

Report on: Tanganyika Federation of Labor and Mr. Rashida Kawawa, General Secretary,
TFL

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Background -- Located on the east coast of Africa, Tanganyika is a former German colony which, following the First World War, became a mandated territory administered by Great Britain under the League of Nations Mandate System. Following the Second World War, the British agreed to include Tanganyika as a Trust Territory under the U.N. Trusteeship System. Great Britain is committed by this agreement and its signature on the U.N. Charter to bring about the "progressive development towards self-government or independence." This differs from the main focus of the League Mandates system which was primarily concerned with "just treatment" of the dependent peoples. It differs too from the general social, economic, health and other humanitarian concerns of the U.N. Charter for the peoples of non-self governing areas. The U.N. Trust system goes further by obligating the Administrating Powers to further the development of political self-government or independence; colonial powers are not similarly obligated regarding their non-self-governing possessions. Legally, a trust territory is not a possession of an Administrating Power. The latter merely holds it in trust for the inhabitants.

Unlike Kenya or the Rhodesias or Algeria, the problems of Tanganyika are not complicated by the existence of a sizable minority of white settlers. In contrast to the 8 million Africans in the territory, there are only 80,000 Asians and 20,000 whites, mostly merchants and civil servants respectively. Despite four decades of long British administration, however, the level of the African is pervasively backward; most are illiterate; only 2 percent are urbanized; the tribal system and its vestiges characterize the African community. Out of the relatively recent awakening of the African, however, a few significant signs have appeared. The most important is the emergence and growth of a free trade union movement, in large measure under the leadership of Rashida Kawawa.

Kawawa joined the Tanganyika Civil Service as a member of the Social Development Department in 1949. He was 23 at the time and had been spotted in YMCA work by a laborite British civil servant as a promising young man. The civil service workers, due to the pro-trade union orientation of the British Labor Party, had been encouraged to organize a union prior to Kawawa's entry. They comprised the only legitimate and active union for Africans in the territory in 1949.

From 1949 to 1952 Kawawa served as Liaison officer in the Film Unit of his department, as well as principal actor (he had no prior experience in either field) in making vernacular language films for entertainment of the African population. He also frequently wrote and produced these films. His education has gone as far as the highest level permitted and provided within the territory -- a Cambridge School Certificate, roughly equivalent to a high school diploma.

In 1950 Kawawa joined the Union -- The African Civil Servants Association (ACSA). All unions in Tanganyika are in effect organized along racial lines, including either Europeans or Asians or Africans.

LABOR ORGANIZATION IN TANGANYIKA -- The labor movement in Tanganyika has not achieved any notable organizational success among whites or Asians. The white middle class, imposed on the African population from the outside, has not proven susceptible to trade unions and less than one thousand of the civil servants are organized in the Tanganyika European Civil Service Association. Less than one thousand Asians are unionized and most belong to the Asian Civil Service Association.

In all Tanganyika there are about 450,000 workers, about 60% of which are plantation laborers, mostly on sisal, tea and sugar. Well over 90% are Africans and the bulk of them are agricultural laborers, historically the most difficult to organize even in modern countries. Only about 15,000 African workers are urbanized. The remainder are either plantation workers (about 270,000), self-employed farmers or those still living under tribal conditions. In reality, of the 8 million Africans, only about 5% are listed as gainfully employed.

The only major city - Dar-es-Salaam -- with a population of fewer than 100,000 is eighty percent African. The next largest town is Tanga - the center of the sisal trade - with population of less than 10,000.

The African Civil Service Union - ASCA - was originally formed in 1927 by government directive. The African dock workers union was organized in 1946 in Dar-es-Salaam. The first strike staged by an African union took place in 1946 by dock workers over working hours. It was carried out successfully in Dar-es-Salaam without violence. But pressure resulted in enforcement of a law requiring a license to hold any meeting relating to a strike. In 1950 the dock workers union called a strike on a legitimate issue but the strike ran counter to government law prohibiting public assembly. When the police tried to disperse a peaceful meeting of strikers, riots followed. The police then banned the strike before pickets could assemble.

That same year, the government ordered the dissolution of the dock workers union. At the time only three African unions were organized with a total membership under 2,000.

