territories and a portent of further racial injustices.

The UK Minister of State for Colonies intervened and addressed the Fourth Committee in rejection of Ingles' comments. He interjected against any reference to other non-self-governing

¹¹⁵ Mark M. Mazower examines this issue in depth in his work *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). By no means is Mazower the only scholar who has examined this, but I draw your attention to this work as a starting point to see how newly decolonized states like India proved to be "troublesome" for imperial powers in the halls of the UN.

¹¹⁶ A legal term for precedence that had specific connections to the language of the League of Nations.

¹¹⁷ United Nations General Assembly –Seventh Session Report on Debate, "Committee Four—General debate on non-self-governing territories (continued)." From Uk delegation, New York, No. 17, 25th October, 1952, FCO 371/101397, p.1.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

territories as “out of order” and in violation of Article 73E.¹²⁰ This prevented the committee from delving into issues pertaining to the administration of British colonies that were not trusts. The minister stated that Ingles’ interpretation of “inhabitants” as referring to Africans was erroneous. The minister argued that the Trusteeship Agreement, Chapter XI, did not provide for the sole betterment of Africans, but rather all inhabitants, including Europeans. Therefore, he stated, there was no direct invocation for the consent or paramountcy of African interests alone. He also challenged the statement about the potential administration of the Central African Federation as a white minority government on the grounds that this was beyond the scope of the committee. He also reminded the committee that the British did not have to defend this policy before them, as it was not under their purview.¹²¹ In doing so, he attempted to erect clear boundaries of enquiry which did not include governance in surrounding territories and interpreted trusteeship principles that favoured white settler and government interests.

Earle Seaton’s statements that the Wameru were purposefully excluded from participating in development projects while being subjected to violent reprisals provided the opening for delegates to pursue the idea that the land scheme was akin to practices in South Africa and Kenya. Delegates interrogated the British premise for the need of homogeneity and land expropriation in general. During the Seventh Session, the Indonesian representative made what the British delegate described as “a most malicious speech.” The Indonesian delegate argued that the UNGA needed to:

rectify the wrong done to the Meru...The Administering Authority’s plan for the agricultural development of the territory contained a more sinister plan which was clearly

¹²⁰ Inward Telegram To the Secretary of State for the Colonies From New York (U.K. Delegation), “Following is a text of statement made by Minister of State for Colonial Affairs in Fourth Committee of General Assembly 24th October,” Brief No. 45, FCO 371/101397, p.1.

¹²¹ Inward Telegram To the Secretary of State for the Colonies From New York (U.K. Delegation), “Following is a text of statement made by Minister of State for Colonial Affairs in Fourth Committee of General Assembly 24th October,” Brief No. 45, FCO 371/101397, p.1-2.

motivated by European interests. “Homogeneity” really meant a policy of racial segregation or apartheid. The Trusteeship Council had clearly been influenced by the fait accompli presented by the Administering Authority.¹²²(original emphasis)

The Indian delegate commented that the administering authority had handled the situation poorly and should not have resorted to an eviction. The Guatemalan representative adamantly argued the eviction was a violation of human rights and threatened the reputation of the UN. One delegate asked Japhet about racial relations in the territory and if there was the possibility of resolving the issue in a way that did not exacerbate racial tensions. Japhet responded relations were friendly and could be solved if the land was returned, but if this was not undertaken “they would have no good-will or gladness in their hearts; they would live in great poverty and great trouble would arise, as in other areas of Africa. The Wameru would only take a full part in the life of the country if their land were returned.”¹²³ For Japhet, racial relations were deeply entangled with land issues. Hence, Japhet received much broader support in the Fourth Committee.

The UK delegates insisted a racial policy was not practiced in Tanganyika. They reasoned that their actions were strictly concerned with the future of Tanganyika and its development. The British stated the eviction and general land policy was tied “strictly to the economics of land utilisation.”¹²⁴ Sir Alan Burns, the British delegate, stated that indeed they were looking towards the future of the territory: “Sound land utilisation policies are essential for

¹²² Report No.77, “Committee Four—Report of the Trusteeship Council: reports debates on 2nd December. Statement by Seaton declaring the Administering Authority’s policy on Meru land question was a question of racial discrimination. Gives details of statement by delegates,” From UK delegation, New York, No. 83, UN, FCO 371/101397, December 4th, 1952, p.1.

¹²³ United Nations General Assembly—Seventh Session, Report on Debate, Committee Four—Report on Debate,” From United Kingdom Delegation, New York, No.77, 2nd December 1952, in FCO 371/101397, p.2.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.3.

the future of the territory.”¹²⁵ Similarly, during another day of debates regarding the resolution that would be passed, the UK defended its position by stating that empirically the Wameru had been given more land than the Europeans in this scheme. He stated that “from his long experience of colour prejudice he could recall no more vicious example of racial discrimination than the attempt by the representative of Indonesia to whip up emotional resentment against a scheme designed and carried out in good faith for the benefit of all the inhabitants of territory.”¹²⁶ Burns relied on notions of progress and future outcomes to legitimize the land scheme. This exemplified what Verne Harris calls “privilege[ing] the ghost of those already dead and the ghosts of those not yet born at the expense of the ghosts of the living.”¹²⁷ The living Wameru inhabitants were expendable in order to make claims about rectifying past injustices and for imagined futures.

However, Japhet’s use of a regional lens to frame the Meru Land Case as a symptom of land inequalities and violence cut much deeper than the British government allowed to be seen and pushed the government in an unfavourable direction for the Wameru. The official report sent to the UK regarding the questioning of Japhet revealed the depths of anxiety the British experienced regarding international scrutiny of its land policies in Tanganyika and surrounding territories. The UK delegate reported that Japhet’s statements included “a reference to Mau Mau and to land problems in East Africa generally...the inference was allowed to appear of close connection between events in Tanganyika, Kenya and the Union of South Africa.”¹²⁸ The British

¹²⁵ United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations, “Speech by Sir Alan Burns on Meru Petition in the Fourth Committee on the 3rd December, 1952,” in FCO 371/101397, p. 2.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Verne Harris, “Hauntology, archivy and banditry: an engagement with Derrida and Zapiro,” *Critical Arts*, 29:sup1, (2015), p.17.

¹²⁸ United Nations General Assembly—Seventh Session, Report on Debate, Committee Four—Report on Debate,” From United Kingdom Delegation, New York, No.77, 2nd December 1952, in FCO 371/101397, p.1.

denied the Meru Land Case had any connection to Kenyan land policies and urged delegates to view Tanganyika through the unique prism of trusteeship.

Confidential documents reveal how potent these insinuations were, leading to a hardening of the British position against UN interference in land issues. As the Meru Land Case unfolded before the UN, the British authorities in Tanganyika and Kenya quietly organized the expulsion of the Kikuyu from the Northern Province to Kenya. Officials deliberated over declaring sections of the Northern Province under a state of emergency to allow for the systematic eviction of the Kikuyu from the area, whom settlers feared were under Mau Mau¹²⁹ influence. Officials feared these security measures risked eliciting international attention due the territory's trusteeship status. More pervasive was the fear that the Mau Mau would infiltrate and influence the Wameru, whom they deemed the most vulnerable to these ideas, although there was no evidence of this. Officials reported the Wameru "have been and still are in a sullen mood and are not in any way cooperating with Government. They would be without doubt particularly susceptible to Mau Mau influence..."¹³⁰ More pressing for officials was the fear that if they were forced to return Wameru land, other groups in the territory and beyond would be inspired to make similar demands.¹³¹ Although officials debated which approach was best, they were unified in the belief that UN intervention demanding the return of land must be thwarted.¹³² The regional focus did

¹²⁹ For a discussion of the colonial reaction to the Mau Mau anticolonial insurgency see the following works: Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence: The Wars of Independence in Kenya and Algeria*, Dona Geyer, translator, (Philadelphia: university of Pennsylvania, 2013); David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*, (New York: WW North & Co., 2005); Julianna Appiah, Yeboah, R. M., and A. Asah-Asante, "Architecture of Denial: Imperial Violence, the Construction of Law and Historical Knowledge during the Mau Mau Uprising, 1952–1960," *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 14,1, (2021): 3-27. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/17087384-12340080>.

¹³⁰ "An Appreciation of the Kikuyu Situation in the Northern Province on 27th October 1952, History of the Infiltration of Kikuyu from Kenya into the Northern Province," in FCO 101396, p.3.

¹³¹ Response to telegram no. 959 [of the 10th December 1952]: Meru Petition, telegram No. 1136, 12th December 1952, FCO 371/101397, p. 1.

¹³² "Meru Petition: Copy of telegram no. 746 from Tanganyika 98th Dec., requests information re. proceedings about the resolutions passed in the IV Committee on the Meru Petition," in FCO 371/101397. See for instance, D.N. Royce, "The Fourth Committee's Resolution on the Meru Petition," 11 December, 1952.

prove useful for the Wameru in terms of gaining diplomatic support, yet this strategy also led the British to take a strong stand as interference in the matter posed a substantial threat to their territorial sovereignty and potentially probing questions of what was unfolding in Kenya.

Furthermore, British officials asserted that to return the land to the Wameru would violate efforts to ensure the rights of all inhabitants. With anticolonial violence unfolding in Kenya among landless Kikuyu whose predominant demands included land rights and return of expropriated land, the British were unlikely to submit to Wameru or international pressures regarding this issue. In a confidential telegram that was circulated among Colonial Office members, one official intimated that to allow the UN to force them to return lands to the Wameru was too risky: “But if we now allow the impression to get abroad that that we can be diverted by United Nation pressure from what we consider to be right, we shall be faced with similar petitions from other tribes, e.g. the Arusha and the Chagga.”¹³³ For the government, this meant also protecting the rights of white settlers, whom they deemed essential for the economic development of the land.

Anticolonial violence against white settlers was a preoccupation of the time. The pages of a local newspaper like the *Tanganyika Standard* were filled with reports of government action to prevent the Kikuyu anticolonial organization Mau Mau violence against settlers spilling over outside Kenya.¹³⁴ Accordingly, suspicions of Mau Mau activities in the territory and government reports of measures taken to prevent the Kikuyu in Tanganyika from becoming Mau Mau were

¹³³ “Response to telegram no. 959 [of the 10th December 1952]: Meru Petition, telegram No. 1136, 12th December 1952, FCO 371/101397, p. 1.

¹³⁴ See for instance how government responses to evacuating supposed Mau Mau supporters were front page news: “Tanganyika’s Mau Mau Sweep Over: 42 On Black list Out of 158 Arrests,” in *Tanganyika Standard*, Wednesday, November, 12, 1952, p.1; “Registration for Kikuyus in Tanganyika,” *Tanganyika Standard*, November, 13, 1952, p.1; “Planters Send Families to the Coast: Precaution Against ‘Kikuyu’ Threat,” Monday, November 17, 1952, p.1. , Also see the front page issue of *Tanganyika Standard*, December 4th, 1952 where there are lots of pieces dedicated to events with the Kikuyu uprising in Kenya and what this meant for Tanganyika.

prominent in the November issues of the newspaper. Reports of violence in Kenya and even as far as the Union of South Africa accompanied these stories, which depicted African violence as attacks on white settlers. One piece, titled “Mau Mau Projected Into Union,” quoted South African official Mr. Charles Swart, who equated recent African riots to Mau Mau terrorism: “The riots were simply anti-White,” he opined.¹³⁵ Descriptions of the Kikuyu in the Northern Province suspected of carrying out oath-taking rituals tying individuals to the Mau Mau cause filled newspaper pages. Public expositions of Mau Mau violence against settlers were therefore an important element that influenced British actions in handling the Wameru case.

The newspaper also kept abreast of events occurring at the UN and of issues that related to trusteeship territories. Such press was significant, as it cast another critical eye on British activities in the international sphere. As a result, the British government was self-conscious of the ramifications of an unfavourable outcome. Although the *Tanganyika Standard* was a European-friendly paper, its readership extended beyond European settlers and officials and included a wider public who could be inspired to write to the UNTC or to the newspaper. The paper reported on such events as the resignation of Trygve Lie as Secretary-General of the UN and concerns about who would replace him.¹³⁶ The newspaper also published reports of disputes occurring within the UN among officials. One article described how the British Foreign Secretary accused the Soviets of using the UN as a site for smearing the image of the West. The Foreign Secretary insisted that the trust system of territories was necessary for their progress and development. He argued not to “stretch the meaning of the Charter and extend the areas in which

¹³⁵ “Mau Mau Projected Into Union,” *Tanganyika Standard*, Wednesday, 12 November, 1952, p.1. For other articles and front page news regarding events in Kenya also see the daily issues following this article, especially those for November 17th-18th, 1952.

¹³⁶ “Trygve Lie’s Resignation: New Problem for United Nations,” *Tanganyika Standard*, Wednesday, 12 November, 1952, p.1.

the United Nations has jurisdiction we run grave risks...of weakening the very structure of the United Nations.”¹³⁷ This demonstrates how the British were already sensitive to land issues and international interference in the affairs of trust territories. It also helps explain British recalcitrance in allowing for a deep probe into land issues and their insistence that the Wameru eviction was an important component towards better land utilization and not racially motivated. The attending issues of a wider public outside the UN inspired a position of retrenchment by the government that was linked to fears that international exposure and interference in matters unfolding in the Northern Province could lead to potential obstruction of the containment of violence in Kenya or encourage more land disputes. This is important to understanding some of the reasons why the British were so unwilling to consider returning the land to the Wameru.

Although the British government faced significant criticism from UNGA members, it also had its supporters, who preferred not to see the UN probe deeply into the affairs of land rights. The Canadian representative asked “whether the Committee realised that it was adopting the principle that whenever there was local opposition to an act of an Administering Authority in a Trust territory, that opposition should be endorsed by the United Nations.” The Canadian representative went on to say the UNTC had already done its due diligence with regards to the Wameru, and therefore opposed the resolution proposed by the Indonesian delegate.¹³⁸ The South African delegate made a short statement that the situation interfered in the daily administrative affairs of the British, which was outside the scope of the UN.¹³⁹ This accusation reflected many of the fears of governments who had trust territories.¹⁴⁰ This is only a glimpse of

¹³⁷ “We Will not give up Colonial Trust: Eden Denounce Red Propaganda in UN,” 13th November, 1952, p. 1.

¹³⁸ “United Nations General Assembly Seventh Session: Report on Debate, report No. 77, 4th December 1952, FCO 371/101397, p. 1.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.2.

¹⁴⁰ See for instance Jessica Pearson’s book, *The Colonial Politics of Global Health: France and the United Nations in Postwar Africa*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2018). In her work she explores the tense relations between colonial powers and the new body of the United Nations, and how in the case of France they attempted to negotiate

the range of responses within the Fourth Committee. What was distinctive about this moment was how the Wameru were viewed as representatives of Africans as a racial group and the issue hinged on the question of whether the land scheme was racially motivated. Yet in the case of two proposed resolutions, one calling for returning the land to the Wameru and the other not, neither received the required two-thirds majority needed. The UNTC resolution stood.

This did not deter the Wameru from continuing to petition the UNTC about conditions in the new settlement area and demand the return of their land. However, as it was considered a matter that had already been settled, their case was not taken up again. Settlers who leased this land also expressed nervousness over sabotage and violence from the Wameru, with some of their deaths considered suspicious.¹⁴¹ Many settlers failed to make anything out of the extensive farms they leased and neither did they implement a meat and dairy industry.¹⁴² The land was added to the extensive settler farms and Wameru were forced to adapt in already congested areas.

Conclusions

Wameru disputes over the Sanya Corridor transformed into a protest over racially discriminatory practices that had material consequences for their lives and futures. Their homes, cattle, and places of worship were destroyed to make room for thirteen farms to be leased to European settler farmers, many of whom made no effort to implement meat and dairy farms. Wameru protests to the UNTC were ineffective in achieving support to redress the harm of this loss. The UNTC and UNGA failed to seriously contend with the severity of land expropriations committed by the trusteeship government. However, what this case does showcase, and what the

this that was in their favour. Susan Pedersen's, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University, 2015), also explores these tensions and negotiations with a specific focus on how this played out during the Mandate years.

¹⁴¹ Spear, *Mountain Farmers*, 234-235.

¹⁴² *The Meru Land Case*, p.63.

remaining chapters of my dissertation will bring to the fore, is how human rights were interpreted among petitioners through a lens of racial inequalities that affected their material, social, and political worlds.

The Wameru recognized that the denial of their property rights marked them as racialized subjects, placing them outside the realm of rights and modernity and the risks this posed to Wameru futures. By agitating for their land rights and invoking the right to travel to the UN, they exposed some of the limitations and possibilities human rights posed for trusteeship inhabitants, so much so that Julius Nyerere would come to use the halls of the UN for his own nationalist purposes, with issues of race looming over his own statements before the committees.

Meanwhile, in protesting their eviction and then refusing to move to the designated areas prescribed for them, the Wameru inhabited a liminal position in order to resist the futures imposed on them by the trusteeship authorities. It is within this space that the Wameru made their critique and express their distrust of the trusteeship government as an authority on progress and development.

However, the Wameru strategy of placing their loss of land in regional terms also proved unbeneficial. Although it gained significant attention from certain delegates, the trusteeship system proved insufficient as a mechanism for posing a substantial critique of racialized land policies, as the British adamantly agitated against such insinuations and had the resources to muster diplomatic support and international charters (which privileged territorial sovereignty) in its defense. British responses and secret correspondence regarding the Meru Land Case and landless Kikuyu in the Northern Province reflected a sustained investment in racialized order of land and the control of mobility through forced relocation measures. These colonial office documents trace some of the debates and decisions made during the trusteeship period and point

to how the capture of land was at the core of British interests and authority, on which they were willing to stake their international reputation.

The Meru Land Case failed even though it made it into the halls of the Trusteeship Council and General Assembly and was aided by an extensive activist network ranging from Tanganyika, Kenya, Britain, and the US. It was still unable to garner a satisfactory resolution for Wameru inhabitants affected by the eviction. These Wameru continued to petition the UNTC regarding their land case, and instead persisted to challenge the liminality of their situation and the governance this subjected them to. For the Wameru, the authoring of their experiences through this new international petitioning machinery became a means of challenging the structures and authorities around them.

Chapter Two:

A Case of Inclusion and Exclusion: Trusteeship and Asian Petitioners

In 1955, Julius Nyerere, the nationalist leader of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) spoke before the United Nations Trusteeship Council (UNTC) in New York. This was the first of three visits to the UN for Nyerere. His visit to the UNTC was precipitated by the publication of the controversial 1954 UN Visiting Mission (UNVM) report on Tanganyika. Some of the controversy surrounding the report stemmed from its naming of TANU as a popular nationalist movement led by Nyerere. The UNVM report contained statements to the effect that the policy of multiracialism could only be temporary and implemented for a maximum of three years, after which racial parity– the anti-democratic policy of granting European, Asian, and African residents of Tanganyika equal representation as racial blocks despite Africans constituting the vast majority (98%)¹ of the territory’s population of 8,788,466² – should be dissolved. It also stated that a date, or target dates, for self-determination needed to be set.³ To the consternation of the British government, the UNVM report was published and circulated before the government and the UNTC had a chance to review its contents. According to the British government, it contained many misleading statements and inaccuracies.⁴

This report effectively incited TANU’s cooperation with the UNTC and, more importantly, affirmed Tanganyika’s future as an African majority country (African rule) on the

¹ B.T.G. Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p.6.

² The total number of non-Africans in the territory in 1958 amounted to 123, 130, which includes: Asians, Arabs, Somalis, South African Coloureds, and Europeans. The European population was 20, 598 out of a total territorial population of 8,788,466. The African population was 8,665,336. Ibid.

³ United Nations, *Tanganyika: Land in Transition*, (New York: United Nations Department of Publications, 1955).

⁴ Ibid, 14-17.

international stage—a future the British government hoped to postpone through its policy of multiracialism, which preserved white minority rule. In this case, the UN presented itself as a body willing to challenge European imperialism to secure Nyerere’s cooperation, while also implicitly condoning a system that preserved white minority rule.

However, in a rare instance of Asian communication with the UNTC, the Asian Association threw its support behind Nyerere, submitting that Mr. I.C. Chopra⁵ of the Legislative Council did not represent Asian opinion.⁶ This was one of the few communications submitted to the UNTC from a political body ostensibly representing the opinions of Asian inhabitants of Tanganyika and is easily glossed over in the archival record when focusing narrowly on African opposition to trusteeship authority. This intervention provides an important entry point for interrogating the complex position of Asian inhabitants in the trust territory. This chapter turns to the ways Asian inhabitants engaged with the trusteeship system in Tanganyika while debates about the multiracial character of the territory and the place of minorities featured in discussions about its development and preparedness for self-determination.

East African Asians so often fail to make an appearance in narratives about trusteeship or decolonization in Tanganyika, and when they do, attention is focused either on portraying them as insular and conservative (the majority) or on the few radical TANU supporters among them.⁷

⁵ Iqbal Chand Chopra was a Punjabi Hindu barrister who had only recently been appointed to the Executive Council and was selected by Edward Twining (Governor) to go to the UN as a representative of Asian opinion that the territory needed another 25 years before independence could be considered. Robert G. Gregory, *Quest for Equality: Asian Politics in East Africa, 1900-1967*, (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1993) 109.

⁶ In this communication the Asian Association President importantly distinguishes that I.C. Chopra was a nominated member of Legislative Council and was not an elected official in order to further underscore that he does not represent Asian opinion. T/COM.2/L-3-EN. Digital archives of UNTC. “Communication from the President of the Asian Association Concerning Tanganyika,” 18 February 1955.

⁷ For works that look at more insular characteristics of the Asian diaspora while also complicating prevailing stereotypes of this group in Tanganyika, and East Africa more generally, see the following sample of works: Michael Ada editor, *Indian Africa: minorities of Indian-Pakistan origin in East Africa*, (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2015); Eric Burton, ““...what tribe should we call him?: The Indian Diaspora, the State, and the Nation in Tanzania since ca. 1850,” *proben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien*, no. 25, vol. 13, (2013): 1-28; Richa Nagar, “The South Asian Diaspora in Tanzania: A History Retold,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and*

There is, however, a growing historiography that unpacks and/or critiques notions of African-Asian solidarity and networks during the period of decolonization.⁸ The petitions examined here were written by a range of Asian voices from within Tanganyika and chart the beginning of trusteeship to its conclusion. They all share a common thread, bringing attention to how Asian petitioners recognized their roles as an important tool of the colonial state and its economy in managing British aims. Their writings directly engaged with the essential liminal position of the Asian minority as a group, which both the trusteeship government and African nationalists attempted to preserve. Yet the petitions also go beyond this by conveying Asian perceptions and experiences of how the colonial state, and trusteeship more broadly, used the liminal position of Asians as a mechanism to capitalize on and construct racial difference for politically expedient purposes that placed this group in an uncertain position.

Asian petitioners adeptly explore the many potentialities of human rights as a mechanism of domination and control that risked jeopardizing or aggrandizing their position in the territory.

the Middle East, vol. XVI, no. 2 (1996): 62-68; James R. Brennan, "South Asian Nationalism in an East African Context: The Case of Tanganyika *Comparative Studies of South Asia, 1914-1956*," *Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1999): 24-39. For works that attend to how members of the Asian community were incorporated into TANU and made allies of the political party see: Paul Bjerck, *Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960-1964*, (Rochester: New York, 2015); Robert G. Gregory, "Co-operation and Collaboration in Colonial East Africa: The Asians' Political Role, 1890- 1964," *African Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 319 (Apr., 1981): 259-273; Robert G. Gregory's book *Quest for Equality: Asian Politics in East Africa, 1900-1967* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 1993); John Iliffe gives credence to Asian in East Africa for encouraging nationalist thought and organization in the territory, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979); Sophia Mustafa's account of her work as an Asian representative for TANU; *The Tanganyika Way*, (Toronto: TSAR Publications, 1961).

⁸ For examples see: James Brennan sheds much needed light on efforts towards pan-Islamic formations during the decolonial period. He does this by following an individual Muslim Indian's failed efforts as it, too, became increasingly divided and insular, and therefore failed. James R. Brennan, "Constructing Arguments and Institutions of Islamic Belonging: M.O. Abassi, Colonial Tanzania and the Western Indian Ocean World, 1925-1961," *Journal of African History*, 55 (2014): 211-228. For another example of Afro-Asian solidarity see: Caroline Stolte, "Introduction: Trade Union Networks and the Politics of Expertise in an Age of Afro-Asian Solidarity," *Journal of Social History*, Volume 53, Issue 2, Winter 2019, Pages 331-347, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jsh/shz098>. For diplomatic and other organizational efforts of Afro-Asian solidarity see the edited collection: Christopher J. Lee, editor, *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, (Athens: Ohio University, 2010); For an example the tense Afro-Asian solidarities and tensions in Kenya see the following work: Sana Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya: The Politics of Diaspora*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2015).

Their petitions bring much needed attention to how potentiality intersects with the liminal position of Asian petitioners.⁹ In doing so, they reflect how dynamics of sameness and difference were present in systems of law and governance—including those attached to claims of universalism—and recognized how the new legalism was and could be used to recreate sameness and difference. These petitions reveal a grassroots critique of the language of rights and improvement on offer by trusteeship and its mechanisms of order, which accordingly further reinscribed and imposed a state of vulnerability on Asian minorities due to their peculiar position within a decolonizing Tanganyika.

To be clear, the petitions did not deny the fractures and heterogenous makeup of the Asian community. In fact, this very heterogeneity is what gave these petitions and their trenchant critiques of trusteeship so much weight. This varied group of Asian petitioners, some of whom wrote in as individuals speaking on behalf of Asians or through community associations, denied the ostensible universalism of this new legalism of trusteeship and human rights. The colonial administration had long wielded Asian minority group status as a tool for dividing and extracting political and economic gains. These petitions engage with this reality and how this history was embedded and enacted in the present. There is an awareness within these petitions that, in the words of human rights scholar Upendra Baxi, “The politics *of* human rights treats human rights languages and logics as an ensemble of means for the legitimation for governance and domination: it only universalizes the power of the dominant in ways that constantly elsewhere reproduce human rightlessness and suffering.”¹⁰ Asian petitioners shared a distrust of trusteeship

⁹ This notion of human rights as a potentiality is drawn from Upendra Baxi’s discussion on the future of human rights and her consideration of Giorgio Agamben and Martin Heidegger’s discussions on the politics of potentiality as an opportunity for decreation. However, as she notes, Agamben also iterates how within the space of transition there resides the potential of no change. Upendra Baxi, *The Future of Human Rights*, second editions, (London: Oxford University Press, 2007) p.2.

¹⁰ Upendra Baxi, *The Future of Human Rights*, xiv-xv.

and its attending language of human rights, suggesting it was a mode of domination used to deny them certain rights as a minority group and condemn them to a life of precarity. It is through the petitions that they engaged and attempted to create new normative forms of life in a changing Tanganyika.

Multiracialism and the question of minorities

Multiracialism was the British government's attempt to demonstrate their efforts of gradually incorporating and developing government systems for Africans while also claiming to protect the rights of minorities. However, this strategy was aimed at delaying democracy and African majority rule. UK special representative Sir Alan Burns asserted that a gradual approach was crucial for the political and economic development. As such, this approach required the continued presence of British administrators and European economic ventures. According to the British, to establish or even suggest implementing target dates for self-determination would prevent European investment and therefore impede development.¹¹ The British emphasized multiracialism as a development policy, which began with constitutional changes in 1952. This entailed splitting representation on various bodies into an equal number of representatives for each of three racially designated groups: "European" representatives for white residents, "Asian" representatives for Indian and Pakistani inhabitants, and "African" representatives for the Indigenous African and Arab populations. The plans involved introducing a gradual parity of representatives for each racial group in various government bodies, beginning with the lowest levels of government organizations. Africans were eventually to be appointed to the Executive Council; plans were also made for multiracial representation on advisory boards such as the Immigration Board, Labour Board and the Public Service Commission, all of which had

¹¹ United Nations, *Tanganyika: Land in Transition*, 14.

previously largely been directed exclusively by Europeans.¹² By 1955, each racial group was expected to be equally represented on the Legislative Council.¹³

This policy marked a deliberate move away from designations of native and non-native status systems, re-jigging a colonial race-based politics, and reinforcing racial designations with the aim of preserving an extreme over-representation of whites in a system that would have a veneer of representation for Africans. For many inhabitants, the policy was a glaring signal of the preservation of white minority rule in contradiction to UN Article 76.¹⁴ Although certain UN delegates criticized the introduction of constitutional changes that preserved white minority privileges, the UNTC generally accepted multiracialism as a first step towards ‘training’ Africans for government leadership that was sensitive to and respected the rights of minorities. Hence, multiracialism and the trusteeship promise of self-determination and antidiscrimination converged in ways that reinforced racial categories as the rubric for claim making, which is evidenced by the submissions from Asian petitioners who positioned themselves as speaking on behalf of the community.

Although Asians submitted few petitions to the UNTC, those whose who did tended to submit petitions collectively rather than individually. When individuals did write, they often framed the issues they raised as ones affecting the larger Asian community. However, after World War Two, African race-based nationalisms and pan-Africanist movements were gaining in momentum, and many of the Asian political associations in Tanganyika that had received

¹² B.T.G. Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press,(1961): 189.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 187-188

support from the former colony of India were weakened by political and communal divisions.¹⁵ As a result, East African Asians in Tanganyika occupied an increasingly precarious position.

Notably, the position of Asians in East Africa differed from those in South Africa, as East African Asians exercised a degree of political power due to their access to credit, land, and Indian Ocean trade circuits.¹⁶ Those in Tanganyika also had minor institutional power, as they were afforded the opportunity to act as representatives in political institutions such as the Legislative Council, whereas Africans were not allowed to participate on an official basis until 1945.¹⁷ As James Brennan has noted in his analyses of this group in Tanganyika, prior to the 1950s Asians were second only to Europeans in their political inclusion.¹⁸

While constitutional changes were being debated and worked out by British officials during the trusteeship period under the watchful gaze of the international sphere, Asian petitioners inserted their voices in these debates in ways that reflected a notion of “fragile identities” that were made and remade through claims to specific pasts combined with aspirations to proximity to Europeans and Africans.¹⁹ These manoeuvres revealed a skepticism of new international aims of progress and conveyed a perception of the international sphere as an arena made largely for imperialist aims where Asian elites were forced into a retrenchment to retain vestiges of power.

Many of these petitions reveal an attachment to non-native status designations that had defined their position in Tanganyika before formal policies of multiracialism with its registers of

¹⁵ James R. Brennan, *Taiifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 56-57.

¹⁶ Brennan, *Taiifa*, 8.

¹⁷ Brennan, “South Asian Nationalism,” 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 24.

¹⁹ Sean Field, “Fragile identities: memory, emotion, and coloured residents of Windermere,” in *Oral History, Community, and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York, 2012), 341-4.

racial order as mechanisms of rule. Instead, Asian petitioners renewed efforts to acquire a status equal to Europeans while working within the parameters of trusteeship principles and multiracialism. These efforts expressed a shared skepticism of the outcomes of trusteeship and human rights talk. As James Brennan has demonstrated in his work, there was a long history of Asian political action with the goal of acquiring equal status with Europeans.²⁰ While these petitions echo this action, there is also an inherent insecurity that can be detected as they try to navigate their fragile and complex racial identity within a nationalizing Tanganyika.

This is evident in the petitions submitted by various branches of the Indian Association (IA), later renamed the Asian Association. The association petitioned the UNTC to gain political prominence for Asians within the territory against the imperialist manoeuvrings of the administering authority. This association was the most politically powerful Asian association due to its connections with larger organizations, such as the Indian National Congress, while receiving financial backing from wealthy merchants. However, by the 1950s the Indian Association was riddled with internal divisions and in 1952 the association dissolved and was replaced by other associations such as the Asian Association, as well as various merchant and other communal religious based associations.²¹

Two lengthy petitions the IA sent to the UNTC before its dissolution not only represented a last-gasp effort to hold on to its position as a representative body for Asians in Tanganyika, but also used this as an opportunity to expose and explore the ways that imperial political and economic policies neglected to fully account for the role of Asian inhabitants. With news spreading of multiracialism as a policy, the IA submitted petitions in favour of a qualified multiracial system, which exposed the imperial strategies that underpinned this new policy. With

²⁰ Brennan, "South Asian Nationalism," 24.

²¹ *Ibid*, 28-29.

the strategy of preserving the Asian position in the territory as superior to Africans, Asians used the petitioning system to advocate for their equality with Europeans. This drew on European racist and civilizational discourses about the accrual of rights based on claims of preparedness for modern life that was made intelligible and dependent on hierarchical claims about those who were unprepared. In early 1950, the IA wrote the UNTC, warning that while multiracial constitutional reforms were desirable, only the immigrant communities consisting of Europeans and Asians would be suited for participating in common electoral roll.²² As discussions of constitutional changes towards multiracialism were increasingly well publicized as part of trusteeship changes, the Iringa branch of the IA submitted a petition outlining its position. They emphasized its support for multiracialism by stating as its first point in the list of appeals and grievances the issue of constitutional representation. They wrote that the proposed constitutional reforms “will add to the harmony of the races and without doubt it is a good augury for the future.”²³ Its evocation of the “harmony of races” was one of many nods to the deplorable state of racial tension in South Africa, as evidenced by the 1949 Durban riots, which lurked in the background, and a recognition of the lasting importance of the Asian population.²⁴

These petitions also construct a narrative that simultaneously approximate themselves to Europeans as modern subjects, while also distancing themselves from European imperialism and resituating the Asian community as interwoven with the daily life of Africans. Petitioners

²² Indian Association, “Petition from the Indian Association (Tanganyika Territory) concerning Tanganyika,” T/PET.2/94, (New York: UN, 26 Apr. 1950), p.5.

²³ Indian Association (Iringa), “Petition from the Indian Association (Iringa) concerning Tanganyika,” T/PET.2/116, (New York: UN, 2 Oct. 1951) p.2.

²⁴ Jon Soske, “ ‘Wash Me Black Again’: African Nationalism, the Indian Diaspora, and Kwa-Zulu Natal, 1944-1960.” PhD Dissertation, (University of Toronto, 2009).

https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/19234/1/Soske_Jon_D_200911_PhD_thesis.pdf, 13. For a brief discussion of how South Africa figured in internationalist discourse also see, Bonny Ibhawoh, “Testing the Atlantic Charter: Linking Anticolonialism, Self-determination and Universal Human Rights,” *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 18, 7-8 (2014): 1-19.

ascribed to themselves an exceptional position of critique, whereby they could claim a special proximity and investment in Africans and the future of the territory in contrast to the administering authority, thus making themselves out to be better “civilizers”. This included narrativizing a history of Tanganyika that marked out Asians as pioneers of the territory. In 1950 the Dar es Salaam branch of the IA wrote,

The Asians have played a great part, under very difficult conditions, in developing the country in every direction. Their enterprising spirit in carrying trade to the remotest corner of the Territory has done great service in opening up the country as a whole and in bringing the African nearer civilization by their contact and association.²⁵

This evoked the notion of Asians as those better suited to bringing the African population closer to civilization and is reflective of how the association envisioned its past in Tanganyika. As Antoinette Burton explores in her work *Africa in the Indian Imagination*, with Indian independence there was increasingly a practice of using Africa and Africans to measure their position politically and socially, which was based on a racial hierarchy tied to discourses of development and civilization.²⁶ Asians had long claimed that due to their frequent and close interaction with Africans they were the more effective civilizers; this also figured in past appeals from Asians in the territory for Tanganyika to become an Indian colony.²⁷ In doing so, the IA clearly sketched out how the logic of multiracialism as a political system was intimately intertwined with racial hierarchies embedded in supposedly outmoded imperial logics.

In the remainder of the chapter, I first examine petitions from branches of the Indian Association that critique the trusteeship government’s efforts towards development focused on land distribution and rights. Next, I explore petitions from Asian petitioners who narrow in on

²⁵ Indian Association, T/PET.2/94, p.3.

²⁶ Antoinette Burton, *Africa in the Indian Imagination: Race and the Politics of Postcolonial Citation*, (Durham: Duke University, 2016) 3-5.

²⁷ Brennan, “South Asian Nationalism,” 27.

the free movement of Asians and access to certain spaces. Lastly, the chapter closes with a look at petitions from Asian civil servants, whose appeals zeroed in on inequality in the treatment they were receiving compared with that given their European colleagues.

Logics of Land Redistribution

As the chapter on the Meru Land Case discussed, one of the main initiatives of development plans for trusteeship territories was agricultural. While land disputes marked the entire period of trusteeship, the issue of land rights was most acute in the early years of trusteeship with the disposal and redistribution of ex-enemy properties (former German-owned lands). The IA inserted its opinion on this issue and attempted to remake the image of Asians as not merely urban dwellers and emphasized government policies that exaggerated and perpetuated stereotypes about the community. The Iringa IA's petition set out the grievance that many ex-enemy farms were being sold only to Europeans, with some of the Europeans already in possession of large farms, and that they were sold with no conditions for its use in development schemes.²⁸ The Iringa IA argued that since "Asians are born farmers and they can produce better quality and more food and if they have been given chance, the territory can be self-supporting and would encourage vast grains to export."²⁹ The IA strategically positioned the community as willing cultivators who were not being given the chance to prove their abilities due to the British favouring Europeans. It was also a subtle critique of the uneven distribution of rights among non-natives, since Europeans and Asians were both technically non-natives, yet Asians were seemingly being prevented from purchasing farms while Europeans were able to expand their own.

²⁸ Brennan, *Taiifa*, 438.

²⁹ Indian Association (Iringa), "Petition from the Indian Association (Iringa) concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/116, (New York: UN, 2 Oct. 1951), p.3.

The economic position of Indians in Tanganyika was an important contributing factor that determined how the IA presented the abuses Asians felt under trusteeship status. As middle-class Asians often worked as merchants, in shops, or as creditors, Africans had frequently blamed Asians for their economic hardships, which the colonial administration was all too ready to indulge. This fit descriptions of the need for the British to maintain control over Tanganyika to protect supposedly vulnerable Africans from the exploitative immigrant population.³⁰ However, the IA attempted to reverse this narrative and positioned Europeans as exploiters in Tanganyika. Using developmental discourse that espoused the ideal of economic progress, the IA attempted to demonstrate the unfair practices of the administering authority. In particular, the IA accused the administering authority of favouring European business interests over those of Indians:

There is a policy of discrimination in business between Europeans and non-Europeans prevailing in Iringa in the last few years in the shape of monopolies to European firms in one way or another. There should be a free trade and no restrictions one way or another.³¹

By evoking categories of European and non-European, the IA revealed the racial practices of the administering authority that contradicted new international ideals against racial discrimination. Moreover, the IA's reference to free trade as the foundation of the Asian experience in Tanganyika likely was an additional allusion to unrestricted trading practices that defined the pre-European period of rule and hearkened back to a past where their agency and power was not circumscribed by territorial or national definitions of power.³² Many Asians in Tanganyika had enduring relations with the sub-continent that still defined their lives. They relied on Indian Ocean networks, as their families had once been involved in these oceanic passages; to impose limitations on these networks risked altering their livelihoods and identities.

³⁰ Brennan, *Taiifa*, 52-54.

³¹ Indian Association (Iringa), T/PET.2/116, p.1.

³² Indian Association (Iringa), T/PET.2/116, 29, August, 1951, p.2.

The IA offered an alternative view of the many roles Asians could fill in Tanganyika by emphasizing the willingness of the members of the community to be agriculturalists, thus challenging prevailing stereotypes of the exploitative Indian merchant and suggesting that it was the government's economic policies that confined Asians to a particular sub-stratum of Tanganyikan society. The IA suggested that Asians were deliberately kept out of mining industries which were unofficially being reserved for Europeans. The IA argued that this interfered with the development of the territory in the following ways:

...Asian enterprises were financed by local people and the profits and dividends accrued are ploughed back into the country for its social and economic development. The European interests on the contrary are run by companies and the profits derived are taken away as dividends by the overseas shareholders and investors.³³

This remark in their petition is illustrative of the prevailing tone of the document, which draws on the colonial language of development in order to illuminate its discriminatory underpinnings. Despite the fact that the IA was a waning conservative institution with declining membership, its leading members actively challenged harmful rumours of the Asian population as acting only as merchants and minor civil servants who had no long-standing interest in the territory, and sought to mark out a position for Asians while exposing the many ways that the colonial economy had confined them to particular positions in society and denied the supposed social economic rights of the community. The IA's expression of interest in mining and agricultural enterprises attempted to convey an enduring interest and commitment of Asians to the territory, one that Europeans did not share.

The IA was not the only source of such criticism. Individuals also petitioned against the distribution of lands in the territory that unfairly gave preference to Europeans. In 1951, B.L.

³³Indian Association, T/PET.2/94, p.3.

Vadgama³⁴ submitted a petition to the UNTC accusing the trusteeship government of exercising racial discrimination when selecting who could receive ex-enemy properties of sisal estates. He accused the selection committee, made up mainly only of Europeans, of discriminating against Asian applicants. Twenty-six sisal estates were under 99-year leases, with many of them already equipped with the necessary agricultural machinery, which made these highly desirable properties. He laid out the data and facts in a way that mirrored UNTC reports. His petition included columns of information with the names, titles, and acreage of the lands alongside who was granted the estates. Of the 26 estates available, 16 remained under their current leasers. Only four of the remaining estates had been granted to Asians. Vadgama argued that while European leasees were able to acquire the estates next to their own, Asian leasees were not afforded the same opportunity, and instead adjoining estates were granted to Europeans.³⁵ Here Vadgama explicitly highlighted how the political economy of the territory was oriented towards the preservation of special privileges for European settlers in opposition to Asian inhabitants, revealing the operation of racial categories.

Vadgama concluded his petition with verbose statements remarking on the character of the United Nations as a “noble institution” that would examine the facts and right these wrongs. Effectively, Vadgama was offering the UN an opportunity to prove itself capable of fulfilling its mission of preventing and intervening in matters of discrimination. Vadgama recognized the entanglements of identity to rights claims and the potential openings and closures if offered. As if confirming the repressive potential of rights rhetoric and the distrust that seems to reside in many of the petitions, the UNTC resolution concluded that his request for an estate was denied in

³⁴ Please note that in the UN database the name appears as Mr. B.L. Vadhama. However, the name on the petition is B.L. Vadgama. For this reason, I have chosen to use the name that appears on the petition: B.L. Vadgama.

³⁵ “Petition from Mr. B.L. Vadhama concerning Tanganyika,” T/PET.2/128, (New York: UN, 5 Oct. 1951), p.1-7. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1655071?ln=en>.

favour of more qualified applicants, perhaps confirming in the mind of Vadgama, and others like him, the uncertain and unequal position of Asians in the territory. The UNTC also stated that there was no discrimination found in the selection of applicants as decisions were based on experience and expertise.³⁶ Vadgama's petition is a rare instance in the archive of an individual Asian petitioner demanding for an inquiry into the racialization of access to land. However, as an appeal for land, and more specifically ex-enemy lands, which makes up the bulk of petitions sent to the Trusteeship Council from Tanganyikan inhabitants, the content of the petitions was less rare.³⁷

Similarly, D.M. Anjaria, a Hindu lawyer and member of the Asian Association, sent his first petition to the UNTC concerning the land rights of Asians and Arabs in the territory. He wrote on a range of issues such as: advocating against federation with surrounding East African territories, the issuing of medical appointments, private practices, as well as land titles. While he did not act on behalf of any particular person or group in doing so, Anjaria wrote a lengthy petition to build a case for the recognition of Asian and Arab land rights, which they held from before European imperial rule. His petition reveals the importance of land exchanges as a pillar for Asian and Arab inhabitants' socio-economic position and subverts common understandings of land rights as a point of tension only between settlers and Africans. Providing a detailed history of Asian and Arab settlement in the territory under the Sultan and, subsequently, German authorities, he argued that German registration of lands was left incomplete due to the interruption of the war.³⁸ He then proceeds to state that, due to the unique status of the territory

³⁶United Nations, T/Res/478(XI) "Petition from M.B. L. Vadhama (T/Pet.2/128) Concerning Tanganyika," https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/216695/files/T_RES_478%28XI%29-EN.pdf

³⁷ Lohrmann, *Voices*, p. 151.

³⁸ D.M. Anjaria, "Tanganyika: Petition from Mr. D.M. Anjaria dated 30 August 1948," T/PET.2/57, (New York: UN, 10 Sept. 1948).

as it transitioned from being under international supervisions first with the League of Nations and subsequently the trusteeship, the British have gravely mishandled land rights. He wrote that due to the transition from German to British rule 1923 Land Ordinances were passed only to be repealed once again in 1928. However, no official notice was given to residents beyond a letter from a local district officer recognizing an Asian or Arab land tenure. He explained that “The Land Registry Ordinance under which these claims have before the Registrar does not make any provision of such recognition and the position is that many-very-many-persons who have acted on faith of these letters will lose.”³⁹ By doing so, Anjaria narrated an imperial genealogy of shifting practices of inclusion and exclusion that defined racial logics of land ownership and housing in the territory.

Anjaria contested British procedures for recognizing the land rights of Asians and Arabs who were selling and buying land and homes. He wrote that British mandate laws and Ordinances had designated all land as belonging to the Crown, unless previously proven to be freehold. He argued that the procedure of having land recognized by the British government was unclear and many people did not have it properly titled to them through the German or British government before the war. He also relayed that many Asians and Arabs were selling or living on land in the belief that it was freehold.⁴⁰ According to Anjaria, many Asian and Arab land holders merely had a pledge from the past governor recognizing their claim to the land and were now being threatened with dispossession of title. Anjaria’s petition outlined the precarious position Asians and Arabs occupied due to the incomplete and unclear policies of the trusteeship government that threatened the homes and livelihoods of people. His petition also sheds light on the various sediments of intersecting legal systems. In fact, his claim suggests a clear neglect of

³⁹ Ibid, p.4.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

legal procedure from the British which threatened Arab and Asian landowners. Moreover, Anjaria's petition demonstrated the incompleteness of transitions of power and how legalisms could be neglected or transformed to preserve dominant powers. His petition also indicated how this state of affairs offered opportunities for governments and inhabitants to stake claims of authority in potential new ways that could be harmful.

The British government responded that Anjaria was misrepresenting the German procedure of recording land titles using the Flurbuch and Grundbuch systems. They explained that under the German administration, a person could submit for their lands to be reviewed for freehold through the Flurbuch. If their submission was found in that ledger, this did not necessarily mean the title was granted to the applicant. They explained a title was granted only if the claim was also found in the Grundbuch account. The administering authority wrote that it had no doubts money was continuing to be exchanged among these individuals (Asians and Arabs) concerning the disputed lands. This aside in the document contains the biting implication that Asian and Arab inhabitants were known to disregard legalities and suggests the British were upholding racial stereotypes of a greedy merchant class.

The British authority noted that such exchanges and a record in the Flurbuch did not guarantee title. The British explained that if the land was not freehold then a 99-year "right of occupancy" could be granted to a person (33 years if in a rural area) and assured the UNTC that this was granted "without racial distinction." However, it would be granted only if it was not deemed necessary for Indigenous use.⁴¹ This explanation positioned the administration as a rational authority whose only consideration of race was to protect the interest of Indigenous

⁴¹ For a detailed discussion of land laws and the administering authority's response to the UNTC regarding this petition see: United Nations Trusteeship Council (5th sess), "Trusteeship Council official records 5th session: annex," T/PET.2/57, T/5S/Annex, (Lake Success: N.Y., 1949)p.176-176.

Africans. Considering these observations and that the petition concerned appeals that were currently before the local courts, the UNTC deemed the petition to be inadmissible. The UNTC communicated to Anjaria that they were regularly reviewing land legislation and matters of land rights.⁴² This communication demonstrated that they were well aware of how land rights were a flashpoint for rights claims, and one that was often imbued with racial meanings.

Immigration and Home

While land rights were a persistent preoccupation for inhabitants, government officials, and UN authorities, other matters of racial discrimination surfaced that dealt directly with matters of the everyday and family life in terms of social rights. Although less prominent in the UN archives, issues of travel and movement emerge as an enduring attribute of contention among Asian minorities. As a trust territory freedom of movement was protected, and British authorities took advantage of this by allowing Europeans to migrate to the territory in the name of aiding the development and progress of the territory.⁴³ Many Africans met these migratory practices with hostility and viewed them as intrusions and lost opportunities. In 1951, the Tanganyika African Association (TAA) branch in Mwanza argued against increasing immigration of white settlers who had unfair advantages over Africans, since settlers were able to secure loans from the government unlike Africans.⁴⁴ That same year, the headquarters of the TAA petitioned against the free immigration of European women and Asians, who were paid more than Africans and had greater access to jobs, even though Africans were willing and able to do the work. The TAA specifically urged the government to stop hiring settlers from South

⁴² UN Trusteeship Council (5th sess), "Petition from Mr. D.M. Anjaria concerning Tanganyika," T/RES/98(V), (Lake Success: N.Y., 1949), p.7. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/215905/files/T_RES_98%28V%29-EN.pdf

⁴³ Chidzero, 181.

⁴⁴ Tanganyika African Association, Mwanza Branch, "Petition from the Tanganyika African Association, Mwanza Branch concerning Tanganyika," Pet.2/103, (New York: UN, 1 Oct. 1951), p.4-5.

Africa, complaining that immigrants had more rights than Africans and urged against the territory becoming a new South Africa.⁴⁵ African fears about immigration were intimately tied to concerns that Tanganyika would come to resemble a settler colony.

Notably, restrictions on immigration from India were enacted in all three British East African states by 1947.⁴⁶ This influenced the Asian population's own fears regarding immigration policies. The issue of Asian immigration to East Africa, and specifically Tanganyika, stemmed from a long running tension between Europeans and Asians. During the mandate period Indian nationals evoked Article 7 of the League of Nations mandate to secure their right to migrate to Tanganyika. This article guaranteed all member nationals the same rights as those of the British. This included a guarantee of entry as well as access to land and resources.⁴⁷ Notably, Asian migration significantly increased during this period, resulting in the population becoming the largest minority in the territory.⁴⁸

Recalling these past experiences under the mandate system, the IA asserted the need for Asians to have equal access to opportunities with respect to immigration and access to resources. The IA remarked that the administration unfairly viewed European migrants as agents of change and progress in the territory and accorded them a level of freedom of mobility denied to non-white migrants. The IA called upon the international sphere to interfere in the exclusionary immigration policies of the colonial government, writing:

The Immigration Ordinance is inimical to Asians. Even in respect of technicians and Artisans, European artisans and technicians permits are preferably issued to Europeans. Even [the] Visitor's Pass is not

⁴⁵Tanganyika African Association, Headquarters, "Petition from the Tanganyika African Association, Headquarters, Dar es Salaam concerning Tanganyika," Pet.2/120, (New York: UN, 3 Oct. 1951), p.8, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1655004?ln=en>.

⁴⁶ Desh Gupta, "South Asians in East Africa: Achievements and Discrimination," *South Asia*, 21 (1998): 126.

⁴⁷ Robert G. Gregory, *Quest for Equality: Asian Politics in East Africa, 1900-1967*, 378.

⁴⁸ Brennan, "South Asian Nationalism," 25. Chidzero cites that in 1948 Asians (Indians and Pakistanis) amounted to 44, 248 with Arabs and Europeans respectively having 11,074 and 10, 648.

open to all.⁴⁹

Drawing on the language of anti-discrimination, the IA contrasted unchecked European migration to the territory with the restrictions Asians faced. They underscored not only how economic arenas of opportunity were reserved for Europeans, but also the limitations imposed on potential familial or trans-oceanic connections as visitor passes, reserved for short-term stays, were denied to Asian inhabitants. For the IA, this suggested British distrust of the Asian community and a reversal of previously guaranteed rights.

Neither was the IA alone in its privileging of past conditions in its efforts to challenge the limitations of movement that Asian inhabitants and visitors faced. Anjaria, who petitioned the Trusteeship Council on several occasions, also became concerned with the restriction of movement affecting Asian inhabitants. In 1954 he wrote on behalf of Asian women who hired him to represent them. In this petition, he expressed concern with the new limitations on Asian movement throughout the territory, especially its perceived impact on Asian families, and the larger Asian community. Instead of the organizational perspective offered by the Indian Association or Asian Association, Anjaria's petitions offer insight at the family level.

His petition included a statement from the women to the governor contesting an amendment to immigration regulations that came into effect August 27, 1954, demonstrating the unwillingness of the trusteeship government to address the matter. The immigration regulations barred women from endorsing their husbands as residents, which the petition suggested was racial and gendered discrimination against Asians and women.⁵⁰ Anjaria challenged the restrictions by evoking the trusteeship authority's obligations as per Article 76 of the Charter of

⁴⁹ Indian Association (Iringa), T/PET.2/116, (New York: UN, 2 Oct. 1951), p.3.

⁵⁰D.M. Anjaria, "Petition from Mr. D.M. Anjaria concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/187, (New York: UN, 1 Oct. 1954), p. 3, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1656800?ln=en>.

the United Nations, declaring the purpose of the trusteeships system to be “[t]o encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, and to encourage recognition of the independence of the peoples of the world.” Scathingly, in this petition, he asks what fundamental freedoms mean in terms of marriage and family making, since the policies forced Asian women in the territory to marry a man who was a resident within Tanganyika. Anjaria suggested this confined women to marrying a man in Tanganyika “whether she likes him or not,” remain a spinster, or marry a man of her choice outside of Tanganyika and leave the territory.⁵¹ He urged for a statute be implemented to safeguard the rights of Asian women, “and not by concession in the nature of a regulation which can be withdrawn at a few hours notice as in the instant case.”⁵² This remark, buried at the end of one of his many letters on the issue, points to his distrust of the administering authority and the unpredictable shifting parameters of legal policy in the territory that suited the interests of the imperial government.

In a follow-up petition, Anjaria unequivocally argued the policy was discriminatory against Asian women in relation to men. He wrote that “there is a glaring example of discrimination against women in Section 8 of the Immigration (Control) Ordinance, 1947.” Accordingly, he noted that a person who received a permit to enter Tanganyika as a permanent resident or residence, “or a person who is in service of the Territorial Government or E.A. High Commission or of a recognized missionary society, can have the names of wife and children under the age of 18 years endorsed on the permit. This curiously enough applies to a person who is male.”⁵³ Meanwhile, women could not have their husband endorsed in the same fashion. With

⁵¹ Ibid, p.6.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, p.1-2.

unveiled contempt, he wrote that “A female has to enter without her husband. She can bring her children with her. This is a discrimination against the female sex and one would even say that morally and ethically otherwise undesirable.”⁵⁴ His request that the UNTC recommend an amendment to allow for husbands to also receive endorsement on women’s permits maintains a conservative and patriarchal stance around women needing male companions, but also indicates larger patterns of women seeking out men in India and returning to Tanganyika to have families.