Achievements: Three years after joining his union, Kawawa was elected assistant secretary general (1952). After a two-year term, he was elected president of the ACSA. During this period Kawawa took the leadership in organizing unions in other crafts as a basis for a federation of African unions. Between 1950 and 1955 the number of African Unions grew from 3 to 15 and the total membership from under 2,000 to 9,000, most of the gains coming in the latter two years. In October, 1955, Kawawa and his colleagues formed the Tanganyika Federation of Labor (membership open to all races -- only Africans belong). By August, 1956, a total of 21 African Unions belonged to the Federation with a combined membership of 14,000. Kawawa, who was elected General Secretary of the Tanganyika Federation of Labor at the founding convention, predicts 20,000 members by October, 1957 - or a 110% increase in two years. The largest member unions of the TFL are:

civil servants	-- 4,000
railway workers	-- 3,000
dock workers & stevedores	- 1,500
domestic and hotel workers	- 1,000

Other "larger" unions have been organized among the transport, commercial and industrial (clerical), tailors and garment, and agricultural workers. All number in the hundreds.

The numerical growth of African Unions is only part of the story of Kawawa's extraordinary success. As president of the civil servants union, he served on the Lidbury Salary Commission which inquired into the wage structure of the Civil Service. The Lidbury Commission recommended a unified (integrated) civil service and the abolition of the differential wage structure based on race.

Last year as President of the ACSA, he played a leading role in insuring the implementation of these recommendations and in persuading Europeans and Asians to cooperate.

Since becoming head of the Federation of Labor he has succeeded in gaining employer recognition for the dock workers union which was reorganized with his assistance prior to the birth of the Federation and gained almost 100 percent membership of the eligible workers. Shortly thereafter, the dockworkers in Tanga formed the Joint Industrial Council - a negotiating body for labor and management. A few months ago, the government established a board to determine minimum wage scale for Dar-es-Salaam. Kawawa is an active member of this board.

Labor and Living Conditions -- An eight-hour day and 44-hour week were established by the government for its workers, mostly urban, in 1940. No minimum wage scale, even for urban government workers, has been enacted. As noted above, a government board is attacking this problem in Dar-es-Salaam alone, with a proposed wage structure to start at L3 (\$.80) a month. Presently an ^{unskilled} industrial laborer in this city earns on the average $L\frac{1}{2}$ (\$4.40) a month, plus meals. The average wage for a skilled worker is about L6. In Dar-es-Salaam minimum rent is L-3/4 monthly for a single room without electricity, piped water or windows. Occupants share a common dry lavatory, six rooms to a house, and an earthen floor. These abodes are usually owned by Africans and are the common dwellings of urban workers.

With the average African family food bill amounting to $L7\frac{1}{2}$ monthly, a deficit is inevitable. Quite typically, employers argue that "African workers can live on this wage; therefore, it is sufficient." Kawawa discovered some time ago that, in order to survive, African urban workers must labor day and night. After a day's work, they are obliged to take on such odd jobs as selling peanuts, orange and tea, or to carry water for private homes. Wives labor hoeing fields miles from their homes to grow extra vegetables and rice.

Why then do Africans leave the tribe? Kawawa maintains that conditions there are considerably worse -- that the rural area is characterized by a subsistence agriculture with the bulk of the Africans constantly on the verge of starvation. Pressure on African farmers is becoming even greater with an organized European move to push the Masai tribes off their traditional fertile lands. Against the protests of high-brow ASPCA groups, these Masai may be resettled in big game preserve lands.)

Obstacles to Union Organizing

1. Fundamentally illiterate population.
2. Lack of literate much less trained, skilled and experienced leaders and organizers.
3. Tribal customs - 45 main tribes.
4. Vast distances to cover -- Tanganyika is roughly the size of France & Germany combined.
5. Poor communications - skeletal phone system. The Federation had no office phone. Roads are extremely bad. There is only one railroad main line which was built in 1905 by Germany.
6. Trade unionism is not yet recognized by employers. The government permits organizing of unions and, except for the dock workers, only the two government

workers unions - civil servants and railways have succeeded in large measure in organizing. Generally, employers refuse to accept unions as collective bargaining agents. For example, even after the dock workers union organized almost 100 percent of their workers and proved this through membership lists, petitions and meetings, the employers refused recognition for eight months. The employers undertook in September 1955 a lengthy and dilatory series of inquiries to check the union's claims. The following month the Tanganyika Federation of Labor was formed and this is credited with speeding up recognition.