Taking a regional approach, he argued that Uganda, Kenya, Zanzibar and Tanganyika share identical immigration laws, and urged that as a trusteeship territory beholden to the provisions of the United Nations Charter should have a distinct immigration policy that aligned with universal human rights, not colonial policies elsewhere.⁵⁵ Noting the regional framework in which Tanganyika operated and raising the specter of white minority rule in Kenya, he posed a strong critique of the forbearance of colonialism and stressed the need to distinguish the status of Tanganyika not only in policy but in action as well. He wrote, “It is the avowed policy of Kenya to encourage White Immigration. Can this policy not affect Tanganyika?”⁵⁶ Furthermore, he argued immigration controls were supposed to benefit the territory rather than be used to prohibit and exclude an entire racial group. His contestation of immigration policies is an important reminder and critique of the unique status of Tanganyika, and how this distinction was not always made clear or understood by the trusteeship government, with potentially harmful effects on the lives of inhabitants.

The UNTC responded with an expression of “hope that the Administering Authority will consider sympathetically any cases of hardship that may arise out of the provision of the existing

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.2.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.5

⁵⁶ Ibid.

law, which no longer permits the husband of a female resident automatically to enter the Territory, and requires him to apply for an entry permit like any other would-be immigrant.”⁵⁷ Anjaria’s petitions on the issue of women unable to acquire husbands in India reflected existing endogamous marriage practices for those who could travel to India or Pakistan to retrieve a husband. East African Asians were known to marry within their respective identity groups, with intermarriage with Africans or Europeans a rare occurrence.⁵⁸ This submission by Anjaria is unique in the archive, as it addresses the conditions of Asian women. As Antoinette Burton aptly states, narratives of internationalism and nationalism are often steeped in masculinities and masculine experiences.⁵⁹ She, like many other feminist scholars, have sought to uncover female experiences and voices by examining the realm of the domestic.⁶⁰ Anjaria’s petition, although it preserves a male perspective, provides some insight on the lives of Asian women during trusteeship. It also reflects the insular practices of the Hindu Asian community in Tanganyika, and the legal efforts pursued to maintain these social borders. Anjaria, like the IA, wrote with the conservatism of an insular Asian community, yet consciously and openly critiqued discriminatory policies of trusteeship authority, while recognizing how the law could be used to entrench boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

Separately, Anjaria also petitioned about issues that took seriously how Asians moved through the territory and how racial and class divisions restricted freedom of movement within the territory. Unlike in settler territories such as South Africa and Kenya, Tanganyika did not

⁵⁷ UN. Trusteeship Council (15th sess. : 1955), “Petition From D.M. Anjaria (T/Pet.2/187),” T/RES/1106(XV), 601st Meeting, 17 March, 1955, p.8 .

⁵⁸ Gregory, *Quest for Equality*, 20; Brennan, *Taiifa*, 145.

⁵⁹ Antoinette Burton, *Africa in the Indian Imagination: Race and the Politics of Postcolonial Citation*, 7.

⁶⁰ Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2003); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (New York: Routledge, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

have pass laws or official segregation.⁶¹ However, with news of land being sold for hotel developments in various cities, Anjaria took the opportunity to write to the UNTC. He remarked that “it would not be out of place if one humbly suggested that a clause should be inserted in the grant which would make it illegal for the Occupier or person deriving title from him to refuse accommodation in any of these hotels merely on the ground of caste, colour or creed.”⁶² His petition referred to the travel of Asians within the territory and the many hotel owners who would deny visitors. Interestingly, his remark revealed how caste and religion were used equally to deny access to spaces and suggests the material ways this was encountered. Officials argued that they could not enact legislation that interfered with the rights of the owners of the properties who had the prerogative to determine suitable occupants of the spaces.

Notably, Anjaria’s petition indicates that Tanganyika was increasingly becoming a hub for visitors during this period of international activism and trade. He presented himself as taking umbrage with how these visitors were treated, and how class did not alleviate racial discrimination:

I am sure you are aware of the difficulties of the Asian visitors regarding Hotel accommodation in certain parts of this Territory and of some cases where the high persons representing some governments and even in case as a local member of a government board—an Asian unofficial⁶³—were refused accommodation.⁶⁴

Although Anjaria’s petition cited the administering authority’s obligation to prevent general discriminatory practices in the territory, his focus is confined to the experiences of Asians in the territory and is representative of his positioning himself as a spokesman for the community. This

⁶¹ Brennan’s work *Taifa* explores how unofficial segregation in urban areas emerged and was transgressed in the interwar years and war years.

⁶² “Communication from Mr. D.M. Anjaria concerning Tanganyika,” T/COM.2/L.3, (New York: UN, 25 Apr. 1952), p.8.

⁶³ An unofficial Asian or European indicated someone who was not an appointed official by the British government in the Executive or Legislative Councils. In other words, an individual who was not appointed and working as a representative of the trusteeship government in an official capacity.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.8.

interest of Anjaria's was suggestive of how inhabitants perceived trusteeship principles and human rights language as pliable and attempted to use them to improve the status and honour of a racial group, such as Asians, and to advocate for their equal treatment to Europeans, who likely did not share these same experiences of discrimination.

Anjaria also attached to this petition clippings from the *Tanganyika Standard* advertising for "first-class hotels" alongside a local correspondent who described the deplorable conditions of hotels in the territory. In this article, the individual described many of the hotels in Tanganyika as "second-rate" and "run by amateurs; accommodation is antiquated, service poor, boys filthy and food execrable." Thus, Anjaria demonstrated this was not just a particular concern of his but was shared by the wider public. Moreover, he attempted to convey hotel owners were not only neglectful of their duties but also ignored the parameters that defined these spaces as free and open to all. Though this was not the primary concern of this petition, he also remarked upon the travels of UN Visiting Missions throughout the territory and the need to have access to their reports.⁶⁵ Hence, Anjaria insinuated that travel was an important locus of trusteeship for making contacts and acquiring information, and the need for access to not only increasingly elite spaces, but also knowledge.

In response, Anjaria received personal reports from Noel Vicar-Harris, Member For Lands and Mines, who responded that the conditions of sale regarding hotels already ensured all races are to be allowed to use the hotel.⁶⁶ Anjaria remarked that he was pleased to learn that government officials were attempting to fulfill the terms of trusteeship, but that he was not confident in unofficial Europeans(those outside government) would respond to non-Europeans

⁶⁵ "Communication from Mr. D.M. Anjaria concerning Tanganyika," T/COM.2/L.3, (New York: UN, 25 Apr. 1952), p.3

⁶⁶ Ibid.

using these facilities.⁶⁷ In this way, Anjaria purposefully revealed the disjuncture of racial practices enacted in the territory, which challenged prevailing views of Tanganyika as a hub of racial harmony.⁶⁸

Anjaria's discussion of hotels underscores the pervasiveness of informal racial segregation and the reach of racial consciousness among various groups. For Anjaria, a limitation on access to hotels in flourishing areas reduced the opportunities and respectability of Asian people in Tanganyika. His petitions concerning the construction of new hotels subtly critiqued the administration's grasp on news of UN Visiting Missions and reports, as well as the significant political capital unofficial⁶⁹ Europeans wielded. Anjaria likely was aware of the conditions for lease that stipulated a non-discrimination policy, yet by petitioning the UNTC, Anjaria had documentation that could be levied against any hoteliers who presumed to enact colonial systems of racial segregation. Later, a memoir by Sophia Mustafa, who was an Asian nominee for TANU in the 1957 and 1958 elections, noted that as TANU increasingly gained political momentum, Julius Nyerere's tours and her own travels as the selected Asian representative of the Northern Province involved many social gatherings away from home, with many occurring within cinemas and hotels.⁷⁰ Anjaria's petitioning for non-segregated hotels showed an awareness of the importance of these spaces and mobility throughout the territory as political, economic, and social hubs for inhabitants during this period of transformation.

Trusteeship's conclusion for Asian civil servants

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.2.

⁶⁸ Throughout the many United Nations Visiting Mission reports there is commentary on this. See for instance the publication: United Nations, *Tanganyika: Land in Transition*, (New York: United Nations Department of Publications, 1955), p. 6-8.

⁶⁹ See footnote 63.

⁷⁰ Sophia Mustafa, *The Tanganyika Way: A Personal Story of Tanganyika's Growth to Independence*, edited by Fawzia Mustafa, (Toronto: TSAR Publications, 1961), p.24, 53, 57, 78, 89, 90, and more.

As decolonization seemed increasingly imminent to all, the British government feared the Asian population was preparing to leave the territory with their capital. When the colonial government learned of rumours that many Asians were transferring their money to India due to the uncertainties of the effects of decolonization, surveillance of Asian finances began. Officials reported on the movement of capital out of Tanganyika by wealthy Asian businessmen. One official documented that Noormohamed Stachu, partner in Assar Moloo and Co. Ltds. in Iringa “makes no secret of his intention to transfer as much as possible of his capital to England in the next five years...He says ‘in England my money will be safe.’”⁷¹ There was even some concern that the Indian delegate at the UN would leverage this against British trusteeship by suggesting that they were not protecting minority rights of South Asian inhabitants.⁷²

Meanwhile, some wealthy Asians publicly supported TANU, such as D.K. Patel and other Asian Association members. Notably, TANU’s nationalist aims received support from politicians abroad such as Indian Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, who visited the territory and argued for Tanganyikan independence from British trusteeship at a public event. The Colonial Office lamented Radhakrishnan’s public speech, which they thought encouraged Africans towards nationalism, although it was noted the speech had little effect on Asians.⁷³ Officials also confirmed that the Indian Commissioner in Nairobi was lending support to TANU as well.⁷⁴ Scholars have noted the support TANU received from the Asian Association and from other anti-colonial activists was not mirrored throughout the Asian community.⁷⁵ Nevertheless,

⁷¹ To Ministerial Secretary, Dar es Salaam From Commissioner of Police, “Transfer of Sterling to India,” 19, March, 1958. *Asians*, FCO 141/17872, Kew, UK, National Archives.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ To Honourable Chief Secretary From Acting Assistant Commissioner of Police, “Main Points in the Speech Given by Dar Radhakrishnan at the Official Luncheon,” 14th, August, 1956, *Asians* FCO 141/17872, Kew, UK, National Archives.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Ronald Aminzade, “The Politics of Race and Nation Citizenship and Africanization in Tanganyika,” *Political power and Social Theory*, vol 14, (2000): 59-60. Brennan, “South Asian Nationalism,” 30-33.

colonial officials were nervous about the response of Asians in Tanganyika as decolonization neared.

With TANU's success in the multiracial elections of 1958, the existing tensions in the community heightened. TANU submitted demands to the governor for reforms that included an elected majority in the executive and legislative branches, universal adult suffrage, and elimination of the tripartite system of multiracialism. As Mustafa wrote in her memoir, immigrant communities were visibly nervous. Although the Asian Association supported TANU, she recorded fears that TANU would take "positive action" against the government, resulting in violence. She confided: "I heard a number of immigrants say that they wished there would be a little trouble, then the whole timetable of advance would be pushed back again."⁷⁶ Europeans left their farms and moved into hotels, while Asians stowed away food rations for their families and boarded up their shops.⁷⁷ In fact, Mustafa reported her surprise when a group of European ladies gathered around her asking for reassurances that TANU was not going to start positive action against the government.⁷⁸ Mustafa's memoir records these last moments of trusteeship as tense and offers a valuable perspective from a member of the Asian community on how immigrant families and individuals were reacting to the shifting politics of Tanganyika.

With the final transitions to independence, an African majority government was on the horizon. Asian and European civil servants faced joblessness as a result. Work as a civil servant was one of the most desirable positions for wage labourers in Tanganyika due to its proximity to the government and its pay. Africans had long craved the ability to secure spots in the civil service above the lowest level positions. African government servants submitted petitions to the

⁷⁶ Sophia Mustafa, *The Tanganyika Way*, 59-60.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 60.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*.

UNTC outlining their unfair treatment, wages, and poor living conditions compared to Asian and European civil servants.⁷⁹ During the trusteeship period, African civil servants could only occupy the lowest positions, while Europeans secured top level positions, with Asians often occupying the middle rung. However, as Richa Nagar writes, there were significant shifts in employment in this sector that severely impacted Asians. She writes that “Asian civil servants began to feel the impact of this policy toward the end of the colonial period. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of Asian public service employees in Tanganyika showed a minimal increase from 2449 to 2750 while the number of African public servants rose from 56,447 to 83,735.”⁸⁰ In the final years of trusteeship, there was an undeniable shift occurring in who would make up the civil service in the newly decolonized Tanganyika, and for minorities there was an outcry for government compensation and protections as their position increasingly came under the pressures of decolonization.

They argued that neither the outgoing nor incoming government would protect their interests. In a lengthy appeal to the UNTC, the Tanganyika Overseas Recruited Asian Government Servants’ Union (TORAGSU) wrote:

The Union's petition to the Trusteeship Council is the result of the Union's anxiety occasioned by the tabling of the resolution for the termination of the Trusteeship agreement for Tanganyika and as a result of and against the decision of the administering authority to exclude them from the compensation scheme purported to be and given worldwide publicity as a “Compensation Scheme for Tanganyika Civil Servants Recruited Overseas.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ Tanganyika African Govt. Servants Association, “Petition from the Tanganyika African Govt. Servants Association concerning Tanganyika,” T/Pet.2/125, (New York: UN, 3 Oct. 1951); Tanganyika African Government Servants Association, “Tanganyika African Government Servants Association, 1951,” T/Pet.2/188, (New York: UN, 29 Dec. 1954); They wrote against the hiring of European women and for increased wages. African Association, Mpwapwa Branch, “Petition from the African Association of Tanganyika (Mpwapwa Branch) concerning Tanganyika,” Pet.2/112, (New York: UN, 2 Oct. 1951).

⁸⁰ Richa Nagar, 65.

⁸¹ Tanganyika Overseas Recruited Asian Government Servants’ Union, “Two Petitions From the Tanganyika Overseas Recruited Asian Government Servants’ Union Concerning Tanganyika,” T/PET.2/249, 1 June 1961, p. 3, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1656773?ln=en>.

Much like the IA, Anjaria, and other Asian petitioners, this unique group of civil servants critiqued the trusteeship government of unequal treatment of non-natives. Fearing the loss of international oversight, they turned to the UNTC, outlining this sentiment in clear terms. They wrote, “The Union is also urged for this action by the apathy of the administering authority in resolving their anxieties and the fear that further delay in submitting a petition to the Trusteeship Council may make the petition timebarred.”⁸² For these civil servants, the trusteeship government was betraying their obligation to them, a minority, and reiterated to the UNTC that the administering authority’s protection of minority interests was inherently only European interests.

This petition also converges in distinct ways with previous petitions from segments of the Asian community. In this petition, the civil servants provided a historical genealogy of how Asians were recruited from the sub-continent and the benefits they were promised as overseas recruits. Noting that there had been distinct shifts in practices over the years, they indicated that certain government obligations such as paid leave, passage, pensions, and repatriation had been consistently extended to these Asian recruits.⁸³ Like earlier petitions from Asian inhabitants, these overseas Asians were agitating to receive equal consideration and treatment to Europeans and claimed that to do otherwise was discriminatory.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ They outline the details of the history of Asian migration to the territory. They indicate that prior to 1933, immigrants were brought to Tanganyika to fill various government positions. In particular, they emphasize that Asian inhabitants from surrounding territories were hired to perform various roles. However, from 1933 and 1948 there was a significant decline in overseas recruitment as the government hired local Asians and some Africans. However, even though these Asian residents were hired locally they were granted the benefits of overseas leave and passage and pensions. After 1948, with new trusteeship development programs required increasing the number of recruits from Asian territories, and the Tanganyika government paid the costs of their recruitment and assured them that it would also cover their repatriation along with the benefits of overseas recruitment (paid passage and leave, as well as pensionable). This was the practice until 1954 after the Lidbury Commission, however they note that there was continued recruitment of teachers and doctors from Asian countries.

However, unlike previous petitions from Asians seeking equality with Europeans, they argued they could not be equated to local Asians and therefore challenged the rubric of racial categories as a useful apparatus for determining rights during the process of decolonization. Even though legally their status was differentiated from surrounding Asians through contractual obligations, they argued, their position was made ambiguous due to their treatment as part of the larger Asian community, rather than within the broader spectrum of overseas recruits. Many of the overseas recruits came from India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Goa and surrounding islands. They wrote: “With the changing political conditions it was becoming increasingly clear to all concerned that Staff Associations functioning on a racial basis could not fulfil its obligations towards all its members with equanimity, and this difficulty was more, pronounced in the case of the Tanganyika Asian Civil Servants' Association as that body had the maximum number of divergent groups amongst its members.”⁸⁴ Arguing against this grouping of all Asian recruits together, they wrote that their union resulted from the differences between local Asian recruits and overseas Asian recruits, which defined their lived experiences as unique from others.

TORAGS questioned the Secretary of State’s public statement about his special obligation to protect European civil servants who were appointed by Crown Agents or the Colonial Office, and who deserved compensation not only for their sudden loss of employment but also because they had been subjected to the most “odious work” of administration. They countered that all overseas recruits, regardless of race, were confronted with threats of job loss due to new constitutional changes. They submitted that the Tanganyika Order in Council of 1920 had vested the Secretary of State with the responsibility of appointing and directing overseas

⁸⁴ Ibid.

recruits and therefore he was responsible to all recruits regardless of whether they fell under the criteria of having been selected through the Colonial Office or through a Crown Agent.

Moreover, the civil servants wrote that as Asian foreign recruits they were most affected by the changing status of Tanganyika. As individuals who aided with the administration of the colonial government, they had long been viewed by both African and Asian inhabitants with scorn, which suggested a consciousness regarding how Asian inhabitants were instrumentalized by the trusteeship government in harmful ways. TORAGSU unabashedly stated that the Asian recruit “is looked upon by the local population of all races as the 'stooges' of the ruling power and thus carries this ‘odium’ with a stigma.”⁸⁵ In addition to this, they highlight an internal racial tension that operated beyond existing racial categories. They stated,

The fact that there is a large resident Asian population in the Territory does not diminish this odium, on the contrary it enhances it because the resident Asian in particular and the indigenous African in general, who aspires to enter and-who are in the civil service, see in the overseas recruited Asian as a stumbling block to their advancement in service, as he generally occupies a post which they consider they could-otherwise have occupied.⁸⁶

Their petitions make explicit the complex ways that racial categories were manipulated by the government. To further illustrate this, they ascribed a certain urgency to their petition that conveyed the very real risks they faced to their livelihoods. They argued that to assume Asian overseas recruits could easily be transferred to the new local government was naïve and a misrepresentation of both Tanganyikan politics and the operationalization of racial categories in the territory. In conclusion, they remarked that to not consider the fragile position of Asian overseas civil servants and offer the same repatriation and pensions for their service as Europeans received was in direct violation of human rights principles.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 9.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

At the same time, a similar organization that included overseas recruits and permanent Asian inhabitants called the Asian Government Civil Servants Association also petitioned the UNTC regarding the transition to African majority rule under Nyerere. In these petitions, the association mentioned the diversity of its members, noting that only a small number were local Asians and arguing that some existing overseas recruits would become citizens of the new state once they were allowed. However, in these petitions, they disputed the government's definition of "Designated Officer", which effectively excluded Asian civil servants from compensation for their service, writing: "The effects of loss of career on both the European and Asian elements in the service (both are equally non-indigenous and have no place in the future service which is purely indigenous) are the same."⁸⁷ They refuted the operation of racial categories in a tripartite system. Like in past petitions from the Asian community, the association strove to initiate a re-evaluation of race categories in favour of the older system of native and non-native systems. The association reverted to older arguments that viewed past designations as non-natives as the category that could best serve their interests in terms of colonial governance. For them, it was important that they received equal recognition as civil servants who risked loss with the transition to independence. Both TORAGS and the Asian Government Civil Servants Association articulated the potential failures of the trusteeship government in its last throes of power, and its willingness to make more precarious the position of Asian civil servants who had long inspired African ire.

Conclusion

Considered together, the petitions analyzed here span the beginning of the trusteeship period to its conclusion. We see how racial categories, which colonialism had long depended

⁸⁷Asian Civil Servants' Association, "Petition from the Tanganyika Asian Civil Servants' Association concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/248, (New York : UN, 29 May 1961), p. 3.

upon as a foundation for rule, were increasingly the leading platform for making claims during the trusteeship period. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contained explicit protections against racial discrimination, among others, yet categories of race gained political prominence in the territory. With political momentum gaining behind constitutional reforms that would implement a form of multiracialism and moves towards self-determination, those Asians who wrote to the UNTC engaged with the many political possibilities that were emerging. In doing so, they appropriated the terms of trusteeship, race, and universal rights to underscore their belonging or un-belonging in the territory.

The trusteeship petitioning system was a useful platform for agitating for substantive social rights regarding home, family, and finance. In these petitions, issues of land, mobility and employment emerged as salient entry points for making their claims to the UNTC and against the government. Therefore, their concerns intersected in interesting ways with other petitioners examined in this dissertation, and yet they were also particular in the way that they took seriously the historical and present operationalization of race to gain status and rights in the territory, even though the Asian community was richly diverse with their own distinct experiences and histories. Yet these petitioners did not revert to claims of individual rights, and instead used the prevailing framework of racial categories to stake out their claims. By using this colonial apparatus in combination with agitations to be considered equal to Europeans, we can detect how these petitioners did not fully believe in the non-imperialist configurations of the UN.

Asian inhabitants of Tanganyika used the petitioning system to expose and critique the many ways that the trusteeship government operationalised their liminal position to pursue its goals or scapegoat the community. These petitions provide a snapshot of how various members of this community understood trusteeship, universalism, and human rights as a new legal system

with the potential to reorder racial categories as a means of amplifying their position or subverting colonial forms of domination. Shared among them, regardless of whether their politics were conservative or radical, is a concern for a community that, insular as it was, recognized the dynamic potentialities for action and inaction on their part and that of the government.

Although scholarship has increasingly, and importantly, been seeking out the ways that racialized communities have sought to form modes of care and solidarity in opposition to global forms of oppression, this chapter narrows in on the fine-grained experience of race within a territory in the throes of transition. This is not meant to deny the transnational solidarities and activism that animated certain spheres of political life, however neither does this chapter assume that all or many were looking beyond their material and everyday experiences or had access to networks. Therefore, they themselves had to find ways of using the tools uniquely available to them and seek a new kind of shared engagement.

Chapter Three:

A Case of Denial: An Inter-Racial Love Story or A Petition for an African Bride?

“Cruelties against an African girl with a non-African baby” was the title of Anton Weber’s 1953 petition to the United Nations Trusteeship Council (UNTC). In this first of many petitions, he accused the British government of practicing an unofficial colour bar in Tanganyika. The fate of Marita Salim, his domestic servant, and Rocky, their mixed-race child, is a curious case that demanded the attention of British authorities, the press, and the UN.

Anton Weber, a 36-year-old Swiss man, had taken Marita Salim as his domestic servant while he was living in the trusteeship territory of Tanganyika. However, upon leaving the territory, Weber discovered that he was barred from re-entry. He vigorously protested their separation, writing about his concern and preoccupation with being reunited with Salim and their infant child. His petitions tell the story of how he came to employ Salim, his relationship with her and her family, and their eventual separation, which culminated in his designation as a prohibited immigrant to Tanganyika by British authorities – which in turn prevented Weber from re-entering the territory. Anton Weber forced the case to be heard by writing to the UNTC, claiming that his rights and those of Salim were being violated. Anton Weber’s petitions provide a useful entry point for examining the intersections of the personal with territorial and international authority.

Anton Weber’s petitions constitute an unusual case that stands out in important ways from other petitions submitted by Europeans to the UNTC. European petitioners were primarily Germans who tended to write with concerns about land, their repatriation to or naturalization in

Tanganyika.¹ These petitioners were those who had once been repatriated to Germany or were interned during World War Two. In that time, the British government wrested control of German properties in Tanganyika and declared itself the Custodian of Enemy Property in their absence. Meanwhile, the British government sold off the goods and land of German settlers to settle outstanding debts that its former occupants and owners had established or were accruing while away. Following the war's conclusion, the government effectively controlled the distribution of what was termed "ex-enemy property" and transformed these freehold properties into lands with rights of occupancy. Settlers of various backgrounds were eventually allowed to purchase a lease of occupancy for 99 years.² German petitioners wrote to the UNTC to protest the depreciated conditions of their property and the sale of their movable and immovable property in their absence.³ Others attempted to have family repatriated or contested their designation as prohibited immigrants, which prevented them from re-entering the territory. These petitioners pointed to their longstanding connection with the territory, which in some cases stretched back to the German imperial occupation from the late-nineteenth century. They also often were careful to deny any familial Nazi party affiliations, which allowed the petitioners to request family reunification within Tanganyika on sympathetic grounds, often to no avail.⁴ Thus, with its focus

¹ See for instance the following remarks by the UK administering authority regarding the group of petitions submitted by Germans to the first United Nation Visiting Mission. "Trusteeship Council: 2nd session: petitions concerning the Trust Territory of Tanganyika : observations submitted by the Government of the United Kingdom," T/71, (New York: UN, 25 Nov. 1947), p. 1-11, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3847560?ln=en>.

²Ulrich Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961*, (Berlin: Lit, 2007), 295-297.

³ See for instance: "Tanganyika: Petition from Germans residing in Tanganyika," T/PET.2/1, (New York: UN, 24 Feb. 1947; "Tanganyika: Petition from Mr. Hans Schneider dated 9 February 1949," T/PET.2/66, (New York: UN, 4 Mar. 1949), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1655775?ln=en>; "Petition from Mr. Heinz Langguth concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/161, (New York: UN, 29 Oct. 1952). Also see the petition by Mrs. K. Maier who insists on the repatriation of Mr. F.S. Maier due to the exorbitant debts of their property upon return from internment, "Tanganyika: Petition from Mrs. K. Maier dated 28 September 1947," T/PET.2/37, (New York: UN, 10 Oct. 1947), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1654982?ln=en>.

⁴ Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika*, p. 296.

on family, immigration, and settlement, Anton Weber's petition to be reunited with his African wife and family aligned in some ways with these other European petitioners.

Notably, unlike under the League of Nations, when the British had first been appointed as mandate authorities and native interests (African) had ostensibly taken predominance, this was no longer the case during the trusteeship period. Instead, trusteeship was vested in maintaining positive racial relationships, although unequal, that was supposed to allow for the economic and political development of the territory.⁵ Underpinning much of this development discourse, which sought increased government interventions and an influx of European immigration to the territory, was the imperial belief in European abilities to encourage and uplift Africans.⁶ As I argue throughout this dissertation, human rights discourses and trusteeship within Tanganyika worked in complex ways that reinscribed the very racial designations that petitioners critiqued. Those who wrote to the UNTC viewed the post-World War Two system of trusteeship as an opportunity to expose forms of rule, and thus renegotiate their status and make new, or renewed, claims to modes of authority. They often used the language of trusteeship and human rights in an effort to upend existing categories of rule, yet in the case of Anton Weber this did not preclude constructing new forms of domination.

Anton Weber's petition used a language of rights to affirm his status within the territory while also critiquing British liberalism. He envisioned himself as a non-racialist settler aligned with the anti-discrimination principles of UN trusteeship. His multiple submissions to the UNTC concerning his affair with Salim included extensive commentary on the racial conditions in the territory. He attempted to position himself as a benevolent interlocutor while simultaneously

⁵ B.T.G. Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pgs. 33 and 179.

⁶ Lohrmann, 298-300.

erasing his own complicity as a white settler in the racial exploitation that permeated the state and interior lives of colonial subjects in Tanganyika.⁷

A close examination of the language and experiences described in Weber's submissions to the UNTC makes it possible to understand how someone could easily imagine and interpret this new language of rights, trusteeship, and liberalism to push forward seemingly exploitative intimate desires. Weber wrote to the UNTC in an attempt to affirm his personal sovereignty. Although seemingly seeking to liberate Salim and their child from the constraints of an oppressive racialized order, his petitions are in fact mechanisms to assert his sovereignty as a male subject in the world. His inability to gain wealth from land in Tanganyika, combined with restrictions against his movements and procurement of an African bride, severely limited Weber's sense of self-sovereignty. Hence, by leveraging Salim's vulnerability and the trusteeship principles of human rights, freedom, and anti-discrimination, he cast himself as a victim in order to regain his position as a subject with the power to exert his will.

Weber often positioned himself as a liberal figure moving against the exploitations of a racialized state order, and indeed he may have believed this to be true. As Julietta Singh notes in her work, by probing such contradictions within subjects, we are forced to confront "the split subject that is at once masterful *and* oriented towards decolonization."⁸ Yet it is his use of UNTC petition mechanisms and human rights language that allows Weber to successfully impose his sexual mastery over a subaltern woman, even though doubts about his character persisted. The language of rights that characterized trusteeship provided new openings for a man like Weber to

⁷ See Julietta Singh's discussion of humanitarianism in *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*, (Durham: Duke University, 2018), 100-103.

⁸ Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*, 158.

inscribe the image of himself as a liberator while vesting himself with control over an African woman.

Weber was not alone in this endeavour. As this case unfolded, arguments over the application of social protections and rights were disputed among various male authorities who felt themselves to be in the best position to protect and determine the best intervention on behalf of Marita Salim. Weber, the UK trusteeship government, Salim's father and the UNTC all debated her fate. Weber and the British government (Administering Authority) corresponded with the UNTC, competing to position themselves as important liberal upholders of rights and as, essentially, saviours of Salim and her child. Meanwhile, no one objected to her father setting her brideprice and choosing whom she should marry or questioned whether she may have been forced into pregnancy. Salim's fate rested within the hands of men while she roamed penniless with a newborn infant throughout Tanganyika.

In this chapter, I turn to the language of liberation and rights as it intersected with the intimate spheres of Tanganyikan lives and continued to authorize and preserve male authority and interests in harmful ways. Uniquely, Weber's case brings attention to the circumstances of a subaltern woman living in precarity, whom he desired to 'save' from the colonial state. However, the nuances of this case force us to confront how liberal principles and interventions were deeply entangled with forms of authority, coercion and oppression that could reach into the intimate and everyday lives of inhabitants. In this chapter, we see how all parties involved were concerned with matters of coercion and how its meaning varied in ways that did not take seriously the personhood of Marita Salim. We also see competing interpretations of coercion that deal with matters such as gender, racial, and financial oppression. Moreover, it brings into relief how the self is centered over the Other even amidst political alliances, as Weber's experiences, voice, and

opinions dominated Salim's story, while other male authorities attempted to interject and intervene on behalf of their own assertions of benevolence and care while maintaining their own prestige and status. It is within these dynamics of trust that we see layers of sedimentation burying Salim's voice and agency.

Throughout Weber's story we also get a picture of the personalization of power in the territory. As Weber described his many encounters and troubles with various levels of officials, we see how he is able to access and engage authorities on a personal level. He wrote to the UNTC often disparaging the failure of the trusteeship authority to uphold the principles of anti-discrimination and human rights. Even though his aims and intentions are in doubt, he contributes to paint a picture of trusteeship administration as being deliberately impenetrable in its approach to law and human rights, thus casting the administration's aim and intentions equally in doubt. In doing so, similar to other petitioners, he enacts a refusal of trusteeship rule as a liberatory force, while he simultaneously enacted his own will over the life of others.

A Story of Interracial Love?

By paying close attention to the details of this case, it becomes clear that casting this interracial relationship as a symbol of progressive love would elide the complex power dynamics that underpinned the material, social, and racial inequalities pervading everyday experiences and were equally infused in Weber's claims to rights and representation of Salim's interests.

Notably, Anton Weber's petition of interracial love became a high-profile case that demanded action during this last decade of colonial rule. Newspapers in the United States criticized the UNTC and British authorities alike for their slow deliberations over the case.⁹ In

⁹ James L. Hicks, "They Won't Let Me Marry the Mother of My Child," *Baltimore Afro-American Quarterly*, 23 October, 1953, p. 33; *The News Journal*, (Wilmington, Delaware) March 17, 1954, p.7 <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/162271797/>; *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis), 30 May, 1954; *Daily Press* (Newport News, Virginia) 17 March, 1954, p. 17; *Florence Morning News*, (Florence, South Carolina), 17 March,

1954, Henry Swanzy's review of UNTC work in trust territories in the publication *African Affairs* claimed that economic progress was far outpacing efforts at stemming racial discrimination in the territory. Despite this fact, he remarked, Anton Weber's case of interracial love and discrimination had garnered the most significant public interest of all the petitions submitted to the UNTC to that date.¹⁰

Weber's petitions and outreach reflected the salience of the contradictions of racial tensions and discriminations within a UN trust territory. Yet the casting of this case as a triumphant love endures to this day. In 2018, news of Marita Salim's death elicited a newspaper spread dedicated to describing her romance with Anton Weber. In the Swiss newspaper *Blick*, their relationship was lauded as one of the first interracial marriages to take place in Switzerland against all odds.¹¹ However, beneath the surface of such pronouncements of love prevailing against various historical restraints lies a different tale.

Situated between the pages of United Nations Trusteeship Council archives, this late colonial romance forces us to confront the potential madness and coercion that inflected Weber's claims of discrimination and injustice. The specter of coercion that haunts this case also troubled the UN and the British. It served to reflect and expose how rights were enfolded in transactions

1954, p.10, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/162271797/>. "Soviet Delegate Talks of Love," *Daily Herald*, London, England. March 10, 1954, p.5.

[https://www.newspapers.com/image/789144795/?terms=Anton%20Weber&match=1](https://www.newspapers.com/image/789144795/?terms=Anton%20Weber&match=1;); "In Support of Swiss to Wed African," *Daily Press* (Newport News, Virginia) March 17, 1954. p. 17,

[https://www.newspapers.com/image/231045852/?terms=Anton%20Weber&match=1](https://www.newspapers.com/image/231045852/?terms=Anton%20Weber&match=1;); "Swiss Seeking African Bride Get U.N. Support." *The Morning Call*, Allentown, Pennsylvania 17 March 1954. p.39. "U.N. Aids Man Get African Bride and Her Son at Bargain Price: Trusteeship Council Approves Petition of Swiss Citizen to Recover Family: Girl's Parents Slash Ante From \$420 Down to \$56," *The News Journal*, (Wilmington, Delaware) March 17, 1954, p.7 <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/162271797/>.

"Now 20 Pounds: UN Slashes Bride Price in Africa," *Vancouver Sun*, March, 17 1954, p.3.

¹⁰ Henry Swanzy, "Quarterly Notes," *African Affairs*, 53, 212 (1954): 182.

¹¹ "Marita Weber-Salim (†85) war eine der ersten schwarzen Ehefrauen in der Schweiz Pionierin der Misch-Ehe," in *Blick*, 27 October, 2018,

<https://www.blick.ch/news/schweiz/mittelland/marita-weber-salim-85-war-eine-der-ersten-schwarzen-ehefrauen-in-der-schweiz-pionierin-der-misch-ehe-id9031907.html>. (my own translation)

of racial domination. It is revealing of how human rights vocabulary was equally liable to be used as a form of domination that extended beyond the purview of the state and was shared among individuals that reached into the personal and domestic lives of inhabitants. Weber's many intimate fantasies and anxieties are revealed through his use of a vocabulary of rights and persecution, which unconsciously exposes his own racial biases. Moreover, as this case escalated within the UN, the dominance of various male perspectives and definitions of this romantic relationship is revealed. In doing so, the language of rights and racial equality is used by competing male authorities to both reassert and affirm their authority over a subaltern woman and within colonial and decolonial structural processes.

Although interracial romance and sexual encounters were not new or a special preserve of Tanganyika, this case does serve to remind scholars of how affect and the domain of the personal could become entangled in rights talk.¹² Scholars have long foregrounded the intersection of sex, gender, and race as important foundations for constructing imperial inequalities within and outside imperial contexts.¹³ However, much of the literature on interracial colonial sexual intimacies has focused on how sex has been deployed to underscore racial differences and the policing of racial boundaries. Literature on black peril scares and control of

¹² For a discussion of the need to perform a cultural examination of the intersections of politics and affect see Sara Ahmed's *Cultural Politics of Emotion* and Elizabeth Povinelli's *he Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

¹³ Examining the importance of gender, sex, and intimacy in the colonial context see: Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda eds.), *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family in French and Dutch Colonialism*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1998); Rachel Jean-Baptiste, *Conjugal Rights: Marriage Sexuality, and Urban life in Colonial Libreville, Gabon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014); Ann L. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (New York: Routledge, 1994); For an expansive review of the role of institutions in shaping and informing the practices of race and sexuality, as well as practices of transgression against social prescriptions of what is considered proper sexual and racial behavior in American history see the edited volume by Martha Hodes, ed, *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, (New York: NYU Press, 1999). Also see Jeremy Rich's study of French colonial Gabon reveals the many nuances and discontinuities in responses and interpretations of interracial intimacies and the stereotyping of Mpongwe women in his article, " "Une Babylone Noire": Interracial Unions in Colonial Libreville, c. 1860-1914," *French Colonial History*, Vol. 4 (2003), pp. 145-169.

prostitution have been useful entry points for scholars examining these phenomena in their most explicit forms, as well as showing how imperial subjects have challenged and negotiated their subjectivities within these contexts.¹⁴ Important to my own analysis is a developing literature that attends to the emotional nuances that marked these uneven yet intimate interracial relationships.¹⁵ As Carina E. Ray points out in her work *Crossing the Color Line*, the “binary opposition between consent and coercion obscures the complex, overlapping, and changing nature of the range of sexual relationships between African women and European men...”¹⁶ Thus, while Salim is often silenced in the archival record, her movements across the territory and eventually out of Tanganyika suggests that, as Anton Weber, British authorities, and her father competed for their interpretation of events to be accepted, she was engaged in negotiations of her own. According to official reports among UN and British authorities, Salim’s departure from

¹⁴ The black peril, often associated with South Africa, was a fear of African male sexuality with the presence of white settler women—often exaggerated fears that did not reflect the rate of rape of white women. For literature on this see: Timothy Keegan, “Gender, Degeneration and Sexual Danger: Imagining Race and Class in South Africa, ca.1912,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3, *Special Issue for Shula Marks* (Sep., 2001), pp. 459-477; Gareth Cornwell, “George Webb Hardy’s *The Black Peril* and the Social Meaning of ‘Black Peril’ in Early Twentieth-Century South Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22, no. 3 (1996): 441-53. For black peril scares outside of South Africa see: Dane K. Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia*; David M. Anderson, “Sexual Threat and Settler Society: Black Perils’ in Kenya, c. 1907-1930,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 38, No. 1, March 2010, pp. 47–74. For a select review of the expansive literature on prostitution in the colonial setting please refer to Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Luise White, *Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*, (Chicago: university of Chicago, 1990); Emmanuel K. Akyeampong “Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan of the Gold Coast, c.1650 to 1950”, *Past and Present* No. 156 (August, 1997): 144-173.

¹⁵ For select works that highlight entanglements that address issues of emotional and familial ties emerging from interracial sexual relationships include: Randy J. Sparks, *Where the Negroes Are Masters: An African Port in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2014) for an in depth tracing of interracial alliances and familial relations in the early colonial period see; Carina E. Ray, *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana*, 1st ed. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015); Rachel Jean-Baptiste’s work is important in many respects and for emphasizing the emotional interplays of relationships and not confining our analyses to the material, see *Conjugal Rights: Marriage, Sexuality, and Urban Life in Colonial Libreville, Gabon*. New African History Series (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014); For a review of sex and love that includes consideration of colonial and postcolonial dynamics see Jennifer Cole and Lynn M. Thomas, eds. *Love in Africa*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009); for an analysis of postcolonial romance and courtship in East Africa see George Paul Meiu (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017).

¹⁶ Carina E. Ray, *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana*, 5.

Tanganyika was voluntary, even though suspicion of Anton Weber's character and motives remained.¹⁷ One component of my analysis of this case aims to consider the interplay of coercion and consent with abstract ideals of universal rights and racial discrimination.

Liberalism and coercion

In his petitions, Anton Weber narrated his experiences within and outside the territory. Through petitioning the UNTC, he began a transactional process that aimed to work on multiple fronts. First, he communicated an explicit desire to acquire an African wife. Second, he positioned himself as a white savior of Salim and as an individual upholding universal liberal values and norms. And lastly, he situated himself as someone willing to challenge the hypocrisy of imperial liberalism. In doing so, he attempted to acquire a wife and the right to freely move within and outside the confines of empire. However, the details of the case paint a darker picture with the UNTC forced to confront the difficulty and reality of how the language of human rights and liberalism was tied in material ways to forms of sexual coercion that infiltrated the most intimate domains of people's lives. The UN's own image as a moral institution and the media traction that Weber's case threatened to increasingly garner led to a coalescing of power in the hands of this white alleged victim.¹⁸

Weber authored multiple petitions submitted to the UN Trusteeship Council concerning this case. The British were forced to acknowledge and respond to these as per trusteeship procedures. Yet Salim—often referred to in the archive as the “girl”—is at the heart of this case.

¹⁷ United Kingdom, “Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika (T/PET.2/162 and Add. 1-2) : observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority,” T/OBS.2/6, (New York: UN, 6 Jan. 1954),p.4.

¹⁸ For a discussion of how figures and groups were able to use the media to influence and turn international opinions and sway international institutions see Matthew Connelly's *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era*, (London: Oxford University, 2003). Another work that has explored the significance of media, specifically radio, as a medium for agitating and organizing for rights and liberation among various groups among colonized and settler groups see Marissa Moorman's book *Powerful Frequencies: Radio, State Power, and the Cold War in Angola, 1931-2002*, (Athens: Ohio University, 2019).

Weber, British administering authorities, and her father engaged in a long dispute over her welfare and that of her child, which quickly descended into arguments about Weber and the British government's reputations, good intentions, and the meaning of trusteeship. This became entangled in debates and competition over which of these male actors was best positioned to determine Salim and her son's fate, thus obfuscating her own will and desires.

Although much of the UNTC archive concerning this case is dominated by the male voices surrounding Salim and her status as a subject in need of paternal intervention and protection, we can glimpse the ways that she navigated her liminal position as a subject caught in the throes of international and territorial interventions. More importantly, we are confronted with a woman and child who inhabited liminal spaces within the territory and the archive itself.¹⁹ The question as to how much of her actions were her own remains unanswered to some degree. Also present here is the specter of fiction that burdens this archive and the scholar who engages with it. The many voices that demand space are contradictory and self-interested, so much so that a document written by Marita Salim herself was cast into doubt and supposedly lost its credibility among British and UNTC officials, creating contention around the identity of the author of this story and the credibility of the many actors involved. Caught in between are Salim and her son, whom she lovingly called "Rocky", as she roamed alone between Iringa and Dar es Salaam.

The Story of Marita Salim and Anton Weber: the first petition

¹⁹ For an analysis of the difficulties and potential opportunities of accessing the voices of colonized women in the archives see the seminal work by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives," *History and Theory*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Oct., 1985): 247-272; Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India*, (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); For a discussion of the use of oral history see Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Ann Laura Stoler also discusses the difficulty of accessing the intimate in colonial archives in her work *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

In his first petition, dated 24 August, 1953, Weber gave detailed accounts of the events that led to his designation as a prohibited immigrant blocked from helping Salim and their child. Weber described his first encounter with her in the following ways. She is said to have travelled twenty miles from her home in the Southern Highlands of Tanganyika to seek him out. Once there, he claimed she told him she lost her mother as a baby and needed work. She asked him if he needed help in his household and if he was interested in hiring her. Remarking how this elicited pity from him, he wrote that since it was difficult to find a white wife in the territory, he had decided to hire her. Thereafter, with no indication of the duration of time lapsed, Salim became pregnant. Weber admitted that initially he did not believe he was the father of her baby, but eventually came around. She gave birth at her father's home, where she cared for the baby.²⁰

When the baby became sick, her father went to Weber asking for help and explained the infant would not eat.²¹ This suggests her family knew of her sexual relations with Weber. He described himself as springing into action, as he quickly drove there and administered tinned milk to the baby. Soon after, or that same night, it is unclear, he learned of Salim's husband. He claimed that her husband, who is never named and is only referred to as "the cruel African", upon learning of her child with a European man, threatened to kill her, Weber, and (he assumes) the baby too. Weber described "the cruel African" as a violent man with a criminal record. He argued this man had dragged Salim from her father's house four years ago, declaring her to be his second wife. He stated that this man raped and beat her daily and treated her "as a slave."²² Weber reported she had once become pregnant by this man, but miscarried. He speculated that she likely lost the baby either because she was too young or from the daily beatings she received

²⁰ Anton Weber, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/162, (New York:UN, 31 Aug. 1953), p.3.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

from this man.²³ Weber's depiction of her husband plays into colonial tropes of African men who were perceived as having rapacious sexual appetites and as being brutal patriarchs. In this way, Weber implicitly situated himself as the foil to this characterization, and glosses over any potential troubling facts that may describe the nature of his relationship with Salim before she became pregnant.

The husband claimed Salim was his second wife because he had paid her father 19 shillings out of a 300-shilling brideprice. Weber argued that her father had been threatened by this man and forced to accept the price of 19 shillings, even though the African man had not paid in full and had abandoned Salim shortly afterwards.²⁴ Homeless and with no money, she sought out employment with Weber. It can be surmised that Salim may have told Weber these stories of her experiences with this unnamed African man to secure his support or to escape this husband. Throughout his petitioning, Weber consistently cast her as a victim in need of his intervention and as someone acting on terms of human dignity.

Furthermore, Weber recounted a physical altercation between him and Salim's husband, which required police intervention. Salim and her father were arrested, and the customary court forced her to pay an unspecified fine for adultery and ordered her return to the African man's home. Salim's father was able to delay her return to this man's home for a short period,²⁵ Weber wrote, implying her father supposedly believed Weber to be a more virtuous man. However, her father's choice could have been equally predicated on securing another, much higher brideprice, if indeed her father preferred Weber as a husband for his daughter.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

In the interim, he explained, Salim's husband awaited her return with the baby she conceived with Weber to allegedly kill them. Weber described his efforts to inform the authorities of the dangers she and the child faced at the hands of this man. Weber reported that he went to the Superintendent of Police, Mr. Mitchell, whom he informed of the situation. Mr. Mitchell's alleged response was that the situation had "nothing to do with us until the child is killed, and besides the mother is only a bitch and the baby a bastard."²⁶ Including this alleged statement in his petition, he attempted to depict how authorities showed no concern for Salim or human rights, in contrast to his many efforts of caring for her.

Weber became increasingly preoccupied with describing his experiences in the territory and the range of discrimination he faced. In particular, he alerted his readers to his mistreatment by various authorities and neighbours. His account becomes paranoid and disturbed by conditions in the territory. He declared that the territory was not much different from South Africa, where there was a blatant practice of a colour bar at the time.²⁷ Accusing British authorities of racial discrimination and indirect slavery, Weber attempted to situate himself as a benevolent upholder of rights and aligned himself with the United Nations. However, as the story unfolded and more details were revealed, it increasingly seemed that his self-styling interracial progressiveness hid more insidious motives.

Weber also insinuated that some local Africans were familiar with the supposedly traditional punishment for such adulterous acts and reported that they warned him of the imminent fate of the baby. Feeling pressured and anxious, he wrote of going to the district commissioner (DC), who also ignored him. He then went to the Governor with his case, who ordered Salim to seek a divorce from the African man immediately. Weber wrote that the

²⁶ Ibid, p.4.

²⁷ Ibid, p, 3.

African magistrate who had overseen his case was upset as the Governor contradicted his ruling. He stated that in retaliation the African magistrate ordered Salim, her father, and the baby to be released in the middle of the night, in the rain, and forced to walk 45 miles home, even though Weber was willing to pick them up and drive them home the next morning.²⁸ Weber painted a picture of the errant methods of these authorities who asserted themselves in harmful ways as they disputed the interracial relationship. Increasingly, as the story progresses, we see how Salim was at once subjected to the caprices of these men, including those of Weber.

As a result of this midnight release, Weber stated, the baby became sick. He decided to take the baby to a British doctor in the village for treatment. However, the doctor refused treatment for the baby, at which point Weber was allegedly insulted, spat at, and forcibly removed from the office. He contended that he faced such abuses for having offended the doctor's racial sensibilities by bringing a mixed-race child into the clinic. Weber and Salim then left town to bring the child to an Asian doctor, who began treating him. Yet when these excursions were discovered, according to Weber, the DC issued an order forbidding Salim from traveling with Weber in his car. The baby's treatment was therefore discontinued.²⁹ In an addendum to this petition he implored the UN to act on his petition, "For the sake of two innocent creatures softening their fate, I would be very grateful to the United Nations, if something could be done to give them back their father, as they need."³⁰ In his rendering of these events, Weber attempted to portray the lack of safety and discrimination Salim and the child faced in the territory due to her interracial relationship with Weber. Weber also made visible the many interferences that interracial couples faced in living and moving through the territory. This

²⁸ Ibid, p.3-4.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 4.

³⁰ Anton Weber, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/162, (New York: UN, 31 Aug. 1953), p. 2.

is only a brief glimpse into the many personal conflicts and tensions that marred Weber's experiences in Tanganyika.

Weber wrote that he also faced criminal charges for "having struggled for the baby" during the previous incident with Salim's husband.³¹ He asserted that she and her father stood by his side during this, even though her father was allegedly threatened with violence by authorities and forced to testify against him. Weber also stated that natives in the village informed him the DC planned to try him and confiscate all his property and wealth. Therefore, he "decided not to attend such a dirty and disgraceful theatre." Instead, he took Salim to an Asian lawyer where she expressed her will to settle out of court and admitted that she was forced to open the criminal lawsuit against him.³² It is not clear whether Weber, who was so quick to point out how easily and openly Africans were forced to testify in certain ways, in turn pressured Salim to say and do this on his behalf. This also seems to be another attempt to make it appear as though her father was an ally to Weber and in favour of this interracial romance and insinuated Salim's desire to be his wife.

Without attending the trial, Weber wrote that he decided to take himself, Salim, and the baby off to Dar es Salaam to seek passage to Switzerland. Once again, there is no account as to whether she willingly departed with him or not. He set her and the baby up at a mission in Dar es Salaam, while he attempted to acquire the proper documentation for their exit. However, the Immigration Officer claimed she was too young to exit the territory without her father's permission, and was perhaps suspicious of Weber's motives. Weber claimed that she was at least 18 years old, and therefore fit to have a passport issued to her, and suggested this was another moment of capricious authority being enacted by officials. Nevertheless, he wrote: "But as she

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

was an African, I found no understanding and had to leave alone.”³³ He insinuated in this statement that colonial paternalism was merely a translation of a colour bar that did not want to see Europeans and Africans together. Stating he had to return to Switzerland to finish scientific work on a new type of airplane propeller, he left her at a Christian mission house. He claimed he set her up with 300 shillings and three years’ worth of clothing,³⁴ which implied a longer absence than initially indicated. He attested that he was told he could leave for a few months and could easily just write a letter to the Immigration Office to receive readmittance. According to Weber, this suggested his return would be easy and unproblematic with no indication that he had become a prohibited immigrant.

Weber’s inability to return to Tanganyika and marry Salim inspired him to write to the UNTC, with his successive petitions adding additional context and detail of his life and experiences in Tanganyika. However, there was a curious addition to his first petition: a letter written by Salim asking for his help. He included this as evidence of her genuine desire to be reunited with him and proof of her precarious and unsafe condition in the territory. In this letter she addressed Weber as “My dearest love.”³⁵ She wrote of how two women of Mzimba Mission in Dar es Salaam where she was living, the place Weber had established her before his departure, came on behalf of the District Commissioner to ask if she wanted to go to Europe and be with him. In the letter, Salim attested to having acquiesced to this inquiry, yet the Sister Superior disagreed and would not allow it. She wrote that she wanted to go to Europe but did not know how, adding her father had also agreed that she could go.³⁶ This letter indicated her desire

³³ Ibid, p. 5.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵Marita Salim, “Copy of Letter from Marita Salim”, 25 July, 1953, submitted by Anton Weber, “Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika,” T/PET.2/162 (New York: UN, 31 Aug. 1953), p.12.

³⁶ Ibid.

to be with Weber rather than returning to Iringa, and potentially upholds his earlier claims against her husband. The letter also suggests how other women viewed this relationship as either inappropriate or exploitative, and that it was not just male figures who were intervening on her behalf.³⁷

Notably, her letter indicated her father agreed to their marriage on the condition that Weber pay a brideprice higher than what Africans normally paid. This mention of her father's consent on certain terms aligns with other scholarly literature on interracial relationships in Africa, whereby interracial marriages were often conducted on terms of customary marriage.³⁸ It shows that customary marriage could be enacted and approved if proper social and cultural protocols were fulfilled and demonstrates there existed precedents for how these interracial unions were conducted in the territory.³⁹ It also implies that Salim was navigating between these two spheres as a sort of intermediary in these discussions and reflects her agency in the matter.

Salim then explained how she was forced to return to Iringa against her will, as she had neither money nor a home there.⁴⁰ This implies that she was in a situation that made her reliant on Weber to provide for her material circumstances. She wrote that she was taking the child with

³⁷ For a discussion of how women in the colonies took on the supposed protection and upliftment of colonized women and girls see: Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture, and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria*. Jean and John Comaroff's *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol.1, engages with how missionaries and the domestic sphere were important loci of imperial interaction and subject formation. For a discussion of how other African women took on issues of girlhood see George Abosedo's *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development*. For a consideration of Third World Feminism that stood in contrast to Western international feminism that saw women in the Global South as objects of emancipation, yet were still shot through with divisions see Laura Bier's chapter "Feminism, Solidarity, and Identity in the Age of Bandung: Third World Women in the Egyptian Women's Press." In *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlife*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010): 143-172.

³⁸ See Carina Ray, *Crossing the Color Line*, 49-54; Rachel Jean-Baptiste, *Conjugal Rights*, 199-202.

³⁹ "Copy of Letter from Marita Salim", in "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/162/, (New York: UN, 31 Aug. 1953), p.12.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

her, and that Weber should arrange for her to get accommodations at a Christian mission near Iringa. Her letter begs him for help, and she asks, rhetorically, if he wants to leave her in such a poor state.⁴¹ This statement speaks to Salim's will and perception of Weber's duties to her and her economic situation. She repeated her desire to go with him to Europe but reminded him that she could not, and that people would not let her go.⁴² Salim added that she was going mad from overthinking and felt sorrow for their son who calls for his baba (father). She concluded by asking him to try his best to have them reunited and promised, "We will enjoy and be happy together more than the first."⁴³ In this way, Salim herself was engaging in a transactional procedure that invited Weber to intervene and ensure her and their child's well-being on parameters she set out.

If we accept that Salim wrote this letter, it seems she was attempting to negotiate and mediate between the competing choices she faced: poverty in Iringa or relocation to Switzerland. This letter outlined both Salim's and her father's expectations of Weber. It also hinted at her anxieties of abandonment and the need of having him return to her. As scholars have noted elsewhere, this was not uncommon in colonial Africa, where women were left to care for interracial children left behind by European men.⁴⁴ Thus, she indicates an awareness of how these relationships often transpired to the detriment of the women involved.