7. The tragic poverty of the people almost strangles labor's capacity to stay alive, much less to organize new members. The Federation's annual income consists of 15¢ a year from each member. Maximum income, if all dues were collected, would be £700 (\$1,960.00). No other financial assistance is available. Until ICFTU presented an organizing kit, the Tanganyika labor movement never possessed a typewriter or mimeograph machine. All organizing materials were copied by hand. Transportation for organizing is done almost completely by push-bike (which limits the scope of travel severely) or by taxi (a serious drain on funds).

The annual Federation budget is:

1.	2 full-time workers (Kawawa as organizer plus a research officer)	£600	\$1680.00
2.	Rent	£120	336.00
3.	Stationery, etc.	£150	420.00
4.	Organizing expenses (travel) - when available (Kawawa pays for own meals and other expenses on road)		168.00
			<u>2604.00</u>
	Deficit	£	\$476.00

Basic Needs of Federation -- At least \$1500 extra a year is necessary to operate the Federation on a minimum effective basis. More important, Kawawa desperately needs a jeep to carry his organizing beyond the few urban areas (60% of the African workers are on plantations.) The following are what he requires in order of priority thereafter:

1. loudspeaker and public address system
2. extra typewriter
3. motion picture sound projector
4. books for the union library -- texts, social sciences, trade union manuals and histories, social novels, pamphlets of all kinds.
5. scholarships for key personnel to U. S. and British Universities and to labor training institutes.
6. training films
7. additional mimeograph machines and supplies

Conclusions: After lengthy and comprehensive discussions with Kawawa, I have become convinced that he is a man of enormous ability, imagination, courage and maturity. He is clearly in the same class with Tom Mboya, with whom he has

maintained a close friendship and liaison for several years. There are very few men of Kawawa's calibre in labor movements outside the industrialized nations. The achievements of the labor movement under his leadership are one valid indication of his ability. I have to my satisfaction cross-checked his appraisal of the situation, upon which this report is largely based, with a representative of the British colonial administration in Tanganyika, who happens also to be a British Laborite.

It has become increasingly clear that the future democratic orientation of the newly-emerging colonies in Africa must be based on a free trade union movement, perhaps more than on any other single force. Recent experience in Tunisia and Morocco -- and perhaps in Algeria -- would seem to verify this. The work of ICFTU and AFL-CIO in the aforesaid areas was crucial to the success of such free labor movements.

Two other observations seem relevant here. First, the Communists have not yet made any inroads in Tanganyika but have already launched a concerted drive to appeal to the dependent peoples of Africa. With the drive for independence the priority issue, unless this challenge is met imaginatively, the Communists will not find much opposition to their leadership from the African people. A free labor movement is the main bulwark against both the Communists and the traditional colonialists. Second, a relatively small amount of money and material can make a phenomenal impact on the future of the Tanganyika free labor movement. A few thousand dollars a year could spell the difference between survival and extinction for the Federation of Labor. Ten thousand dollars a year would all but guarantee the success of the free labor movement -- and therefore of freedom itself -- in Tanganyika.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The American Committee on Africa, as the logical agency for this work, should immediately circularize all American international unions, urging them either to contribute directly to a Free Labor Fund for Tanganyika to be channelled through ACCA, or to adopt a segment of the TFL's schedule of needs and persuade their locals to undertake responsibility for filling these needs. For example, a local union could undertake to supply sound equipment, a motion picture projector, training films, a mimeograph machine, etc.

College and youth organizations -- particularly those interested in international relations or civil rights -- could organize chapters to collect books for the trade union library, funds to ship the books, funds for scholarships, etc. ACCA should also circularize all organizations in the labor, civil rights, human relations, international affairs, economics, and political fields to immediately place the TFL on their regular mailing lists for pamphlets, books, etc.

Finally, ACCA should undertake as a project to raise a few thousand dollars annually to assist the TFL in its regular organizing expenses.