This letter, the only moment her voice is ostensibly made clear, was attached to Weber's first lengthy petition. However, the British authority's written observations on the petition question the validity of the letter. They argued that Salim could not have possibly written the

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Carina Ray, *Crossing the Color Line*, 30-38 and 148-155; Christopher J. Lee, *Unreasonable Histories: Nativism, Multiracial Lives, and the Genealogical Imagination in British Africa*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) work takes an in-depth examination of interracial offspring and their status in the Central Africa Federation. For a brief discussion of interracial offspring in Tanganyika and their status see James Brennan, *Taiifa*, 134-136.

document, as she was barely literate and only in the local language. This negates the fact that she could have hired someone to write it for her, which was not an uncommon practice.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, her voice was denied by UK authorities, which was accepted by the UNTC. If, indeed, the colonial authority is correct in its assumption that Weber was the true author of her letter, this would indicate Weber's awareness of the expectations and anxieties that local people had concerning interracial relationships, which speaks to how common these affairs were in the territory. Yet if Salim did indeed write the letter, she appeared to do so in an effort to insert into the narrative her own ambitions and stipulations regarding her life and the relationship.

Responses and Contradictions

Weber described his vulnerability as a white European subject in colonial Africa, thus donning his own victimhood and neatly demarcating himself as distinct from other white imperialists who thrived in conditions of racial inequality. However, Weber does not acknowledge how his own tale negates the kinds of potential violence contained in a sexual relationship with a young servant girl. Weber disclosed in his petition that he spent three years in southern Africa, which provided him with the background experience to identify racial discrimination. He wrote that he could not withstand bearing witness to the system of segregation and European rule there and was himself victimized by discrimination due to his friendly relations with Africans. Weber therefore decided to migrate to Uganda, another British-ruled territory, where he spent six months, before moving to Tanganyika where he had spent almost two years.⁴⁶ He equated the Tanganyikan government's treatment of his relationship with

⁴⁵ Chima J. Korieh, "May It Please Your Honor": Letters of Petition As Historical Evidence in an African Colonial Contest," *History in Africa*, Vol. 37 (2010):p. 101.

⁴⁶ Anton Weber, T/PET.2/162, p.3

Salim as akin to the racial policies in South Africa under Prime Minister Daniël François Malan, from 1948 to 1954.

The British administering authority confirmed aspects of Weber's account. They stated he went to Uganda on a permit as a farmer, yet noted he was forced out of the territory once his permit was cancelled, since he was unable to show any evidence of having established the farm for which he was permitted entry. He was admitted to Tanganyika in 1951.⁴⁷ However, the administering authority denied that he was a pilot, instead claiming he was a house painter.⁴⁸ They also reported to the UNTC that before gaining entry to the territory, he made frequent enquiries about a colour bar and if he would be able to hire African women or have an African wife. Confirming that the state did not interfere in the private affairs of inhabitants, it asserted, "In reply he was informed that his personal relations with his employees would be no concern of the Immigration Department. There is of course no restriction in the territory of marriage between Europeans and Africans."⁴⁹ This statement alludes to his sexual deviance and suspicions of his relationship with Salim. Nevertheless, he was permitted entry to manufacture leather goods from crocodile and snake skins.⁵⁰

Instead of fulfilling this project, he purchased 60 acres of freehold land and began practicing some mixed farming. The British authority wrote that he made little effort to improve the territory through business or farming pursuits. They described his house as having been shabbily built and noted he had rented out almost all his land to Asian merchants.⁵¹ The implication that he was selling land to Asian merchants is a subtle suggestion that he was

⁴⁷ United Kingdom, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika (T/PET.2/162 and Adds. 1-2) : observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority," T/OBS.2/6, (New York:UN, 6 Jan. 1954), p.1.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

interfering with native interests by exacerbating racial tensions over land. Asian merchants and land tenancy were hotly contested subjects within the territory that the UNTC would have been familiar with at the time.⁵²

Furthermore, while in Iringa, he acquired a Right of Occupancy for an additional 300 acres to cultivate sisal. However, Weber had not even demarcated the boundaries of the land as per the covenant of his occupancy.⁵³ On August 14, 1953, the Land Utilisation Committee for the Southern Highlands Province recommended that Weber's Right of Occupancy be cancelled "in view of the total lack of development."⁵⁴ They argued that his presence in Tanganyika did not lead to any benefits for the territory, as he often failed in his many pursuits and obligations. As European immigrants were permitted entry depending upon their ability to contribute to the development of the territory,⁵⁵ Weber's inability to develop land properly cast his status in doubt. This was one of the justifications British authorities used for marking him as a prohibited immigrant. This conduct, the state suggested, impeded British administration of trusteeship principles of protecting and aiding the native inhabitants of the territory while promoting economic and political development.

The Administering Authority's observations concerning Weber's refusal of re-entry and status as a prohibited immigrant rested on statements that upheld the British as the supposed protectors of native interests, including against exploitative and potentially racially disruptive immigrants. This positioned the administering authority as neutral benefactors. The British acknowledged Weber's new application for re-entry with the supposed aim of establishing a

⁵² James R. Brennan, "South Asian Nationalism in an East African Context: The Case of Tanganyika Comparative Studies of South Asia, 1914-1956," *Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1999): 28-29.

⁵³ United Kingdom, "Observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority," T/OBS.2/6, p.1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.1-2.

⁵⁵ B.T.G. Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 178-179.

chocolate factory but expressed doubts as to whether Weber was serious about the undertaking. They added that his history in the territory of failing to fulfill projects influenced their decision to not permit his re-entry.⁵⁶ This attested to their disbelief in his ability to commit to the many ventures he claimed to be willing and able to implement and suggested the trusteeship government carefully considered white settlement in the territory. The Administering Authority also implied it viewed Weber as a chancer figure who roamed the imperial sphere looking for advantages.

In addition to this, the Administering Authority depicted Weber as a detriment to harmonious racial relations in the territory in other ways too. They stated that while he was living in Iringa District, he was known to frequent African bars “where he consumed beer and fondled African women, sometimes to the annoyance of African men. The undesirable effect on African opinion of such conduct is obvious and Mr. Weber acquired in the District a reputation of being a person with abnormal mentality.”⁵⁷ The depiction of Weber as a person of immoral and possibly deranged character was an attempt to delegitimize his many claims of discrimination and corruption against the government. Later in the same document, they wrote:

It is also clear that he suffers from a long-standing obsession regarding sexual relations between the white and black races, while at the same time his attitude and conduct towards African women have been such as to cause resentment to African men. His return to Iringa District in particular might well be dangerous to himself and would be prejudicial to good order and to the maintenance of amiable inter-racial relations.⁵⁸

Therefore, the administering authorities boldly suggested that his perspective could not be trusted and doubted his devotion to Salim. The Administering Authority supported the Governor’s decision to designate Weber as a prohibited immigrant.

⁵⁶ United Kingdom, “Observations,” T/OBS.2/6, p. 4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.3.

As many scholars of interracial relations have noted, it was not uncommon for colonial authorities to cast men who engaged in such racially subversive sexual activities as deranged.⁵⁹ If this characterization is taken seriously, these statements could be indicative of the many tensions between Weber and his neighbours, Africans and Europeans alike, though for differing reasons. This would also confirm Weber's accusation that the colonial authorities were opposed to formalized interracial unions. However, traditionally colonial fervor to stem these relations seems to have often been directed most at colonial officials and African women.⁶⁰

British authorities described his relations with Salim in terms that compelled them to actively protect her from an exploitative immigrant figure. They confirmed Salim's young age, her employment as Weber's servant, and that she had become pregnant by him. The British authorities also noted Weber's initial refusal of the paternity of the child by mentioning the case Weber had brought before the court under the Affiliation Ordinance. However, they noted Weber convinced Salim to drop the case and proceeded to take her to Dar es Salaam. Interestingly, in Weber's petition, he implied the case she dropped against him was one of criminal violence while he was protecting his child, yet the British here suggest that it was a case to force his acknowledgement of the paternity of the child.⁶¹ Meanwhile, the administering authority, under UN scrutiny, carefully tread the line between colonial authority and trusteeship. It was important for them to position themselves as protectors of those Africans who were most vulnerable to exploitation—African women and girls, even if their actions and statements reflected a primary concern for protecting the authority of male elites, European and Africans alike. Any indication

⁵⁹ Ray, *Crossing the Color Line*, 137.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p, 13 and 54.

⁶¹ Anton Weber, Pet.2/162, p.5. and see for comparison, United Kingdom, "Observations," T/OBS.2/6, p.2.

that Weber was an odious character therefore needed to be brought to light in order to defend their position as trusted authorities.

At the same time, Weber's reputation was perhaps what appealed to a young woman such as Salim, who could have been seeking to escape the social and economic bonds she found herself in. If she did indeed pursue Weber, as he implied, perhaps it was because she knew he would be willing to take her on, which would allow for her potential departure or escape. This latter supposition is conjectural and leans on Weber's almost pathological concern about how she may have viewed his absence and his incessant writing to authorities. His effusive writing eventually earned him a mark on his UNTC file advising the committee to no longer respond to his requests, as it would only encourage further correspondence from the petitioner.⁶² This notation on his file signaled their view of his persistence as a mental compulsion and aligns with the pervasive anxiousness that marked his many submissions to the UNTC.

To further their case for concern and refusal against Weber's re-entry, the administering authority described his purported disregard for European and traditional authorities of various levels and reported he wrote "an insulting letter to the [native]magistrate concerned with the case." In their report to UN authorities, they indicated that Weber did not respect native authorities and aggravated racial tensions. They confirmed Salim was betrothed to an African man who had started paying her brideprice, and whom they described as "naturally" becoming upset at the news of her relationship to Weber, further aligning themselves with Salim's African husband. They also reported that this qualified as a case of adultery in accordance with native law. Salim was forced to pay a fine, which Weber reportedly paid on her behalf. Following this, the African man refused to continue paying the brideprice to her father. The authorities added

⁶² United Kingdom, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika (T/PET.2/168) : observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority," T/OBS.2/12, (New York: UN, 3 Nov. 1954), p.1.

that there was no evidence proving that this man was violent or that Salim and her baby were at risk of danger.⁶³ These remarks concerning the Customary Court's decision for her to stay with her family served to demonstrate their respect for native authority and legal procedures in these cases, while also suggesting support for the patriarch of her family, who expected brideprice payments and control over their daughter. In this way, the British authority attempted to undermine Weber's claims by insinuating that, unlike them, Weber unsettled local rules and authority while also being a person of ill repute.

Weber refuted such characterizations of his actions, of course, as further proof of a colour bar. He accused British authorities of attempting to publicly denigrate those who did not ascribe to policies of racial discrimination. In response, Weber proceeded to portray his early years in the territory as one of victimization from the authorities and neighbours. He proclaimed that even South Africa was more favourable a place to live than Tanganyika, and he attempted to feebly muster evidence to prove this assertion. He argued authorities in Tanganyika favoured British inhabitants over other Europeans, and that the territory was administered as a British settler colony, not a trust territory intended to protect human rights.⁶⁴

He explained his house was robbed by a British neighbour and servant who were never pursued by the authorities, even though, according to him, it was publicly known they had robbed his house.⁶⁵ Weber described how he was forced to purchase land in an area riddled with steep hills and rocks that was not useful for economic endeavours.⁶⁶ His African neighbour allegedly promised him access to a local water source. However, after building a home, his

⁶³ United Kingdom, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika (T/PET.2/162 and Adds. 1-2) : observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority," T/OBS.2/6, (New York: UN, 6 Jan. 1954) p.2-3.

⁶⁴ Anton Weber, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/162/Add.2, (New York: UN, 29 Sept. 1953),p.2.

⁶⁵ Weber, T/PET.2/162, p.9.

⁶⁶ Weber, T/PET.2/162/Add.2, p.3.

African neighbour refused him access to the water. Weber stated that because his neighbour was African and native interests were privileged, he was cut off from a valuable water source. With this statement, he inadvertently confirmed British descriptions of him as someone who was consistently in conflict with Africans and who did not respect African interests or authorities. He went on to write that, according to villagers, had he been Greek, the authorities would not have allowed him to access any land. He writes that, “So there are not only colours and races, but also Nations to be treated differently.”⁶⁷ These anecdotes contained in Weber’s letters are the fodder he used to demonstrate the unfair distribution of justice and discriminations he faced, all of which, he claimed, culminated in the government’s refusal to allow him to re-enter Tanganyika to marry Salim.

His interracial relationship with Salim, resulting in a mixed-race child, was disruptive to social order in the territory. His sexual deviancies, social conflicts, and inability to fulfill economic projects cast a shadow on British trusteeship and their protection of European inhabitants. Moreover, in his account of his experiences, he loses sight of who was supposed to be the vulnerable subject in this story. Weber’s preoccupations with his own struggles are revealing of how European immigrants, like himself, who had significant economic and social capital, were able to instrumentalize the language of injustice and human rights to acquire various benefits. The substantial emphasis he placed on his emotional turmoil and experiences in the territory is revealing of whose rights and interests he was really petitioning for. For Weber, while Salim and the child were subjects of his petitions, they were subjects that were owed to him for the injustices he suffered in the territory. Meanwhile, British authorities clung to an image of themselves as respecting African notions of justice and authority over women. The

⁶⁷ Ibid.

overall effect is to obscure Salim's story in favour of a dispute over who held power over subaltern women.

Resolutions and delays

After these initial remarks and responses, in three additional addendums Weber continued to describe events that he argued demonstrated the interference and abuse levied at him and Salim as a result of their relationship. Weber reported that Salim was ordered by the DC to leave the mission in Dar es Salaam and return to Iringa. He accused the Mission of stealing the clothing and money he had left for her care. Weber stated that Salim and the child had effectively become homeless, even as the child was ill. He also accused the postmaster and other authorities of interfering with the letters he sent to Salim, as he had become aware she had not received them. He expressed substantial fear that she would think he had abandoned her, like so many other European men were wont to do to African women, and that she and her father would testify against him in retribution.⁶⁸ In these letters, he lambasted the authorities for not protecting and caring for the vulnerable, and who instead received mistreatment and neglect.

In response, the administering authorities confirmed that when Salim arrived in Dar es Salaam in August, 1953, she was in the care of Mzimbazi Roman Catholic Mission. They reported she later went to the DC and requested to be repatriated to Iringa. The authorities stated that this information, including the well-being and health of the child, was communicated to Weber by the Colonial Office on August 17, 1953.⁶⁹ In contrast, Weber outright accused the DC of wanting the baby to be murdered by "the cruel African", who apparently waited at her father's house in anticipation.⁷⁰ The authorities' response reflected how they viewed him as a paranoid,

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.2.

⁶⁹ United Kingdom, T/OBS.2/6, p.3.

⁷⁰ Anton Weber, T/Pet.2, p.8.

unstable, and indolent man. They reported that once Salim and her child were in Iringa she was well cared for by the Roman Catholic Mission there and assured that there is no justification for Weber's fears about their safety and well-being. They also contested the validity of Weber's claims that colonial officials were attempting to prevent him from communicating with her and were interfering with her health and care of that of the child.

Although British authorities had expressed substantial doubt with regards to Weber's character and stability, they further situated themselves as deferential to native authorities and her father. The British disclosed that although the local chief agreed with them that Salim should not travel to Switzerland, the chief deferred to her father to make the final decision. Her father reported that he also did not believe it was in her best interest to migrate out of Tanganyika with Weber, but he granted her permission as she professed to love him.⁷¹ This implies, to some degree, that she was able to negotiate with her father and local authorities her position to achieve her desires. Accordingly, her father, the chief, and British authorities were uncomfortable with her supposed choice. Nevertheless, Salim and her child departed for Switzerland. For those dealing with the case, this was likely a relieving conclusion to a difficult case.

After this resolution, Weber was still required to fulfill certain economic obligations before being permitted to re-enter the territory and retrieve his bride. In the interim, Weber continued to write petitions and the case persisted to be before the UNTC. Meanwhile, as this file grew, it gained international attention, becoming less and less about Salim and increasingly about the injustices Weber faced. At this point, the archive turns and becomes a battle of reputations between the British and Weber, with Salim and her child receding into the

⁷¹ United Kingdom, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika (T/PET.2/162 and Add. 1-2) : observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority," T/OBS.2/6, (New York: UN, 6 Jan. 1954), p.4.

background. It was at this juncture that Weber's case gained public attention and was published in newspapers. Weber emphasized in these news reports how Tanganyika, a trusteeship territory, was practicing a colour bar wherein he was kept away from the African woman and baby he loved, who lived in constant jeopardy.⁷² In doing so, he accused the British of acting as oppressors rather than uplifting Africans and of ignoring the principles of trusteeship and universal human rights.

The Question of Bride Price

In 1953, Weber's latest concern was focused on how the British trusteeship government was financially exploiting him, and effectively punishing him for wanting to marry Salim by asking a high bride price.⁷³ Newspapers picked up this thread of the storyline with headlines like the one found in Wilmington, Delaware declaring: "U.N. Aids Man Get African Bride and Her Son at Bargain Price: Trusteeship Council Approves Petitions of Swiss Citizen to Recover Family; Parents Slash Ante from \$420 to \$56."⁷⁴ This headline unequivocally expressed an understanding of the transactional aspects of the case. Weber received notice from the British Consulate in Switzerland that Salim would be issued a passport on the condition that he marry her with £150 paid as bride price, and a separate £150 deposited into a bank in case Salim and the child required repatriation due to abandonment. These stipulations reflected concerns that he

⁷² James L. Hicks, "They Won't Let Me Marry," p.7, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/162271797/>; *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis), 30 May, 1954; *Daily Press* (Newport News, Virginia) 17 March, 1954, p. 17; *Florence Morning News*, (Florence, South Carolina), 17 March, 1954, p.10, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/162271797/>;

⁷³ James L. Hicks, "They Won't Let Me Marry," p.7, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/162271797/>; *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis), 30 May, 1954; *Daily Press* (Newport News, Virginia) 17 March, 1954, p. 17; *Florence Morning News*, (Florence, South Carolina), 17 March, 1954, p.10, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/162271797/>.

⁷⁴ "U.N. Aids Man Get African Bride and Her Son at Bargain Price: Trusteeship Council Approves Petitions of Swiss Citizen to Recover Family; Parents Slash Ante from \$420 to \$56," *The News Journal*, Wilmington, Delaware: March 17, 1954, p. 7, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/19422198/wilmington-delaware-wednes-march-17/>.

would abandon her and were designed to satisfy her father's demands. While Weber did not debate the issue of having to pay a brideprice, he argued against the high cost. He stated her parents only asked him for a £20 bride price and offered written proof (not found in the file nor provided, although this eventually became the agreed brideprice). Regarding the deposit of a further £150 in case of repatriation, he said he was willing to open a savings account for her and give the account passbook to the British consulate, if necessary.⁷⁵ His contestation of the price revealed the transactional process required to acquire a wife, which positioned the UNTC as an intermediary in this transaction for an African bride and reveals the potential insidious use of the institution for this purpose.

Having still not married Salim and relocated her and the child to Switzerland, Weber submitted another petition to the UNTC. Writing from Ibadan, Nigeria in July 1954, Weber reported the difficulties he faced in fulfilling his obligation to have Salim and the child brought to Switzerland.⁷⁶ He complained that the Immigration Office refused to grant him a visa to enter the territory to arrange passage for them. Instead, Weber described a story of being told to use two separate ship companies, both of which responded vaguely to his inquiries, while air passage was impossible since it could not be arranged without a proper visa. Weber accused the Immigration Office of conspiracy and undermining the decision of the UNTC. He expressed frustration at having to be away from work to make these arrangements while Salim and her family waited in frustration and likely in disappointment.⁷⁷ Weber concluded this letter implicating the reputation of the UN by drawing attention to what he believed to be the

⁷⁵ Anton Weber, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/162/Add.3, (New York: UN, 2 Mar. 1954).

⁷⁶ Anton Weber, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika," T/Pet.2/168, (New York: UN, 26 July 1954).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

trusteeship authorities' disregard for the UN and its principles in the following words, "I trust that the United Nations will not tolerate their decision to be disrespected like that..."⁷⁸ His rendering of these events is revealing of the many obstacles that could be placed before individuals who challenged colonial authority in ways that did not overtly challenge the rights of an individual. Meanwhile, Salim was left anticipating his arrival and her subsequent departure.

Shortly after his July petition, Weber submitted a follow-up petition to the UNTC, dated September 27, 1954.⁷⁹ He disclosed that Salim and the child had successfully been reunited with him in Switzerland. However, at this juncture, he wrote with fury over the fact that the child was still sick and was never properly treated with medical attention. He described how Salim disclosed that she had taken the child to several doctors and was turned away. He attached a photo of the child whose backside was riddled with sores and spots. He stated that the only reason they were apart for two years was due to racial discrimination against their union, which resulted in their unnecessary suffering. In this missive, he demanded reparation for the damages and hospital costs involved in treating the child and the mother. He also demanded payment for the insulting lies the government told about him and the damage done to his reputation. Once again, Weber enlisted the aid of the UNTC to participate in transactions with the trusteeship authority. He also repeated previous claims against the DC and reiterated his difficulties in acquiring passage to Tanganyika in 1954; upon his arrival, the entry price was crossed out with an overwritten price of 40 shillings.⁸⁰ Whether this is a sign of Weber's paranoia or an accurate account, it seems that Weber continued to challenge trusteeship authorities and their territorial

⁷⁸ Ibid, p.2.

⁷⁹ Anton Weber, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika," (New York: UN, 4 Oct. 1954).

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.4.

claims to be upholding order and justice. He persisted to accuse the government of an errant form of rule that rested on racial discrimination.

In response, British authorities seem to bristle at these many persistent accusations levied at them. They reported that his demands were based on “the fallacy that because he, the petitioner, on account of his improper conduct was declared a prohibited immigrant, the Tanganyika Government has some special duty or obligation to look after the welfare of Salim and the child.”⁸¹ They pointed out that Weber had voluntarily left Tanganyika and that Salim freely left the Mission in Dar es Salaam where they were receiving care. In addition, the British authority stated that there were several government hospitals free to use where Salim could have taken the child, and that upon departure for Switzerland both were deemed healthy. The officials also asserted that Salim had requested to return to Iringa and willingly filed a case against Weber. The only reason she was not admitted to the Mission near Iringa is because Weber had refused to pay the nominal fees, and that before his departure for Switzerland in January 1953, he had only left 150 shillings for Salim, not the 300 as described.⁸² These details go towards possibly explaining the additional fees Weber faced, such as ensuring there was money deposited for her in a separate account, before receiving Salim. Notably, a small handwritten note was attached to this petition at the UNTC. This note suggested the file was closed and not to send a response to Weber as it would only encourage further correspondence. This short statement suggests that the UNTC may have conceded that Weber was not of sound mind or character, or that he was indeed a troublemaker.

⁸¹ United Kingdom, “Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika (T/PET.2/168/Add.1) : observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority,” T/OBS.2/12/Add.1. Also see, United Nations Trusteeship Council Official Records, Fifteenth Session 15th January-28 March, 1955, p. 85.

⁸² Ibid.

This seemed to conclude the case for several years. However, in 1960 Weber submitted a new petition to the UNTC.⁸³ In this petition, he asked for his status as a prohibited immigrant to be removed. He explained how the weather in Switzerland was difficult for Salim to endure, and that she would like to see her family in Tanganyika. He proceeded to report they also had a second child—evidence of their enduring love. He argued that given the new conditions and policies of multiracialism in full swing in Tanganyika, he believed the hardships and discriminations they faced would no longer be an issue. He argued their relationship would benefit the territory, as it could be illustrative of how Europeans and Africans could live together. The Administering Authority remained unwavering in their decision regarding his status. They reiterated the conditions that led to his designation as a prohibited immigrant but stated that Salim and her children were free to visit Tanganyika without him.⁸⁴

After the troubles Salim and Weber faced in previous years, one can only guess that she did not make the visit. Upon further investigation, information reveals that they remained married for many years until Weber's death in the 1970s. Salim was permanently settled in Switzerland where she passed away in 2018 with four surviving children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this case sheds light on the pivotal tensions between the intimate lives and attachments of people and how these issues were forced onto the desks of high international and territorial officials. This case, and others like it, demanded the UN, a new institution mandated to uphold abstract ideals of international human rights, to confront the troubling contradictions and

⁸³ Anton Weber, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber-Salim concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/243/Add.1, (New York: UN, 25 Feb. 1961), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1656806>.

⁸⁴ United Kingdom, "Petition from Mr. Anton Weber concerning Tanganyika (T/PET.2/168/Add.1) : observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority," T/Pet.2/243/Add.1, (New York: UN, 21st April, 1961).

coercive effects of the new liberal world order of rights. Most importantly, it forces us to confront the persistence, transformations, and conflicts of this relationship as it underscored the authority of competing male authorities over the life of a young African woman and her child. Salim's experiences became muted in this story as Weber and the British competed to position themselves as the benevolent imperialists. Although Weber likely would not have assented to this characterization, his petitions spoke of his authority and claim of her as his own. A significant component of his petitions related to the limitations imposed on him or to his refutations of those obstacles. Salim herself recedes into the background as Weber and British authorities compete for respectability and weave stories of injustice and exploitation. Meanwhile, a picture of vulnerability is painted. African women were subjected to multiple authorities and were rarely able to interject their own voice, which was so easily denied or depended on the graces of male authorities.

Importantly, this case also demonstrates how colonial life, affect, and spheres of intimacy converged with issues of high politics and human rights. According to Weber, he was a victim of discrimination due to his interracial relations. For the British, he was an opportunist who had disruptive sexual proclivities. While the British attempted to present themselves internationally and locally as progressive upholders of liberal world values of human rights and development, Weber's petitions cast a long shadow on these claims and pointed to the problems of racial categories and white migrant exploitation. His ability to position himself in the same liberal light as the British and UN threatened to expose the flimsy foundation on which rights rested. And as we have seen with the Meru Land Case, the British were prone to relying on claims to rights and progress as trusteeship authorities who had the best interests of inhabitants in order to implement coercive projects throughout the territory. This case uncomfortably mirrors the Meru Land Case,

as Weber effectively managed to use the UNTC to procure an African wife. Yet particular to this case is how it demonstrates the far reach of rights claims and their ability to penetrate the inner and personal lives of individuals in coercive ways. This coercion took the form of assuming ownership of an African woman and her child and demanding financial compensation. Instead debates about the reputation of Anton Weber and British authorities, and invariably that of the UN, are foregrounded. One thing is certain: the British, the UN, Anton Weber and her father were acutely aware of how rights were not divorced from coercion and that their liberatory affect was not its sole possibility.

Chapter Four:

A Case from Domestic Workers: Labouring for Futures Denied

The 1948 United Nations Visiting Mission (UNVM) report on the trust territory of Tanganyika was the first report of its kind. In 1948, after the first UNVM tour, they reported the standard of living in the territory as “still very low for the African population.” The UNVM members remarked that, except for the city of Dar es Salaam, there were no available statistics on African income, the cost of living, family expenditures, or standards of living, writing that “[a]dmittedly such surveys for rural areas, where the vast majority of the population lives, may be difficult to establish but it is the opinion of the Mission that information of this nature is basic to the formulation of fair and realistic policies relating to African life.”¹ The UNVM added that the most important issue in the territory was the need to raise the wages of Africans.² This report was the first full investigation into conditions within the territory conducted by members of the international community who had toured the territory first-hand. This emphasis on labour reveals how it figured into evaluations of preparedness for self-determination and would continue to be central to arguments for its delay. The report sheds light on how the practices of trusteeship converged in such statistical reports and evaluations.³ The future was to be tabulated.

¹UN Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Runada-Urundi and Tanganyika, 1948 United Kingdom, “United Nations Visiting Mission to East Africa : report on Tanganyika and related documents,” T/4S/Supp.3, (Lake Success, N.Y. : UN, 1948) p. 134, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1299112?ln=en>.

² Ibid, p. 138.

³ Scholars of decolonization and modernity have commented on the epistemic forms that defined ideas of development and its expectations, as well as the bureaucratic strategies of state power. See James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Frederick Cooper and Randall M. Packard, editors. *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1997); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity*, (Berkeley: University of California, 2002).; James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, 1998). Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 2009).

In 1954, the United Kingdom's annual report to the Trusteeship Council on the administration of Tanganyika declared "no material changes during the year under review" regarding matters of labour. It reported 409,094 Africans engaged in paid employment in the territory and broke down employment of Africans in various sectors using numerous tabulations and charts. However, rather than providing detailed statistics on domestic workers,⁴ as they did for all other formal occupations, officials simply approximated: "there are some 30,000 [domestic workers] in service throughout the territory."⁵ Unlike "unclassified workers"—a category that included those who worked for employers with less than five employees—domestic workers were cordoned off from other labourers; their labour was relegated to an asterisk in the tables and charts tabulating labour in the territory. This deliberate overlooking of domestic workers demonstrates the ways that they were made marginal in late colonial politics of future making.

In fact, domestic workers at this time were actively participating and engaging with prevailing discourses concerned with conditions in the territory. They directly engaged with the politics of the present made up of hierarchies of power and inequalities by demanding trusteeship authorities and the UNTC uphold their mandate of universal human rights and anti-discrimination. Domestic workers made their voices and experiences heard by organizing and petitioning authorities locally and internationally. This chapter shines a light on the activism of domestic workers during this period, with a focus on their use of the trusteeship petitioning system as a mode of demanding a spotlight for themselves from beneath the weight of the

⁴ U.N. Secretary-General, United Kingdom, "Administration of the trust territory of Tanganyika : report of the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for 1954 : note / by the Secretary-General," in Administering Authority Report. Tanganyika (United Kingdom), A/3174 (New York UN, 5 Sept. 1956), p.114, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/843718?ln=en>.

⁵ U.N. Secretary-General, United Kingdom, "Administration of the trust territory of Tanganyika : report of the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for 1954," p.62-63.

asterisk. Moreover, I argue that due to the unique liminal position of domestic servants in late colonial Tanganyika, they had a special view of how various hierarchies of class, gender and race intersected. Their use of the UN petitioning system reveals the limitations of possibility offered to a group who occupied such an acutely liminal space in society.

Communications from domestic workers during this period demand scholarly attention, as colonial, international, and local elites of the period relegated the story of domestic servants to the background, rendering them invisible in narratives of progress. The “houseboy,” so crucial to the functioning of the everyday operations of colonial life, was excised from narratives of activism and visions of the future. This trend has been sustained by scholars indirectly as well, as so often analyses of domestic workers have examined the houseboy as a representational figure of colonialism, although scholars have brought much needed attention to the liminal position of domestic workers as figures who haunt the colonial household and categories of race.⁶ This literature focuses on the colonial home and the servant as a pillar of the household and its many symbolic and material representations as an edifice of power. But the houseboy was much more than a figure. Where the literature does consider the everyday habitus of the colonial domestic

⁶ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), Swapna M. Banerjee, *Men, Women and Domesticity: articulating middle-class identity in colonial Bengal* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004); Satyasikha, Chakraborty, “Mammies, Ayahs, Aabies: Postcards of Racialized Nursemaids from the Early Twentieth Century,” *Visual Culture & Gender* 13,(2018): 17-31; Rebecca, Ginsburg, *At Home with Apartheid: the Hidden Landscapes of Domestic Service in Johannesburg*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011). For an examination of this resonance in colonial households and those of the metropole see Anne McClintock’s classic work, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, (New York: Routledge, 1995). In general, the lithe regulation of sex in empire was linked to categories of race making within the colonies and in the metropole, see Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*, (New York: Routledge, 2003). For a novelisation of this see Ferdinand Oyono’s book *Houseboy*, (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1966). And concurrently the 1988 film *Chocolat* directed by Claire Denis that was inspired by this novel which features a white woman’s relationship with her Cameroonian houseboy: Claire Denis, director., *Chocolat.*, (France: Cinemanuel-MK2 Productions-Cerito films-Caroline Productions-La S.E.P.T.-TFI Films Production), 1988.

servant, the contours of their lives are remade, shaped, and formed by the colonial relationship of employer and employee.

Another branch of this literature focuses on the gendering of domestic work as a primarily male occupation in colonial households.⁷ While useful, this approach uses colonial epistemologies as a starting point and ties any power that domestic servants wield as directly connected to their access to the colonial household, even though Asian, Arab and African elites also employed domestic workers (albeit usually women or children). In brief, although some scholars have made great strides in understanding the social lives of domestic workers through their participation in urban activities and associations, much of the literature has focused on the colonial and personal dimensions of domestic work and the subjugation of domestic servants to the power and needs of employers.⁸

⁷ There are many works that examine the social lives of domestic workers that takes the gendering of the labour as its starting point. . For a specific focus on Tanzania see Janet Bujra, *Service Class: Masculinity and the Feminisation of Domestic Service in Tanzania*, (Edinburg: Edinburgh University, 2003), as well as Robyn Pariser, “Masculinity and Organized Resistance in Domestic Service in Colonial Dar es Salaam, 1919–1961,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 88, Fall 2015, pp. 109–129. For a discussion of gender in domestic work in colonial and postcolonial Zambia see Karen Hansen Transberg, *Distant Companions: Servants and Employers in Zambia 1900-1985*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). For a discussion of the shifting terms and meaning given to various positions of domestic service that includes a discussion of the feminization of this field of labour in colonial India see, Nitin Sinha, “Who Is (Not) a Servant, Anyway? Domestic servants and service in early colonial India,” *Modern Asian Studies* (2020): 1-55.

⁸ Jacklyn, Cock, *Maids and Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press.1980), this is considered a seminal work for its full-length study of domestic work in Africa. Charles van Onselen, *New Babylon New Nineveh: Everyday Life on the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2001) is a social history approach of various workers in Johannesburg, which has an extensive look at houseboys and other servants. His examination of Amalaita, a houseboy gang, is especially useful for understanding the dynamics of their social worlds, however this work is still focused on an economic analysis of these associations and their labour. Also see Karen Transberg Hansen, *Distant Companions: Servants and Employers in Zambia 1900-1985*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). Janet Bujra, *Service Class: Masculinity and the Feminisation of Domestic Service in Tanzania*, (Edinburg: Edinburgh University, 2003); For a more recent exploration of the social as an important vector for organizing labour see Sacha Hepburn, “Service and Solidarity: Domestic Workers, Informal Organising and the Limits of Unionisation in Zambia,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 45:1 (2019): 31-47. Frederick J. Kaijage’ article “The war of clubs: Life, labour and struggles of the Tanga dock workers,” in *Dock workers: international explorations in comparative labour history, 1790-1970 Volume 1*, edited by Sam Davies, Colin J. Davis, David De Vries, Lex Heerma van Voss, Lidewij Hesselink and Klaus Weinhauer, (Routledge: New York, 2000): 290-318. In this chapter the author discusses how Tanga dockworkers participated in a vibrant social scene whereby labourers in the city established dance societies (beni) according to their profession, which helped forge connections with other workers. One of the many dance societies based on labour was the *beni ya maboi* (houseboys’).

My own approach builds on these contributions and engages with new literature that considers how domestic workers were confined by apparatuses of the state.⁹ This chapter contributes to analyses of domestic workers organizing for rights and reforms, in contrast to prevailing views of domestic workers as isolated and atomized. Even as these studies have done much to further our understanding of domestic workers' efforts to organize, both formally and informally through associations, there is a growing literature that attests to the limitations of state interventions as a regulatory and protective mechanism for workers. Much of this new literature is concerned with contemporary practices whereby women from the Global South migrate to countries in Europe and North America and the limitations states place on their citizenship and mobility.¹⁰ This scholarship on domestic workers brings to light the many constraints that domestic workers face in having their labour recognized due to the "peculiarity" of their work as domestics.

This chapter brings insights from these works into conversation with one another while paying close attention to how domestic workers in colonial Tanganyika narrated their experiences and critiqued the state to an international audience. Through the mechanism of the trusteeship petitioning system, domestic workers in Tanganyika had the unique opportunity to engage with and challenge existing dominant hierarchies. This provides valuable insight into the shifting politics of domestic workers and how they envisioned themselves and their futures in the territory within the rubrics offered by the international system. This chapter argues that domestic workers in Tanganyika discerned and articulated the vectors of racial and class inequality with

⁹ Shireen Ally, *From Servants to Workers: South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic State*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); Nicole Constable, *Maid to Order in Hong Kong*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Daiva Stasiulis and Abigail B. Bakan, "Negotiating Citizenship: The Case of Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada," *Feminist Review* No. 57, *Citizenship: Pushing the Boundaries* (Autumn, 1997), pp. 112-139.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Also, see editors Dirk Hoerder, Elise van Nederveen Meerker, Silke Neunsinger editors, *Towards a Global History of Domestic and Care Giving Workers*, (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishing, 2015).

state rule and called on the promises of trusteeship and human rights as a mode of redressing these concerns. The denial they met with from trusteeship authorities had many of these domestic servants become activists who allied and supported the growing African nationalist movement headed by Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). This chapter attempts to recenter the domestic worker as an agent who actively sought to experiment and provoke change outside the employer's household, while still taking seriously the power disparities that imposed limits on their lives.

In fact, domestic servants in Tanganyika experimented with new forms of organization, labour mobilization, and internationalism that were not specifically confined to their affective relationship with their employers or the employer household. Although the power of the state and the apparatus of international institutions, like the UN, were not the windows of opportunity they appeared, domestic workers in Tanganyika critically engaged with the politics of the day and used various means to voice their everyday experiences of inequality and their possible futures in Tanganyika. The petitions from domestic servants provide an invaluable opportunity to gain insight into the working conditions, aspirations, and sentiments of domestic workers during the last years of colonialism. This serves to shift our gaze to a non-elite corps of individuals, whose small influence as an underclass of middlemen during the previous decades who challenged their marginal status in the final years of colonialism. They critiqued prevailing political forms of rule that persisted under trusteeship which was ostensibly intended to resolve matters of inequality.¹¹ Nevertheless, these workers organized and inserted themselves into the

¹¹ Robyn Pariser has shown how before the 1940s and 1950s domestic service offered a degree of prestige to men due to the specialized skills involved with working in a European home. See Robyn Pariser, "Masculinity and Organized Resistance in Domestic Service in Colonial Dar es Salaam, 1919–1961," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 88, Fall 2015, pp. 109–129. Ann L. Stoler has also explored how domestic workers occupied a liminal position in colonial culture due to the proximity involved with the service. Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*. For a thorough examination of Africans occupying liminal positions of labour in hospitals and/or missionary homes Nancy Rose Hunt examines how those occupying these positions were

politics of the territory and took seriously their labour as an important force. Their labour became the entry point for inserting themselves in debates surrounding issues of colonialism and universalism as well as the particularities of everyday life in Tanganyika. In this way, they forced their demands for state recognition and reform onto international tables and attempted to overturn their status.

In 1945, domestic workers organized and registered the first trade union in the territory under the name the African Cooks, Washermen and Houseboys' Association (ACWHA). At this time, domestic workers were beginning to organize and establish similar associations throughout East Africa ¹² In fact, domestic workers deliberately used both unionization and the international sphere as mechanisms of complaint against the state, demanding recognition for themselves in the face of their persistent erasure, while also demonstrating a participatory politics of racial solidarity that went beyond the particularities of their profession. In turn, I analyze how trusteeship authorities and colonial authorities responded and relegated these complaints to the background, as domestic workers' protests failed to receive the serious recognition they hoped for.

The erasure of domestic workers

The ACWHA was suddenly deregistered by colonial authorities who questioned the integrity of the association.¹³ The ACWHA refused its deregistration. Instead, they continued to operate and petitioned the UNTC in direct opposition to the colonial authorities. Their first petition to the UNTC, written on October 3, 1951, catalogued the many failings of the trusteeship

central to exchanges of meaning and understanding. Nany Rose Hunt, *Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Durham: Duke University, 1999).

¹² Bujra, *Service Class*, 154. Although I have not come across evidence that there was any overarching coordination across colonial territories among these associations of domestic workers.

¹³UK, T/953/Add.2/Administering Authority Observations, "Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen, and House Servants Association (T/Pet.2/121)", p. 23.

government. At the top of the petition they asked: “Those in the Commission [United Nations Visiting Mission] i.e. from the 4 parts of the world, when they meet each year, do they act according to word er to deeds?(sic).”¹⁴ This statement expressed their frustration over what they considered to be the UN and administering authority’s disregard for the rights of domestic workers. Following this line of inquiry, they asked what made their union any different from existing unions in the territory.¹⁵ For these petitioners, the promises of universal human rights provided an opportunity to shape their futures as workers and challenge the ongoing persistence of racial and class hierarchies that determined their lives. Their petitions pushed back against the categorical exclusions they were forced to reside within that had rendered them illegible from other forms of being.

In this first petition, they expressed their longing for recognition and rights in intersecting ways that would persist throughout the period. They questioned the administration of the trusteeship territory and the internal hierarchies that supported it. This included racial hierarchies of status as well as the privileging of elites over non-elites. Thus, they represented themselves as workers with valid complaints, ideas, and aspirations. The archive of petitions from domestic servants not only reveals the contours of their life as being steeped in precarity and disregard, and efforts to have their labour and life recognized as equal, but also is an attempt to become legible to others using the framework of universalism and trusteeship to do so. Eventually, as this failed they turned to African elites who signalled a willingness to work together.

Domestic servants did this in several ways. Firstly, they critiqued the processes of decolonization as managed, directed, and delayed by those whose interests were intimately tied

¹⁴ The African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, “Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants concerning Tanganyika,” T/Pet.2/121, (New York: UN, 3 Oct. 1951), p.2.

¹⁵ Ibid.

to these existing hierarchies, while simultaneously allying themselves with African elites who were also benefitting in some ways from these hierarchies. Secondly, they refused a position of liminality that pushed domestic workers into the background of territorial affairs. Instead, they argued that the treatment of domestic workers in the territory was reflective of prevailing inequalities that plagued the territory due to colonial management, which the trusteeship system was supposed to ameliorate and improve. For instance, in their first petition they questioned why Africans were being pushed off their lands, why people do not know where the territory's treasury was, and when referring to their labour as European house servants stated: "we do not get any help from them [Europeans employers] even if you work for 29 or 30 years, you can be dismissed any time, and you cannot get any help from the C.D. or The Chief Secretary or the Labour Commissioner."¹⁶This approach aligned them with others who were also experiencing oppression in the territory, demonstrated their understanding of territorial affairs, and indicated their interests and knowledge in these matters. Lastly, they made specific complaints about their conditions of labour. These complaints provide insights into the conditions and everyday experiences of domestic workers, while also linking these concerns to the exclusions and barriers that non-elites faced.

Perhaps surprisingly, over time, matters pertaining directly to their labour conditions increasingly faded into the background, as an anticolonial stance against the persistence of inequalities within universal discourses and practices become ever more central in their petitions. Domestic workers were avid supporters of anticolonialism and eventually TANU as well. Although recognition as workers was central to their politics, it was not confined to this single

¹⁶ African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, "Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants concerning Tanganyika," T/PET.2/121, (New York: UN, 3 Oct. 1951) p.2-3.

issue. Their political practice was multi-directional and included issues that went beyond the particularities of domestic work. Their petitions expressed an aspirational politics that was not limited to a single group or issue but engaged with prevailing conditions and inequalities in the territory that threatened to persist.

Labour Relations in Tanganyika

In Tanganyika, domestic workers were part of a growing wave of labour mobilization across the continent. Scholars examining the rise of trade unions and labour organization in Africa have pinpointed the 1940s and 50s as a vibrant moment of labour action throughout much of the continent that forced colonial authorities to seriously engage with labour issues.¹⁷ However, scholarship on trade unions and workers in colonial Africa has often been preoccupied with labourers whose work was central to ensuring colonial economic interests, such as mining, railways, and dock work.¹⁸

In the post-war years, a shift in colonial policy in Africa was marked by colonial interventions to stabilize the workforce while attempting to increase productivity for European reconstruction. These efforts included the decasualization of labour sectors such as dock work, while various commissions investigated the factors behind increased migration to urban centers

¹⁷ Frederick Cooper, "Nation, international trade unionism, and race: anglophone Africa in the 1950s," in *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, e-book, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For a look at dock workers in Mombasa and their strike action see his work *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). For a brief description of labour strikes and unions in Tanganyika see John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 537-542. For an examination of transport workers see Timothy Oberst, "Transport Workers, Strikes and the 'Imperial Response': Africa and the Post World War II Conjunction," *African Studies Review*, Apr., 1988, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Apr., 1988), pp. 117-133. For an examination that considers the importance of gender in these conflicts see Lisa A. Lindsay, *Working with Gender: Wage Labor and Social Change in Southwestern Nigeria* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003).

¹⁸ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, e-book, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

and rising costs of living.¹⁹ As Andrew Burton writes, prior to this the government had been preoccupied with famine and the under-nourishment of migrant workers; by the 1950s, however, high unemployment levels brought on by increased wages and migration to urban centers increasingly forced the attention of officials.²⁰

The official response to increasingly frequent strike actions throughout the 1940s and 1950s was to manage and coordinate trade unions and employment associations. Officials encouraged non-political trade unions, preferring these avenues for essential industry workers to express their grievances, as opposed to spontaneous strike actions.²¹ Frederick Cooper writes that there was a conscious effort among colonial authorities to direct labour grievances towards coordinated labour and employment associations. Such tactics allowed colonial authorities to claim they were directing the progress of the territory and its inhabitants, while also quelling any radical political organizations.²² In brief, the state increasingly began to manage and direct labour disputes and issues.

Labour issues were far from a new concern for colonial and international authorities at this time, however. During the interwar years, the League of Nations (LON) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) worked to stamp out slavery in its various guises. Both organizations were concerned with child and forced labour and their connections to slavery and prostitution during the interwar years.²³ Referring to female domestic workers and house slaves

¹⁹ Cooper, *African Waterfront*, 259-261. For a specific example in Tanganyika see, Andrew Burton, "Raw Youth, School-Leavers and the Emergence of Structural Unemployment in Late Colonial Urban Tanganyika," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2006), 378-380.

²⁰ Andrew Burton, "Raw Youth, School-Leavers and the Emergence of Structural Unemployment in Late Colonial Urban Tanganyika," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2006), 364.

²¹ Iliffe, *Tanganyika*, 537. Also see, Timothy Oberst, "Transport Workers, Strikes and the "Imperial Response," 117.

²² Cooper *Africa Waterfront*, p. 436.

²³ Silke Neunsinger, "From Servitude to Domestic Service: The Role of International Bodies, States and Elites for Changing Conditions in Domestic Work Between 19th and 20th Centuries," An Introduction, "Towards a Global

in America, both W.E.B. Dubois and Frederick Douglass respectively described the house servant as a figure forced into prostitution or as another iteration of slavery.²⁴ This focus on children and prostitution briefly brought domestic work to the fore on the international stage. Writing about international responses to stamping out slavery and prostitution which led to an examination of domestic work, Silke Neunsinger writes: “These attempts to transform it from a personal relationship between servant and master/mistress to formal employment on a legal basis equal to other wage work were rarely successful. In most labor codes domestic labor remained an exception.”²⁵ International responses were limited and constrained by notions that the relationship between domestic workers and employers was unique and could not be universally regularized. This perception of how the “personal” seemingly defined this professional relationship would continue to persist and colour how authorities and academics viewed domestic work as opposed to other sectors of labour.²⁶ Hence, there has been a longstanding practice of cordoning off domestic work as a serious category of labour and life-making. Indeed, scholars have examined the organization and unrest of labourers in large sectors of economic production, and there has been an underlying agreement in most quarters that domestic workers rarely organize and are a unique subset of the proletariat due to their atomized working conditions.²⁷ Yet domestic workers in Tanganyika defied this characterization of their

History of Domestic and Caregiving Workers, editors Dirk Hoerder, Elise van Nederveen Meerker, Silke Neunsinger, (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishing, 2015): 390.

²⁴ Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories or Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals*, (New York: Norton, 2020), 246.

²⁵ Silke Neunsinger, “From Servitude to Domestic Service,” 397. For further examination of a history of domestic labour and its reception, or lack thereof, in the international sphere see, Eileen Boris and Jennifer N. Fish, ““Slaves No More: Making Global Labor Standards for Domestic Workers,” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, Special Issue: Food and Ecology (2014), pp. 411-443.

²⁶ Eileen Boris and Jennifer N. Fish, ““Slaves No More: Making Global Labor Standards for Domestic Workers,” p.421-422. For a new and interesting discussion of how ideas of freedom and unfreedom and the visibility and invisibility of certain forms of labour during the colonial period in Sri Lanka see Nira Wickramasinghe, *Slave in a Palanquin: Colonial Servitude and resistance in Sri Lanka*, (New York: Columbia University, 2020).

²⁷ Citing this idea and writing against it is Sacha Hepburn, “Service and Solidarity: Domestic Workers, Informal Organising and the Limits of Unionisation in Zambia,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 45:1 (2019):32. Shireen

labour. They had an established history of worker solidarity action, as many of them had joined in the Dockworkers' strike action of 1939.²⁸ And they were building on this history to remake their futures.

The choice to use a labour union to petition the UNTC was likely a deliberate strategy on the part of domestic workers. Labour issues and relations were an important preoccupation for the administering authority, which was expected to submit annual reports to the UNTC regarding labour policies and development. Labour was a reoccurring topic of discussions within the UNTC and represented a potential entry point for critics to make demands about the internal governance of the territory. Yet officials and UNTC members were most frequently occupied with concerns surrounding agricultural labour and the training and incorporation of African civil servants. Petitioners often had similar preoccupations: African petitioners tended to write about land and agricultural policies, increased access to education, and access to senior level employment opportunities.²⁹ As a result, the UNVM's reports often urged the administering authority to increase opportunities for higher level education and to encourage Africans to participate in civil service positions in preparation for the territory's future independence.³⁰ These reports were future oriented and considered economic conditions as measures of the

Ally also addresses this in her work Shireen Ally, *From Servants to Workers: South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic State*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009) 17. Robyn Pariser, "Masculinity and Organized Resistance," 110.

²⁸ Frederick J. Kaijage, "The war of clubs: life, labour and struggles of the Tanga dock workers," in *Dock workers: international explorations in comparative labour history, 1790-1970*, Volume 1, edited by Sam Davies, Colin J. Davis, David De Vries, Lex Heerma van Voss, Lidewij Hesselink and Klaus Weinbauer, (Routledge: New York, 2000), 310.

²⁹ The many petitions submitted by the Tanganyika African Association addressed these issues. For a sample see TAA petitions covering these issues see: T/Pet.2/120; the Wameru also petitioned vociferously about land rights (T/Pet.2/143), as well as the Chagga Council (T/Pet.2/137) and Arusha authorities (T/Pet.2/144).

³⁰ See for instance, UN Trusteeship Council, "Report of the Trusteeship Council covering its 4th special session and its 10th and 11th sessions, 18 December 1951 to 24 July 1952," in *Report of the Trusteeship Council to the General Assembly, Official Records, Supplement, A/2150* (New York : UN, 1952), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/708127?ln=en>.

preparedness of the territory for independence. In contrast, the figure of the houseboy likely represented a colonial relationship that many preferred to keep in the shadows.

Ulrich Lohrmann's examination of African petitioning and trusteeship governance in late colonial Tanganyika reveals that petitions about labour tended to center around wages, hours, benefits, housing, and hiring practices.³¹ His work departs from a focus on labourers who were directly involved in the extractive economies of the colony. Instead, his attention is directed towards African civil servants and their protests to the UNTC, whose grievances, he argues, went beyond working conditions. Instead, per Lohrmann, their primary concerns included the hiring of Africans and a general policy of Africanization. Civil servants also protested the prohibition barring them from participating in the vibrant political life in Tanganyika. By 1953 civil servants were expected to remain apolitical and, therefore, could not be members of the Tanganyika European Council, the Asian Association or Tanganyika African Association (TAA), and later Tanganyika African National Union (TANU).³²

However, Lohrmann's attention to civil servants as petitioners privileges the small educated class of the territory at the expense of the politically galvanized underclass of domestic servants; he glosses over the individual and organizational demands that came from domestic workers in this period. The submissions from domestic workers to the UN reveal that domestic workers were unique as a group of petitioners because they were not considered by others to be part of an elite in the eyes of anyone but themselves. Domestic servants were and continue to be persistently downplayed as agents of change.

Recognition As Workers

³¹ Ulrich Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), 242.

³² Lohrmann, *Voices*, 245.

Most domestic worker petitions were submitted through a form of domestic workers' association. The 1945 formation of the African Cooks, Washermen and Houseboys' Association (ACWHA) was one of the first steps towards signifying their official participation in territorial politics. Janet Bujra writes that part of the reason domestic workers in Dar es Salaam formed this association was in response to the Women's Service League (WSL), headed by Lady Gilman, an employment bureau established by European women for the registration of domestic workers and monitoring of their wages.³³ Although the WSL had formed in 1927 to improve the situation of women in the territory, by 1948 the league was operating a registry of domestic servants to provide information to fellow Europeans regarding wages, hours, and duties of domestic workers.³⁴ The league argued that domestic workers could too easily take advantage of Europeans and maintained their oversight of domestic workers would improve relations between Europeans and Africans. However, shortly after the WSL implemented this system, Tanganyika became an international trusteeship territory with increased powers of supervision from the international community. Bujra suggests that this led to the colonial administration's denial of direct funding of the WSL's registry, as it was evidently for the sole benefit of Europeans.³⁵ These first attempts to officially recognize and standardize domestic labour stemmed from settlers' fears of potentially being exploited by domestic labourers. In no way did the WSL focus on domestic workers as labourers with rights owed to them; the rights and protections of settlers were foregrounded. The government's response, meanwhile, revealed it considered the matter of domestic labour to be trivial. Far from inspiring further consideration, hierarchies of domestic work were considered 'natural' and if left unacknowledged would remain in the background.

³³ Janet Bujra, 12.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 53.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 64.

The decision to form a workers' association was also linked to shifting conditions in the territory more generally. For many years, domestic work was attractive employment for young men migrating to cities. It offered stability that could not be acquired in other industries operating on a daily casual labour basis. Before World War Two, work within the colonial home also included specific benefits. It added a degree of prestige, as workers had access to European fineries or could wind up working for the upper elites of the colonial administration.³⁶ There was also a tradition of hiring multiple servants with each individual specializing in their duties, colloquially referred to among Europeans as the "Indian system". This afforded a sense of specialization and skill to their labour.

However, there was a post-war decline in the demand for multiple servants per household. Many employers began to employ one or two servants for general household duties.³⁷ Robyn Pariser notes that this led to a cultural shift in how servants saw themselves and were seen by others. No longer were they professionals with specialized skills; rather, they were servants who took on whatever tasks the employer gave them. Servants were now more beholden to their employer, who could hire anyone to perform these tasks.³⁸ Meanwhile, the influx of African men entering the cities looking for employment further complicated matters. In this period, many young men migrated to the city, as it offered both a reprieve from obligations to village elders and the potential to make something of themselves.³⁹ The formation of the ACWHA was also a response to this changing situation, and the name of their union reflected their attachment to the specialization of their positions and shifting perceptions of their work as generalized and unskilled. The ACWHA, with Saleh bin Fundi as its leader and headquarters in Dar es Salaam,

³⁶ Pariser, "Masculinity," 111.

³⁷ Pariser, 112-113.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 113.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 111.

quickly formed nine branches throughout the territory.⁴⁰ It began holding public meetings promoting worker solidarity while also petitioning the governor for better working conditions.⁴¹

However, in 1950 the ACWHA was unexpectedly deregistered. Colonial authorities claimed the organization was unrepresentative of domestic workers and that it was a forum for a select group with no records of membership, fees, or expenditures.⁴² In response to a petition submitted to the UNTC by the Dar es Salaam branch, the colonial authorities questioned the legitimacy of the organization, stating they had serious doubts regarding the integrity of the organization and its status.⁴³ Their petitions pushed back against the categorical exclusions which had rendered them illegible from other forms of being and made this apparent in their writings to the UNTC.

In their first petition, the ACWHA called out the obfuscations of knowledge and procedures enacted by various authorities. They critiqued the Labour Commissioner and the tendency to appoint commissions to investigate and diagnose prevailing issues in the territory. For the ACWHA seemed to understand that administrative procedures were both a way to raise the profile of a group or its issues while obscuring others. The petition opened with a demand to know the cause for its cancellation and insisted the authorities clearly elaborate on the rules for the registration of unions. This would become a persistent complaint in their petitions—that authorities deliberately took action without informing or sharing how these decisions were made and applied the rules unevenly. The petition emphasized that while the Association had been registered 28, August, '45, under Registration Ordinance, No. 3, Section 9, this had been taken

⁴⁰ Bujra, 157.

⁴¹ Bujra, 155.

⁴² United Kingdom, "Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen, and House Servants Association (T/Pet.2/121)", in "Petitions concerning Tanganyika : observations of the Administering Authority," T/953/Add.2, (New York: UN, 18 Jan. 1952) p. 23.

⁴³ Ibid.

away from them by the Labour Commissioner. By citing their registration date and the ordinance under which it was registered, they were also making a claim to knowing and having complied with territorial regulations. They perceived deregistration as a move to delegitimize their association and exclude them from the wider politics of labour organization that was clearly taking form around the territory.

The petition then critiqued the bureaucratic platitudes of the UNTC and British authorities by posing the question of whether they both acted according to “word or deed.”⁴⁴ It then pondered the purpose of the government administration by asking what it had done for the territory. This was an unabashed expression of their distrust and frustration for the administration of the trust territory and the beginning of their critiques of colonial elites and authorities, which would remain a persistent thread in these petitions.⁴⁵

Annexures appended to this first petition included letters submitted to the Colonial Secretary’s Office earlier that year. In one letter, the ACWHA requested the Colonial Office communicate to the king the following: “[W]e want you to know how we are living with the officials who are with us here, and you know, why we are always oppressed.”⁴⁶ This letter focused on the racial inequalities within the territory as practiced by the administration, while also seeking direct recognition for their association and demanding communication with top authorities. In doing so, they employed a tactic of shaming the administration which brought attention to its failure to live up to its professed ideals. They demanded to know “if the Governor was sent here T.T. [Tanganyika Territory] to deal only with Europeans and Indians or with

⁴⁴ T/PET.2/121, “Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Concerning Tanganyika,” 3 Oct. 1951.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Pet.2/121, Annexure No.1 to the petition, Letter to Col Sec of Col Office (p.4) This has as its letterhead, of sorts, its date of registration as a union. From August 1945 No. 3. Registered Dar es Salaam, p.4.

Africans, if so, why these officials do not allow the Africans to see the Governor at the time and Africans wish to interview him?”⁴⁷ However, their main disputes rested with the Labour Commissioner, Chief Secretary, and the Provincial Commissioner, whom they implied were preventing them from accessing the Governor. They insinuated that as domestic labourers their concerns and experiences were not being taken seriously, and that a direct conversation with the uppermost authority was therefore necessary.

The letter also expressed their frustration with how information was disseminated and collected to exclude them. They questioned the veracity of government information as it came from local elites: “[T]he reason why the Government is misled is because the officials deal only with the people employed in Government, these people never [favour] the officials for their daily bread.” Domestic workers argued for their position in the territory to be studied as necessary to properly assess conditions in the territory, since they suffered inequalities at the hands of multiple elites. In conclusion, they asked for their letter to be passed directly to the Governor of Tanganyika, Edward Twining, and expressed their wish to schedule an interview with him, adding they were aware he was on leave—again expressing their knowledge of current administrative affairs to pre-emptively challenge claims that domestic workers were ill informed or unschooled in the day-to-day politics of the territory. This denoted a breakdown of trust, an awareness of authorities’ disregard for the voices of domestic labourers and the uneven weight given to the voice of elites.

In the second annexure, the ACWHA reiterated many of the aforementioned issues. However, the association also disputed the Labour Commissioner and Chief Secretary’s claims that Governor Twining had ordered the cancellation of their organization, writing: “[W]e do not

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.7.

think that this is true, because they are always oppress us [sic].” They added that as a result of their de-registration, the ACWHA was being blocked from receiving mail, which seemed to substantiate how authorities were actively pursuing a project of erasure against them. They also asked why they were being prevented from meeting with the governor. This reflected their desire for more access to authorities than the administration allowed, and for a more active and caring government. Accordingly, ACWHA inferred that this was in part the reason for the oppression and mismanagement of the many issues afflicting the territory and represented official views of the unimportance of domestic labourers as a political group. The association complained it could not gain access to authorities or UNTC officials who toured the territory: “...when you people come here in T.T. you hold your meetings with Arabs who are working at the Bomas who are not in need, and you also here the well to do African who do not care about the poor other Africans, those are the people who are fighting for there own interests not for the others [sic].”⁴⁸ The domestic workers represented any misinformation or misunderstanding as a direct result of deliberate obfuscation of knowledge and procedure on the part of authorities. They declared in unequivocal terms their suspicions that as domestic workers their concerns, organization, and demands were purposefully suppressed due to their lack of status and the racial inequalities that defined the territory.

Domestic Workers as Political Visionaries

However, their petitions were not confined to these issues of erasure and critiques of various elites. Among the 18 points listed in their first petition, a significant portion described conditions affecting the larger community of Africans in the territory rather than domestic work specifically. In this way, they positioned themselves as enmeshed in issues affecting the

⁴⁸ T/Pet.2/121, Annexure No. 2 African Cooks, Washermen... From August 1945 No. 3 Registered Dar es Salaam, To James Griffiths, Col Sec of Col Office 14th April, 1951, p.6.

territory—their subjectivity was not confined to the colonial household, as authorities tried to assert.

One of the most prominent and contentious issues affecting the territory was the availability and sale of lands. In 1951, no other issue dominated petitions to the UNTC more, while the Meru land case was making headlines and newspapers were filled with descriptions of the violence occurring in Kenya over land ownership.⁴⁹ The Chagga Council, Tanganyika African Association, and many Europeans were among the groups that petitioned the UNTC regularly on land matters.

The ACWHA recognized the importance of this issue and included African land rights in their petitions. In 1951, the ACWHA supported early protests against the removal of Africans and the sale of their lands. In their first petition, they questioned why Africans were being driven into the hills while the best lands, including ancestral lands, were sold to the rich. In a later petition, they critiqued how lands were being sold to Asians and Europeans. Land issues often featured in UNTC reports, resulting in many urgings from the council for the Administering Authority to address and rectify the situation.⁵⁰ Although this was cast as a racial inequality issue, as settlers gained and disposed of lands to the detriment of Africans, the ACWHA also argued this was an affront to the spiritual and cultural beliefs of Africans, which were supposedly protected by the UN Charter. They ACWHA asked, “Why are we driven from our original lands, since our forefathers, and we are placed on hills, and the rich people take our lands?” On the

⁴⁹ Lohrmann, *Voice*, 290.

⁵⁰ The UNTC recognized land as an ongoing political and economic issue and would state this in their resolutions to petitions, such as the African Cooks, Washermen and Houseboys’ Association petition. “Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association (T/PET.2/121) concerning Tanganyika,” UN Trusteeship Council (11th sess.: 1952), T/RES/475(XI), Adopted at the 442nd plenary meeting, 10 July 1952, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/216692?ln=en>.

heels of this they asked, “Why the graves of our forefathers are dug out?”⁵¹ In doing so, they made it clear that the issue of land and spiritual beliefs were intimately connected and were tied to the racial politics and economy of the territory. By underscoring the racial politics that coloured the lives of Africans in the territory, they did not confine their politics to issues that were determined by their labour position or to urban centers where most domestic workers lived.

Another popular grievance shared by Africans in the territory, particularly elite Africans, was the Africanization of senior level positions. Many African petitioners wrote of the need for increased access to education as a means of allowing Africans to acquire the qualifications necessary for senior positions. Domestic workers, like many other Africans, recognized the ways Africans were prevented from holding these positions due to the colonial economics of racial hierarchies, asking in their petitions why Arabs and Asians occupied prominent positions and not Africans or why these groups did not display solidarity with Africans. Thus, domestic workers critiqued how other groups benefitted from this general policy, while also signaling their recognition of how these racial networks stood in the way of all Africans throughout the territory. This was particularly poignant for domestic workers who were especially attuned to the many vertical linkages in the territory due to their unique position. They were signalling that by having TANU in power this meant there were potential gains for domestic servants as these African elites would serve as better patrons than the trusteeship administration. As a clear underclass, domestic workers were sensitive to the racial politics inhibiting the progress of African futures. Notably, the ACWHA petitions also revealed an attempt to pioneer a better way,

⁵¹ African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, T/PET.2/121, *Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants concerning Tanganyika*, 3 Oct. 1951, p.2.

by both noting African elites' relative privilege while not letting that tar the causes for which these elites were pushing.

Visions of solidarity in practice

The ACWHA's agitation for land rights and Africanization were just some of the ways that domestic workers expressed their political visions for the territory's future. They also had specific grievances regarding labour conditions. This worked to politicize domestic work and the conditions of service, while also aligning themselves with the poor as well as African elites.

Their first petitions expressed displeasure at their exclusion in the consideration of issues affecting the territory and how this was linked to their position as domestic workers. They faced the challenge of disrupting colonial categories that sought to exclude and differentiate domestic workers as a distinct category of Africans, while also attempting to express the specificity of their experiences relative to others in the territory.

Their first petition spoke to the workers' quotidian struggles as well as their social obligations and aspirations as African men in Tanganyika. Their sense of obligation to family members was reflected in their confusion over why food from Dar es Salaam could not be sent to family outside of the city. Although some domestic workers may not have been living with dependents, there was still a desire and obligation to provide for those individuals, who held their own expectations of social obligations owed to them. Domestic workers called for the recognition of their labour, asking why they did not benefit from the same conditions of work as other labourers: "Why Cooks, Dhobis and house servants, are not granted leaves, or off duties, or over times in Sundays and holidays?"⁵² They also demanded housing and clothing be provided to domestic servants who worked for Europeans. This singling out of European employers

⁵²African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association, T/PET.2/121, *Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants concerning Tanganyika*, 3 Oct. 1951, p.1.

indicated that working for a European family meant higher expectations of employer obligations—an acknowledgement of the European racial position within the territory.

Contained in this early petition were expressions of dread and aspiration that further emphasized their struggles. They wrote, “We are poor Africans, we cannot educate our children with money, and our children have to work for Europeans and Indians to get money for their help.” Importantly, this statement reflected that domestic workers were not only employed by Europeans,⁵³ as the colonial administration tended to emphasize, and also reflected the material limitations that domestic workers felt confined them and their families to a narrow class position. These conditions excluded them from potential future making opportunities. Instead, due to the meager wages of domestic workers, their children also worked as domestics. This reinforced their feelings of exclusion and dread regarding their futures. They argued that the elites of the territory did not consider the poor: “The common town people are those who know the needs of the people because they can starve for 2 or 3 days, but you people hold your meetings with the rich people, so you cannot find out the difficulties of T.T.” They requested the governor and other officials consult an ACWHA member in order to understand the situation and signalled that the position of the poor in Tanganyika was an important determining factor in the territory’s future. They defiantly asserted,

If you will not follow what we are telling you, even for period of thousand years, T.T. will not prograce [sic] at all, because we father of our children we have no means at all to feed our father and our children and our wives, and we cannot afford to send our children to high educations, as our wages is like a daily wage, so our sons and daughters are working to support themselves working for Europeans and Indians, and the reason is because we fathers have no enough money to do so, and you people there wonder why T.T. is behind, the reason is money, education comes after money.⁵⁴

⁵³ Bujra argues that this also impacted the collection of data on the number of domestic servants employed, as there was a reluctance to admit that Africans also had domestic servants. Bujra, *Serving Class*, 6.

⁵⁴ T/PET.2/121, *Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants concerning Tanganyika*, 3 October 1951, Annexure No. 2: August 1945 No. 3 Registered, Dar es Salaam, To James Griffiths, Colonial Secretary of the Colonial Office, p. 6

Their aspirations for recognition were intertwined with a robust politics of solidarity that included bringing attention to the daily economic restraints domestic workers and the poor faced and how this interfered with the realisation of their aspirations for themselves and the territory.

This politics of solidarity converged with a “bread and butter” politics was occasionally pursued by individuals rather than through the union. Petitions from individuals often dealt with matters of wrongful dismissal and requests for compensation of work, as was the case with Philip Moses, a cook and ACWHA member who petitioned the government and the UNTC individually.⁵⁵ Like with the association, his entreaties for compensation were met with disqualifications and prescriptions of failures to take certain actions. Moses wrote to the UNTC seeking compensation after an accident wherein he was struck by a police van that left him with a permanent limp. He suffered four months in the hospital due to a fractured leg, where he received some compensation while being retained at a nearby barrack. He then submitted a petition requesting further compensation, due to his permanent disability.

The Administering Authority wrote to the UNTC with details of the exact monetary compensation he received under the Workers’ Compensation Ordinance. Referring to this ordinance served to assuage potential critiques from the UNTC about the protection of workers. The Administering Authority admitted that the Surgical Assistant agreed Philip Moses suffered a permanent disability that resulted from the accident. The trusteeship government urged that no further actions be taken as it claimed Moses was properly compensated: “His partial disability is not such as to seriously interfere with his work as cook. There is no evidence available to support the petitioner’s assertion that he had failed to obtain employment because of this disability, and it

⁵⁵ Lohrmann, *Voices*, 257.

is known that he is now again in domestic service.”⁵⁶ This conclusion, however, does not consider whether the continued presence of a limp, and likely pain, impacted his ability to meet contractual obligations or work long hours (another primary issue that the domestic workers association actively lobbied to have rectified).

Three years later, Philip Moses submitted a second petition in the form of a resumé listing his work experience as a cook for important officials, such as the Labour Officer at Mbeya, Labour Commissioner of Dar es Salaam, and the manager of the Stewart Store in Dar es Salaam.⁵⁷ Handwritten in the upper right corner was his affiliation with the deregistered, yet still active, ACWHA—a subtle note of rebellion and perhaps also an indication of his political consciousness and expectations in terms of the labour rights owed to him as a cook.

His petition brought attention to the fact that although he worked for many people of high rank, he never received any gratuities or payments upon his discharge or for services rendered. It also echoed the ACWHA’s calls for better regulation of working conditions and challenged the Administering Authority’s claims that domestic workers often received informal benefits from European employers, placing the problem of working conditions on the shoulders of non-European employers. The Administering Authority had previously declared

it need hardly be said that the domestic servants of reputable employers are given periods of leave or “off duties” and many are provided with quarters...Some servants receive rations, some are provided with clothing or uniform; in other cases the wages are regarded as sufficient to cover the provision of these and other necessities by the servant himself.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ UN Trusteeship Council, “Petitions Concerning Tanganyika: Observations of the Administering Authority,” T/953/Add. 2, Petition From Mr. Philip Moses (T/PET.2/133), p.40-1.

⁵⁷ Philip Moses, “Petition from Mr. Phillip Moses concerning Tanganyika,” T/PET.2/181, (New York: UN, 30 Sept. 1954).

⁵⁸ T/953/Add.2/Administering Authorities Observations, “Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen, and House Servants Association (T/Pet.2/121)”, p.25.

However, as Moses' resumé indicates, he worked for Europeans and found himself facing the arbitrary conditions of domestic work. Meanwhile, a 1958 petition from the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union (TDHWU) disputed the Administering Authority's claim with regards to rations and reputable employers. The petition described the meager wages, long hours, and lack of rations domestic workers received from both Indian and European employers, writing:

Common among Indian employers is the practice of allowing the worker to eat what remains at the end of a meal but if nothing remains or if that is not the practice, then the servant is issued with twenty-five cents worth of maize meal and fifteen cents worth of dried fish. Workers employed by Europeans are not supplied with rations or paid any ration allowance. If the accommodation supplied to such servants is valued at Sh.25 per month, there remain Sh.75 for food and living expenses in Dar es Saalam, where in general a servant receives Sh.100 per month, and Sh.50 in up-country districts, where the monthly wage is generally Sh.75 per month.⁵⁹

This petition came after a minimum wage was established for workers in Dar es Salaam, and although Moses did not provide such detailed information in his petition, he nonetheless challenged the presumed conditions of work that the Administering Authority asserted to the UNTC.

The government refuted his claims, and in doing so unintentionally revealed the precarious conditions domestic workers inhabited and the difficulty of making claims against employers, even those who were prominent members of the community such as the Labour Commissioner. The British authorities claimed it was impossible to confirm the duration of his employment with the listed employers since many of them had either passed away or were no longer in Tanganyika. The government commented that the usual practice was for an employer to pay either a retainer fee when they went on leave or a gratuity for the duration and remarked

⁵⁹ Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers' Union, "Petition from the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers' Union," T/Pet.2./L.11, (New York:UN, 13 June, 1958), p.2.

that the petitioner likely received such a payment, although no evidence of this could be made, nor was it ever expected to be proven. Moses' petition received no further attention, as it was presumed he had received such benefits. The government's response reflects a reluctance to seriously consider the contingent nature of work for domestic servants, who may not have been paid retainer fees or for whom a two-year contract was indeed a lengthy time of service, given the possibility of employer relocation or death. Individually, domestic workers still failed to receive the recognition they so desired for their work and the contingent nature of their working conditions.

A 1954 petition from the ACWHA, newly renamed the Trade Union of African Cooks, submitted to the UNTC reveals the precarious character of the workers' lives: "The salaries given to different categories of domestic servants are not enough to meet the requirements of life in these present circumstances," they wrote, adding that with the current state of their salaries "no one can live in peace without being in perpetual debt to the shopkeeper."⁶⁰ These statements did not differentiate between employers or types of domestic labour but rather characterized a general condition of domestic work that pervaded their everyday life.

In this petition, the union compared their conditions to that of government servants whose work was regularized and often came under the purview of the UNTC. The union asserted that domestic work, which included ensuring the maintenance and proper functioning of the home and fulfilling the demands of their employers, was similar to the work government servants performed in maintaining and ensuring the smooth operation of government services and general governance. This equation seems to be an attempt to force the UNTC and the government to recognize domestic work as a proper form of labour. The workers called for a house rent

⁶⁰ Trade Union of African Cooks, "Petition from the Trade Union of African Cooks concerning Tanganyika," T/Pet.2/177, (New York: UN, 29 Sept. 1954), p.1, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1656754?ln=en>.

allowance and cost of living allowance similar to the one afforded to government servants; their workdays to be limited to eight hours, with over-time pay required for any work surpassing this limit; and 18 days of paid leave per year, with an increase to 72 days after three years of service.⁶¹ Ullrich Lohrmann has called this demand an exaggerated and outlandish request and as an example of petitioners' overreach.⁶² However, as the earlier portion of the petition indicates, domestic servants often did not have fixed hours of work per day; moreover, if they were live-in servants, they likely worked every day. They also requested that, like government servants, they should receive their full pay for six months should they experience prolonged illness, with a reduction to 75 per cent of their pay after that period.,⁶³ These requests reflected the fears and experiences of domestic workers, whose lives often depended on the goodwill of employers. This was a radical request that suggested the equal value of different modes of work, a vision that was likely an affront to various levels of authorities.

Alliances with TANU

Encountering little success with this strategy, in 1955 the union formed an alliance with TANU, the main nationalist party pressing for independence. They also reformed their organization to include hotel workers and renamed it the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union.⁶⁴ Although the majority of members remained household domestic workers, this was an important shift that shored up their efforts at achieving recognition for domestic workers as labourers and reinforced their commitment to a more expansive politics of solidarity. The union then quickly became part of the 23 labour organizations that made up the Tanganyika

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Lohrmann, *Voices*, 256.

⁶³ "Petition from the Trade Union of African Cooks concerning Tanganyika," T/Pet.2/177, (New York: UN, 29 Sept. 1954), p.1-2. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1656754?ln=en>.

⁶⁴ Pariser, "Masculinity," 121.

Federation of Labour (TFL). According to Robyn Pariser, this move benefited the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, as it lent it the legitimacy to which it had previously aspired.⁶⁵ However, this position supports notions that domestic workers on their own were unable to secure recognition, whereas the petitions of the ACWHA had signaled early on their engagement with the greater politics of the territory.

This reorganization revealed further the union's awareness of organizing labour as a political strategy in the territory. Domestic workers were not only gaining legitimacy, but also were reimagining union solidarity. Their union was expanding its parameters and showed its willingness to collectively work towards labour rights. In 1958, the union submitted to the UNTC a petition revealing the unsatisfactory conditions facing domestic workers, including working 12-hour days.⁶⁶ They explained that minimum wages in Dar es Salaam did not rectify matters for those outside the city limits:

The minimum, maximum and average wage-rates of domestic servants employed by Indians and Europeans in six towns range from Sh.22 per month paid by Indians in Newala to Sh. 75 per month paid by Europeans in Tabora. In Dar es Salaam, Europeans pay Sh.100 per month for an eight-hour working period In accordance with the Wage Fixing Order, whereas "a considerable number of domestic workers mostly employed by Indians..., are not paid in accordance with that Order" and receive only a minimum of Sh.25 per month. The wage rates in hotels situated where no Government Wage Regulation Order is operating, is similar to those applicable to domestic servants. The very wide variation in wages paid by the different races was a fact mentioned in the report of the 1957 Visiting Mission to East Africa, and "reflects a deplorable state of affairs when wage rates fall far below the subsistence level".⁶⁷

I quote this section of their appeal at length because it testifies to their vision and efforts to underscore that their union was not confined to Dar es Salaam but represented these workers' interests throughout the territory. It also acknowledges hotel workers' conditions of service as

⁶⁵ Ibid, 122.

⁶⁶ "Petition from the Tanganyika Domestic and Hotel Workers' Union," T/Pet.2./L.11, 13 June, 1958.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

well. Moreover, their citation of the 1957 UN Visiting Mission was a deliberate indication that the union was abreast of the information and expositions occurring within the halls of the UNTC. This worked to bring attention to how the union was engaging with the territorial and international and indicated the union's political aspirations to actively connect with other workers beyond domestic workers. Such statements challenge the pre-conceived notion that domestic workers were too individualized through their labour to organize.

This new alliance with hotel workers was directly linked to what popularly came to be known as the Houseboys' Strike of 1956, which began when a few hotel workers were fired from a hotel in Dar es Salaam. Other hotel employees agitated against this and were subsequently fired as well. As a "houseboys' strike" was threatened and rumors circulated, the TFL tried to negotiate on their behalf with the government. However, the government argued that their wages were sufficient and did not require intervention as domestic work was a personal contract between the parties involved.⁶⁸ Hence, the TFL also struggled to have domestic work recognized as legitimate labour.

The union declared a strike on December 6, 1956, demanding both the reversal of the termination of the dismissed hotel employees and a raise in pay for all domestic workers. Thousands of domestic workers in Dar es Salaam went on strike. Purportedly in response to the Labour Commissioner's instructions to employers to not renew any domestic servant's contract in December if they planned to strike, other unions, including the Workers of the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union and the Eastern Province Building and Construction Workers Union, joined in solidarity.⁶⁹ Both TANU and TFL encouraged Africans throughout the territory to boycott the purchasing of bottled beer and to avoid bus transportation in support of the

⁶⁸ Pariser, 122.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 123-124.

Houseboy Strike. This support from TANU and TFL solidified domestic servants' support of TANU in opposition to the trusteeship government and the UN's failure to take their labour seriously.

Although the strike lasted three weeks in Dar es Salaam, scholars often cast it as a failure. The workers' demands went unfulfilled and many employers refused to allow domestic workers to return to work afterwards.⁷⁰ In response, the TFL called a second strike in January 1957, demanding the reinstatement of all employees affected by the previous month's strike. This second strike would be a short one, as the government quickly promised a minimum wage for those living in Dar es Salaam, a strategy that had previously proven useful for the administering government to defer effective action.⁷¹ As a result, many likely felt uneasy about asserting any kind of success following the 1957 strike negotiations. Janet Bujra notes union leaders called the strike action a success even though the minimum wage was still too low and was restricted to only adult men working in Dar es Salaam.⁷² The UNTC lauded the government for its swift handling of this situation and for the proliferation of unions in the territory yet admitted that the standard of living and conditions of work were in need of improvement in the territory.⁷³

In 1958, the Domestic and Hotel Workers' Union submitted a follow-up petition providing details of the deplorable living conditions and discrimination that domestic workers and hotel workers, especially union members, continued to experience. In addition to the issue of insufficient pay, the union corrected the presumption that many employers provided

⁷⁰ Bujra, *Serving Class*, 160.

⁷¹ Bujra, 161. United Kingdom to the UNTC, "Petition from the Trade Union of African Cooks concerning Tanganyika (T/PET.2/177) : observations of the United Kingdom government as Administering Authority," T/OBS.2/17, (New York: UN, 4 Jan. 1955), p.1, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3833476?ln=en>.

⁷² Bujra, 161.

⁷³ Report of the Trusteeship Council: covering the work of its twenty-first and twenty-second sessions," vol. 2, General Assembly Official Records, Thirteenth Session Supplement, No. 4, A/3822, New York, 1958: 27-28.

accommodation. It called for a standardization of accommodations, as Indian and Arab employers tended to provide insufficient housing accommodation, if any.⁷⁴

The union acknowledged that European employers provided accommodations, albeit in exchange for decreased pay and availability to the employer at all hours. The cost of food was another issue: as many domestic workers were men without wives to cook for them, they would buy hot food daily. Some hotel workers were able to get meals on credit at their place of employment or would “try to feed off their friends.”⁷⁵ Taken together, these conditions of work meant that domestic workers, in particular, identified as migrant labourers. They often had to leave contracts to return to their home villages in order to seek rest, which was often considered a breach of contract, since no leave of absences or holiday pay were included in the contract. Noting that the migrant nature of domestic labour was often a challenge for Indian and Arab employers, the union offered a solution: collective bargaining with employers for a joint consultation. In brief, for the union the government’s response to the 1956 Houseboys’ Strike was insufficient in addressing the most pressing issues affecting their lives. Egregious imbalances and abuses of power between employer and employees persisted, and the union sought actionable results for hotel and domestic workers alike.

The petition explicitly addressed the residual effects of the strike action and demanded a Wage Council be established for the negotiation of wages between employers and employees. As the union pointed out, “joint negotiating machinery exists for other industries, Government has not provided it for domestic workers...”⁷⁶ However, this request was refused. Instead, the government instituted a wage fixing system in Dar es Salaam. For the union, the wage fixing was

⁷⁴ T/Pet.2/L.11, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.4.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

insufficient, as “not less than 65 per cent of domestic workers in Dar es Salaam are not being paid in accordance with the Government’s wage Regulation Order.”⁷⁷ Meanwhile, the price of foodstuffs continued to increase while wages for hotel workers and domestic workers stagnated at 1956 levels. Although the Tanganyika Hotel Keepers Association had reinstated the employees who struck in December 1956, the association made a point of stating that it was in no way the result of union action. Meanwhile, some domestic workers had not regained employment since the strike, even though the Dar es Salaam Employers’ Association had recommended that its members consider reinstating employees who had more than five years of experience but who had been dismissed after the strike. The Labour Department was expected to facilitate this process. However, according to the petitioners, the unfavourable attitude of the department towards unions led to a lack of cooperation.⁷⁸ They argued that employers and the government alike neglected to recognize the many obstacles domestic workers faced in organizing and demanding their labour rights. This was also likely a move to highlight the limitations that unions and its members faced throughout the territory.

The petitioners’ remarks stand in contrast to the favourable comments found in UNTC reports about the success of trade unionism in the territory.⁷⁹ Their aims of receiving recognition as workers and building alliances with other workers and Africans were also reflected in this

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p.5.

⁷⁹ See for instance, Report of the Trusteeship Council: covering the work of its twenty-first and twenty-second sessions,” vol. 2, General Assembly Official Records, Thirteenth Session Supplement, No. 4, A/3822, New York, 1958: 27-28. However, by 1960 the UNTC came to the conclusion that although there was a proclivity towards trade unionism within the territory many of these lacked leadership and training in the operation and purpose of unions, and labour disputes persisted. This latter report also noted that although provisions for minimum wage boards were promised by the administration in 1951, by 1960 only Dar es Salaam had such a board. The UNTC urged the administering authority to extend minimum wage legislation to all industries throughout the territory. UN Trusteeship Council, “Report of the Trusteeship Council, 7 August 1959-30 June 1960,” A/4404, in *Report of the Trusteeship Council to the General Assembly: General Assembly, Official Records, Supplement*, p.49, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/714866?ln=en>.

petition's final statements of solidarity in helping build the future of the territory: "The Union will devote its energies for the attainment of a New Deal and democratic self-government and the establishment of a Welfare State."⁸⁰ The union's submissions to the UNTC aimed not only to remedy conditions plaguing domestic workers but were part of a broader political vision that included social rights for Africans and menial labourers.

By 1960, the union was operating as the Tanganyika Government Trade Union under the umbrella organization of Tanganyika Federation of Labour. In their final communication to the UNTC that year, the union enumerated the issues contained in their many prior petitions and communications to the council. It reiterated that the original impetus for founding the ACWHA was Lady Gilman's Women's Service League of Tanganyika. The union wrote that she "was told that the organization served nothing on the African side. This she was asked by the Tanganyika Government Trade Union to close her office since most of the Africans were suffering because of it. Instead of Africans having nice wages and treated well at work, they had things as before."⁸¹ In other words, the WSL made no efforts to improve domestic working conditions. The union also wrote that the UNVM had expressed their sympathies for domestic workers' conditions of service.⁸² However, by 1954, when the UNVM was once again touring the territory, the union's concerns were no longer focused on labour conditions. Instead, the workers' desire was for their lands to be free. During all subsequent UNVM visits they unabashedly supported Tanganyikan independence and expressed their support of Julius Nyerere, the leader of the nationalist party TANU. The union concluded its final communication

⁸⁰ T/Pet.2/L.11, p. 7.

⁸¹ "Communication from the Tanganyika Government Trade Union concerning Tanganyika," T/COM.2/L.57.EN, Tanganyika, (New York : UN, 6 Sept. 1960), p.2, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3835639?ln=en>.

⁸² Ibid, p.2.

with the UNTC by stating: “We have nothing more to say than that ‘We want full Self Government.’”⁸³

This final missive from the union provides a summary of the transformation of their politics and is a powerful statement of the failure of the trusteeship authority and the UNTC to live up to their mandate as patrons. However, it is important to note that the early petitions from domestic servants were never solely about wages and labour conditions. A consistent attribute of their politics was a critique of authorities and racial hierarchies alongside expressions of solidarity with Africans throughout the territory. Their petitions express the increasing importance of their politics of solidarity as a mode of accessing and bringing nearer possibilities for futures envisioned yet deferred by colonial politics.

Coda: responses and futures not taken

The Administering Authority’s many responses to communications from domestic workers maneuvered to foreclose such aspirations. Confirming domestic workers’ fears, the Administering Authority response to the UNTC regarding ACWHA’s first petition both invoked the particularity of domestic workers, while also denying that these workers were being treated differently. The Administering Authority observed: “Few of the questions set out in the letter have any direct connexion (sic) with what might be assumed to be the interests of an association of urban domestic servants. Some of the questions are so vague as to make precise answers impossible, while the point of others is not understood.”⁸⁴ The Administering Authority denied the merit of their petition by delimiting the interests of the petitioners to matters concerned only with their labour. Meanwhile, its pointed response to the intelligibility of the petition emphasized

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ United Kingdom, T/953/Add.2/AAObs, “Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen, and House Servants Association (T/Pet.2/121)”, p. 23.

the status of domestic servants as unskilled and uneducated workers. The colonial authority emphasized this by arguing that there was no need to address all 18 points made in the petition, writing: “The Administer Authority does not regard the petitioners’ letter as either capable of or calling for detailed observations on each of the eighteen questions it contains.”⁸⁵ In this way, the authorities denied the entanglement of domestic workers with the racial, social, and political questions of the day.

The Administering Authority maintained that the primary aim of their petitions was the reinstatement of the labour association. Rather than addressing the other issues contained in their first petition, the Administration explained why the ACWHA was deregistered, arguing this step was taken as a result of an investigation into the association’s finances and organization, which according to the administration did not meet the necessary requirements for their labour association to continue: “It became evident that the so-called managing committee was not only not representative of any substantial body of members but its incompetence was such as to give little hope of its being able to comprehend and comply with the requirements of the law.”⁸⁶ Once again, this statement reinforced how the government struggled, or refused, to see an organization made up of domestic servants as a legitimate functioning political body.

The administration supported the Labour Commissioner’s decision to terminate the registration of the association and dismiss the group’s complaints.⁸⁷ The Administering Authority elaborated on how the association was unsanctioned and could not properly be considered a labour association: “These successive representations and petitions, including the

⁸⁵ UN Trusteeship Council (11th sess.:1952) “Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association (T/PET.2/121) concerning Tanganyika,” T/Res/475 (XII), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/216692?ln=en>, p. 16.

⁸⁶ United Kingdom, “Petitions concerning Tanganyika : observations of the Administering Authority,” T/953/Add.2, (New York: UN, 18 Jan. 1952,)p. 23, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3853673?ln=en>.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 24.

present one, have been made by a small band in Dar-es-Salaam who are unrepresentative of any coherent body and whose chief concern at the cancellation of registration of the Union appears to be the loss of a source of personal income.”⁸⁸ In this way, the government made an attempt to evade criticisms that it was effectively suppressing labour movements or rights.

The government argued that many domestic servants in the territory had expressed relief that the association was disbanded.⁸⁹ This may have been true, as labour unions were new and many workers were unclear as to the purpose and utility of a union, yet neither does the Administering Authority provide documentation to support its claims. The UNTC adopted the position of the Administering Authority, viewing the petition as simply preoccupied with the deregistration of the Association, rather than a complex letter demanding recognition, a fair and just patronage from the administering authority and UNTC alike, leading to a politics of African solidarity. The UNTC resolved that no recommendations were necessary in the case of the association’s deregistration. In response to the general questions regarding land alienation, taxation, and working conditions, the council stated that these were matters which were under continued examination.⁹⁰ Finally, the UNTC acknowledged that there were significant issues with regards to economic development in the territory and that the Administering Authority was taking steps towards addressing these issues. Even with this recognition from the UNTC, this does not alleviate impressions that both the UNTC and administering authority were ineffectual at fulfilling their task. Instead, these responses to the well-thought-out political arguments of domestic servants illuminates the uniquely visionary perspectives of this group of workers who

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ UN. Trusteeship Council (11th sess. : 1952)“Petition from the African Cooks, Washermen and House Servants Association (T/PET.2/121) concerning Tanganyika,” T/Res/475 (XII), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/216692?ln=en>, p.16- 17.

are often rendered invisible in political and daily life in Tanganyika, a group of workers who were denied a position within the text of official reports.

This response coloured all remaining resolutions and responses to the many versions of the association. There were references to annual reports of wages and living conditions, with particular attention paid to agricultural production. Domestic workers and their politics remained in the background against their many agitations. Their political visions expressed an understanding of the class and racial politics that underpinned colonial life, although there was a persistent failure to recognize or include African women, who also worked as domestics, and only slight recognition of how the children of domestic workers were forced to take on positions as domestic labourers.

This chapter has aimed to bring much needed attention to the precarious conditions faced by domestic workers, and their activism in response to this. The archive surrounding the petitions of domestic workers illuminates the deliberate denial by authorities, the UNTC and the trusteeship authority, to take seriously the labour, lives, and goals of domestic workers. By opening and concluding with the statements and observations of the administering authority, the chapter structure mirrors the openings and closures that domestic workers confronted, and the ultimate failure to break out of the constraints authorities imposed. While trusteeship offered promises of social and political rights, its functions were not realized for domestic workers. The futures envisioned by domestic workers and their many associations were denied.

Nevertheless, the avid petitioning and organizing that these domestic workers participated in reflects a broader refusal of the terms of rule they experienced as authorities continued to neglect their own mandate. For domestic servants, the resolution was easy:

authorities need to step up their efforts to redress inequalities. However, authorities refused to take seriously these calls from domestic servants.

These petitions reveal not only the precarious structures that impeded the fulfillment of their goals, yet also illuminates the rich political organizing and social lives of these workers who occupied the interstitial spaces of colonialism. They were cooks, washermen, house servants, hotel workers, parents, friends, colleagues and more. They acknowledged the importance of their work as a fulcrum of support for the many spheres of social and political life and worked towards having this recognized as such by the colonial authorities and the UN. Finally, they settled with TANU, the nationalist organization, as these others failed to convincingly accept their labour as important. In doing so, they elucidate the failure of the mandate and the UN and must turn to a more palatable and legible form for claiming rights—nationalist organization.

Conclusion:

File Closed: The end of trusteeship and petitioning in Tanganyika

In December 1961, Julius Nyerere became the first Prime Minister of Tanganyika. With independence, Nyerere and his supporters could celebrate Tanganyika's new status. Nyerere's face was seen across television screens and newspapers as the young new statesman of Tanganyika was celebrated. This marked the conclusion of international trusteeship over the territory. Those in Tanganyika who insisted on continuing to submit petitions to the United Nations Trusteeship Council (UNTC) were met with responses that made it clear the advent of formal independence foreclosed the option to write to the United Nations (UN) body as trusteeship inhabitants. Soon afterwards, Tanganyika was admitted as a member of the UN, and petitions from inhabitants were no longer streaming in as before. By 1964, with the amalgamation of Tanganyika with Zanzibar, John W.S. Malecela would become the first UN representative of the new state of Tanzania.

As part of a history of decolonization, Nyerere's rise to power and the peaceful transfer of political sovereignty to Tanganyika is often cited as a story of success.¹ Perhaps unexpectedly, this dissertation does not have the sovereign state and its potential leaders as its focus of success or failure. This is not to detract from the work of Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) or its many members and allies, who worked towards obtaining relief from British suzerainty in the

¹ B.T.G Chidzero, *Tanganyika and International Trusteeship*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Ullrich Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946-1961*, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007); Paul Bjerck, *Julius Nyerere*, (Athens: Ohio University, 2017).

making of the nation-state. Neither does the thesis seek to pursue the trajectory of human rights claims and activism within Tanzania after its independence.

Although Nyerere was lauded early on as a progressive young statesman, his leadership did come under scrutiny as TANU consolidated its power as a one-party state, implemented the Preventive Detention Act, and quelled any opposition from labour movements. At the same time, Nyerere and his party, in their pursuit of human rights, remained dedicated to supporting self-determination efforts, even if violent, throughout the continent in places like South Africa and the secessionist region of Biafra in Nigeria.² Although African statesmen have been critiqued for their shift in human rights advocacy and methods upon achieving independence, Nyerere's early success and use of UN trusteeship has stood out as an example of human rights achievement in peacefully negotiating transfer of power.

The recent scholarly turn to re-examine international institutions and human rights in the post-World War II period has resulted in the recognition of the complex ways in which Global South actors organized around issues of human rights. The resulting literature has predominantly been focused on matters of decolonization and the many possibilities and limitations the UN offered and foreclosed within this political realm.³ UN membership, which expanded to include recently decolonized states alongside other formerly colonized states, encouraged new networks of international cooperation and critique.⁴ In fact, for some of these new states, their focus turned

² See Priya Lal's discussion of the complex dynamics of African socialism and pan-Africanism in Tanzania in her chapter, "Tanzanian *Ujamaa* in a World of Peripheral Socialisms," in Martin Klimke, et al., eds., *Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties*, (New York: Routledge, 2018) 367-380.

³ Steven Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization and the Reconstruction of Global Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); In particular see chapter four of Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Vijay Prashad, *The darker nations: a people's history of the Third World*, (The New Press, 2008).

⁴ Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania: 2011); Alanna O'Malley, "Ghana, India, and the Transnational Dynamics of the Congo Crisis at the United Nations, 1960-1," *The International History Review* 37, no. 5 (2015): 970-990; Christopher J. Lee (ed.),

to one of cooperation both within and outside the UN to address such major issues as apartheid in South Africa. With Tanganyika's new status, Nyerere put great emphasis on making the country as a site for pan-Africanist activism and liberation from oppressive racial regimes. Left-wing liberation activists and scholars, including Walter Rodney, Che Guevara, Angela Davis, and Malcolm X, to name only a few, were welcomed into Tanzania. This influx created a fecund intellectual arena for discussing and critiquing the many systems of racial imperialism and strategies for gaining rights. Scholars have been returning to these alliances, not only to seek out the agency of Global South actors, but also to examine the nuances, conflicts, and estrangements that resided within these maneuvers, which increasingly occurred outside the theatre of institutional organizations.⁵ In doing so, this scholarship has underscored the multiplicity of political strategies and arrangements that responded to and shaped the liberal world order that defined the period.

Although this dissertation has retained a focus on life under trusteeship as rendered by the petitions submitted by inhabitants, we must keep in mind that the UN was a space with many voices competing for their visions of the future and what is right to be realised. Unlike the League of Nations, the UN and the UNTC were spaces that were increasingly peopled by delegates who had experienced colonial oppression. This lent an additional layer of potential for the voices of petitioners in trusteeship territories to potentially have their appeals taken up.

Making a World after Empire: the Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010); Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution, Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵See the following works which engage with the many ways that Dar es Salaam was a cultural and political hub of Pan-Africanism: Seth M. Markle, *A Motorcycle on Hell Run: Tanzania, Black Power, and the Uncertain Future of Pan-Africanism, 1964–1974*, (Michigan State University, 2017); Andrew Ivaska, "Liberation in Transit: Eduardo Mondlane and Che Guevara in Dar es Salaam." *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation Building*, ed. Chen Jian, Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young, and Joanna Waley-Cohen. (London: Routledge, 2017); Monique A. Bedasse, *Jah kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, and Pan-Africanism in the Age of Decolonization*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2017).

Unfortunately, as this dissertation demonstrates, even with important anti-colonial activists and networks, the hopes of petitioners were not guaranteed to find the resolutions they so desired. It is this failure that this dissertation explores as we encounter colonial subjects whose occupation of the liminal challenged discrete designations of universalism as a wholly realised abstraction.

This scholarly work has benefited the field by encouraging the move away from stifling binaries of colonizer and colonized as the sole actors in struggles for and against liberation. Despite this, the underlying assumption that liberation constituted the pursuit of self-determination in the form of the nation-state often undergirds much of the literature. However, early petitioners in Tanganyika did not necessarily conceive of liberation in this way, even as they called upon the instruments of the UN trusteeship system, with its obvious ties to the nation-state system. Instead, human rights language and trusteeship status created a forum for petitioners to discuss the many ways in which the racial hierarchies of colonialism instilled rightlessness. For petitioners who wrote to the UN, they imbued a capaciousness to human rights and self-determination that sought to ameliorate situations that addressed their unique positionality in a shifting Tanganyikan society and political world. For many of these petitioners they emphasized the importance of social rights like economic equality, the cost of living, and freedoms of movement and to fall in love.

Trusteeship status underscored the trajectory of nationhood in its formation of, and resolve to, prepare trust territories for self-determination issued under Chapter XII, Article 76.⁶ While in the post-war period statehood was emphasized by the establishment of the UN, not all people had the same preoccupation. Instead, in the case of the petitioners examined in this dissertation, the language of human rights and trusteeship provided a means of critiquing while

⁶ United Nations, *The United Nations and Decolonization: International Trusteeship System*, <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/history/international-trusteeship-system-and-trust-territories>.

engaging with the growing predominance of this liberal structure. Trusteeship provided an alternative for critiquing colonialism and universalism as a mode of domination that sought to manage dynamics of sameness and difference. In this dissertation, I have shown how these petitions were deliberate efforts of refusal of terms and classifications imposed on them that often took racialized forms. These petitioners also pushed at the seams of what constituted human rights and internationalism to potentially improve their everyday situations and futures through this new universal language that served as their own inspection of these terms.

The liminality that trusteeship imposed on subjects with its promise of self-determination to come, enforced a practice of imagining a future while allowing for individuals to attempt to gain dominance, control, or advantage in various ways that could mitigate their marginal status within a racialized system. Although most were unsuccessful in their attempts, we see the range of grievances and ways they instrumentalized this new language to expose racial inequalities and the abject failures of the trusteeship government. With this focus, petitioners tested the limits of international anti-discrimination declarations by drawing on this language of promises to both reveal and critique the real racial disparities in the territory. Furthermore, we see within these petitions a creative engagement with human rights as a language for claiming authority.

The ambiguities of trusteeship and petitioning to the UN has been my primary preoccupation. My concern is less with the outcome of the nation-state and more with what was being imagined, thought, contested, and anticipated. As I have argued here, for Tanganyikan petitioners the pervasive and looming presence of colonial racial hierarchies defined their everyday experiences and informed their visions of the future, regardless of their status and position in the territory. For many petitioners, especially in the early years of trusteeship, the international sphere and the language of human rights did not represent possibilities of statehood

and political sovereignty so much as an opportunity to ameliorate or advance their position within an existing system. Petitioners understood and negotiated the imperial backdrop of internationalism, recognizing and pushing its possibilities as a language for asserting authority over others in new ways. In doing so, petitioners critiqued existing authority and power structures, while attempting to resituate and claim their own. These petitions provide a picture of how their vision of rights claims was also interconnected to their social lives, affective attachments, solidarities, and antagonisms. These petitions allow for a more fine-grained understanding of life under trusteeship as well as the political strategies people deployed to benefit their cause or situation.

Race as a Defining Factor

Referring to international promises of universal human rights and anti-discrimination, petitioners described the racial anxieties and inequalities that informed their lived experience. The petitions encountered in this dissertation serve as a reminder of what Lisa Lowe aptly describes as the act of forgetting involved in liberalism and progress. This forgetting involves neglecting to account for or acknowledge the often violent encounters and entanglements that attend liberal projects, and how these are often imbricated with notions of race. For Lowe, “The genealogy of modern liberalism is thus also a genealogy of modern race; racial differences and distinctions designate the boundaries of the human and endure as remainders attesting to the violence of liberal universality.”⁷ The petitioners in this dissertation cast a spotlight on this violence and the range of forms this takes. The Wameru experienced land dispossession and the erasure of their ancestral histories and connections. Asian petitioners were forced to contend with looming limitations to their access to work, migration, and marriage. For subaltern women like

⁷ Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, (Durham: Duke University, 2015), 7.

Marita Salim, their political and social subordination to men retained its dominance over their lives, and their voices were muted in the din of competing male perspectives. Finally, for domestic servants, we see the intersection of all these issues most acutely. Domestic servants were aware of social and racial hierarchies in the territory and were confronted with continued obstructions to their ability to set the terms of their work, home, and family.

To varying degrees, the petitioners and the British administering authority were fixated on the racialized body. Haunting the petitions examined here is a call to attend to the racial inequalities expressed through housing, land ownership, marriage, employment and more. In these calls, petitioners invoked the body politic of the international sphere and the administering authority to direct its gaze towards the importance of the racialized body and its politics in a trust territory. Their emphasis on race, whether inadvertent or not, communicated how colonialism is a racialized system of governance that inhibits the achievement of human rights and equality. Even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) presumes all people inherently bear rights as humans, trusteeship subjects, like so many others before them, had their bodies inscribed with meanings that both permitted their humanity but denied its innateness. For this reason, Wameru encountered the forced removal from their lands, resulting in violence, imprisonment, and death. Their homes, churches, animals, and belongings were destroyed. The tracking of intimate relationships between Asian women and men, or African women and European men, further illustrates the limits of the human. Marita Salim was left homeless and made a vagrant through her dispossession. Domestic servants were prevented from organizing a union to protect their rights as workers and men with families to support. Many were left unemployed at a moment's notice or after a single tragic accident. Yet trusteeship petitioners were included as individuals protected by the UDHR, as per their humanness. As a result of this

inclusion, they were allowed tutelage from colonial powers, a vestige of the Permanent Mandate years, yet they could not just be admitted as full rights-bearing humans. Their race did not permit it.

Residing within the liminal

In writing this dissertation, I have asked you to dwell within the liminal space alongside the petitioners. As with the appeals to human rights discussed above, the liminal allowed for the reconsideration and replaying of injustices. By dwelling in the liminal with them, we have expanded their audience a little bit more, and we have brought the liminal to the center. In this dissertation, I have brought attention to the trusteeship period, of not quite colony nor nation-state, as a constructive moment of liminality in the physical and temporal sense. For those who chose to write to the UNTC as trusteeship subjects, there is a deliberate acknowledgement of the status of the territory as being in-between and in transition. However, the experience of liminality is not restricted to territorial status and goals of political sovereignty. Liminality was also experienced, quite simply, in terms of waiting. Petitioners waited for responses to their petitions and to have their pressing issues addressed. Some, such as the Wameru, Marita Salim, and some domestic servants, were left homeless and adrift as they waited for responses. The liminal is a space of waiting, one in which bureaucrats and politicians could defer or hasten matters at their will.

The experience of the petitioner is one where authorities deferred or meddled with time. The Wameru land eviction was sped up as Wameru urgently waited for a UN response to their petition against eviction. Marita Salim and her sick child's peripatetic journeying from Iringa to Dar es Salaam, then Iringa, Dar es Salaam, and Switzerland lasted three years. All the while, men of various rank and influence debated her future. As independence loomed, Asian migrants

and settlers queried about their futures and ability to maintain contact with the Indian sub-continent. Their lives were coloured with uncertainty about categories of belonging, as these seemingly threatened to shift at a moment's notice. Their position as a non-white minority group within a trust territory was unclear and shadowed by imperialism in complicated ways that left many feeling unsure. Their petitions were often subsumed under headings of general conditions in the territory and matters of constitutional considerations, rather than having their individual cases attended to. Domestic servants inhabited the liminal margins of Tanganyikan society on an acute scale. Faced with the precarity of labour contracts and the living conditions that defined their work, domestic servants attempted to gain control over their labour and futures. Their efforts to unionize and bring stability were frequently left lingering and unaddressed. These petitioners shared the experience of dwelling within the liminal space, and for a little so did we. Through this dissertation, they ask for us to bear witness to the obstructive but also, occasionally, constructive force of the liminal and the ambivalences it produces.

This experience of inhabiting the liminal characterizes all the petitions examined here. The petitioners occupied varying levels of marginal status in a time where aspiration and uncertainty defined the territory. One of the most dramatic characterizations of this can be seen in the chapter on domestic servants petitioning the UNTC. They inhabited the liminal on a daily basis, which provided an important glimpse into life in Tanganyika that afforded a certain valuable knowledge and intimacy of hierarchical systems, while also being subject to the shifting whims of power. It is from this position that readers encounter the paradox of the liminal as a place of potential harm or power. By narrowing in on this in-betweenness in terms of status, social position, and time, I have attempted to bring to the fore how liminality is a productive place of inquiry and for reflection, even though it is inevitably limited and formed by internal

and external constraints. From a vantage point situated between liberation and oppression, petitions to the UNTC are valuable glimpses of how and what people envisioned as possibilities for change, for better or worse. Therefore, these petitions and their engagement with human rights language are records of aspiration and dread, as potential openings for liberation, authority, and mastery. The liminal space of the trusteeship petitioning system cannot be ignored as a theoretical and material space of experience that defined life in Tanganyika during these final years of colonization.

The Epistolary and Negotiating Authority

Within this dissertation, I have explored how petitioning the UNTC allowed inhabitants to express their distrust, fears, and hopes about trusteeship, human rights, and the future, while serving as a channel of opportunity for testing the limits and possibilities of authority and dominance over others. Inhabitants issued petitions where thresholds of discomfort and ambiguities were outlined and underscored. Contained in the creases of petitioning papers and responses are the ephemeral attempts of petitioners and authorities to exert control over time and its futures, while also shedding important light on how human rights and the international were made to intersect with the hopes and lives of everyday people.

In a petition, the writer works to diagnose a problem and demand action and there is an attempt to exert authority. The petition has an assumed propulsion behind it. With the UNTC petitioning system, this allowed inhabitants to reach across spatial barriers to a wider audience. This audience was increasingly made up of former colonized states who could potentially view their conditions with sympathy. Therefore, the petition as a form is a deliberate tactic to assert one's authority over space and time simultaneously. Furthermore, the petition as an epistolary form has the writer assume certain authority and claim knowledge or privileged insight about a

charged matter. In this way, petitioners, in picking up their pens, are initiating an encounter that admits to authority over some matter or another. Although the authors of these petitions may not agree with such an assessment, the political act of petitioning works on such tiers. Therefore, we see a specific form of agency being enacted that expresses a discontent with authority and a willingness to confront it using international channels and audiences. Those writing these petitions recognized the potentialities of authoring their experiences. These petitions critiqued and sketched out the dynamism of racial discrimination in the trusteeship territory and the ways this could possibly be mitigated by internationalism. This informed their understandings of what liberty could look like for themselves and others, even if it went ignored.

For petitioners in Tanganyika, there was a clear understanding of the operational uses of race. The language of human rights allowed for the contestation of racial inequalities. At the same time, this new language was complicit in, or had the potential to be used as a tool for reinscribing colonial inequalities on various levels. The uncertainties that defined this period of liminality encouraged various responses to this new language of human rights and the potential futures it produced. Sometimes petitioners responded by expressing their distrust and asserting the authority of their experiences and histories. The targets of these critiques were not confined to a single group or authority. People wrote against Europeans, Asians, Africans, the UN, the British government, their neighbours, and more. In doing so, people asserted their position over others and tested the lengths to which the language of human rights could be used as a mode of dominance. For in these petitions, the UNTC and the human rights language it offered was taken up with a view to critique authorities and establish new boundaries and orders of power, with the petitioner as the arbiter.

Concluding Thought

An important component to my analysis has been the duality of the liminal that trusteeship created. This is a dynamic that, I argue, invites the attention of scholars. The liminal position of trusteeship was the point of departure for this investigation, and so it seems only natural to end with the conclusion of the trusteeship system as a liminal period of time. The petitions explored here speak of the everyday dramas that featured in the lives of trusteeship inhabitants during a unique period. I cannot tell you of the dramas, both personal and political, that many of these petitioners experienced after trusteeship. Some, like Marita Salim, left the territory never to return. For others, like Joseph Seaton, they would be important to the political project going forward by occupying government positions. One can perhaps assume that some of the Asian inhabitants migrated out of the territory with Nyerere's nationalization and ujamaa projects that came in the 1970s. However, there are countless others whose names make no further markings, as far as I am currently aware. One can hope that they found other opportunities to test, hope, and negotiate life and its promises.

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