

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE IN
A TWENTIETH CENTURY AFRICAN URBAN
COMMUNITY IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to study an African community in a Kenyan colonial town from the first decade of the twentieth century up to independence in 1963. Although the colonial structure largely dictated the status and conditions of Africans living in the town, African responses and initiatives played a vital role in the development of their community. The town also played an important role in the history of the surrounding area and the colony as a whole. An attempt is made to trace social and political change and to follow the process of African urbanization mainly through a study of African urban-based organizations and institutions. Africans will be seen in their roles as tribesmen, as townsmen and as Kenyan Africans participating in national politics. It will be suggested that the different spheres of African activity in the town were far from being mutually exclusive and that Africans moved freely in all of them regarding them, in part, as alternative bases in a struggle for urban status. A special place will be given to the emerging African urban elite who figured prominently in all aspects of the town's life and who led most African urban-based associations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	African Affairs Committee
AALMR	African Affairs Department Monthly Report
AAF	Abaluhya Association Files
AWA	Abaluhya Welfare Association
Adm.	Administration
Ag.	Acting
APP	African People's Party
BUF	Bunyore Union Files
CLG	Commissioner for Local Government
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CO	Colonial Office
CRIM	Central Rift Independence Movement
CRLP	Central Rift Labour Party
D.C	District Commissioner
dep.	deposit
D&H.W.U.	Domestic & Hotel Workers Union
E.A	East Africa
EARRH	East African Railway & Harbours
<u>EAS</u>	<u>East African Standard</u>
F&G.P.C.	Finance and General Purposes Committee
GAWU	General Agricultural Workers Union
GRUF	Gen Rahusa Union Files
GWC	General Ward Council
KALU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KASU	Kenya African Study Union
KAU	Kenya African Union

KCA	Kikuyu Central Association
KCEMU	Kenya Carpenters and Masons Union
KFA	Kenya Farmers Association
KIM	Kenya Independence Movement
KLDAR	Kenya Labour Department Annual Report
KLFA	Kenya Land Freedom Army
KLAGMU	Kenya Local Government Workers Union
KMT	Kakamega, Tiriki, Maragoli
KNA	Kenya National Archive
KNF	KANU Nakuru Files
KNP	Kenya National Archive
<u>KLN</u>	<u>Kenya Weekly News</u>
Legco.	Legislative Council
LUM	Luio United Movement
MAAO	Municipal African Affairs Officer
MAR	Municipal Annual Report
MAAC	Nakuru African Advisory Council
MAAP	Nakuru African Progressive Party
MAWMR	Nakuru African Welfare Monthly Report
NED.C.C.	Nakuru and District African Chamber of Commerce
NED.C.C.F.	Nakuru and District African Chamber of Commerce File
NEDAR	Nakuru District Annual Report
NDC	Nakuru District Congress
NDMR	Nakuru District Monthly Report
NKB	North Kavirondo Baraza
Nku	Nakuru
NLDR	Nakuru Labour Officer Report
NMA	Nakuru Municipal Archive
NMB	Nakuru Municipal Board

NMC	Nakuru Municipal Council
NMSSDF	Nakuru Municipal Social Service Department Files
NPCP	Nakuru People's Convention Party
P.C	Provincial Commissioner
PCS	Presbyterian Church of Scotland
P.P	Private Papers
PRO	Public Record Office
RAU	Railway African Union
R.S.A.	Registrar of Societies Archive
RVAU	Rift Valley Agikuyu Union
RVP	Rift Valley Province
SLO	Senior Labour Officer
T&AWU	Transport and Allied Workers Union
TC	Town Clerk
TUF	Tiriki Union Files
WHC	Water and Health Committee

GLOSSARY

The area in the midst of which Nakuru was to be built had been
 who **Fitina** - a habit of trouble the advent of colonial rule. It was
 with **Boon** - a habit of enclosure was apparently unpopular with these
 people **Barasa** - the name "meeting" in Kisi means "the place where the
 are **Shauri** - a habit of problem, dispute occasionally passed through
 the **Panga** - the name a long heavy life was lagoroti in Kikuyu country
 to **Kanzu** - a habit of a long robe was included in the British Pro-
 tection of Kenya during the war, but in 1946 the Nakuru-
 Wajir area was transferred to Uganda, only to revert to Kenya
 in 1962.

Majimbo Regionalism

where a station was built. Perhaps symbolic of such an origin, in 1851
January 1904 G. Mier, N.E. Commissioner, issuing a Proclamation in
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Railway District and was still a predominantly a railway station. Nakuru
was a convenient place for a railway depot since it was the last
station before the trains began to climb the gradient west-wards. It

¹ Kenya Times, 28.11.1952, p.18.

² C.E. Odundo, Land and Peasants: Problems in Kenya (Harare, London, 1968), p.4.

³ Kenya Times, 13.12.1953, p.26.

INTRODUCTION

From a Railway Station to a County Town

The area in the midst of which Nakuru was to be built had been virtually uninhabited prior to the advent of colonial rule. It was within the Masai sphere but it was apparently unpopular with these pastoralists; the name "Nakuru" in Masai means "the place where the cow doesn't eat".¹ Swahili traders had occasionally passed through the area on the caravan route leading from Lagoretti in Kikuyu country towards Uganda. In 1895 the area was included in the British Protectorate of Kenya declared in that year, but in 1896 the Nakuru-Naivasha area was incorporated into Uganda, only to revert to Kenya in 1902.²

The beginnings of Nakuru date back to 1900 when the railway, which had begun in Mombasa in 1896, reached the shores of Lake Nakuru where a station was built. Perhaps symbolic of such an origin, on 28th January 1904 C. Eliot, H.M. Commissioner, issuing a Proclamation in the Official Gazette declaring Nakuru as a Township, delimited it to "within a circle having a radius of one mile from the main entrance to the Railway Station as Centre".³ In that year Nakuru consisted of only a locomotive shed, a Railway Station and two or three dwelling houses mainly for railway employees. It also had the beginnings of an Indian bazaar. By 1906 Nakuru had become the H.Q. of the Northern Railway District and was still predominantly a railway station. Nakuru was a convenient place for a railway depot since it was the last station before the trains began to climb the gradient westwards. It

¹ E.A.S., 28.11.1952, p.18.

² S.H. Gwande, Land and Population Movements in Kenya (Heinemann, London, 1968), p.2.

³ Kenya Weekly News, 13.12.1963, p.26.

was significant that at least until 1908 the railway authorities provided the town with water supply and conservancy services.¹

The railway was one of the pillars upon which Nakuru was to develop and prosper.

The cause of Nakuru's development received considerable impetus in 1908 when the Government decided, after much wavering, to move the Provincial Headquarters from Naivasha to Nakuru. It seems that the main reason for deciding in favour of Nakuru was its central position in the Province compared with Naivasha which was situated some forty miles away on the eastern edge of the Province.² The concentration of the various administrative departments in the town, with relatively large European staffs and the many ancillary jobs they offered to Asians and Africans, was also to be a major factor in the development of Nakuru.

The most important factor which determined the pace of Nakuru's development was its position in the centre of the European rural settlement in the Rift Valley Province. It was the turning of the Kenya highlands into the "White Highlands" which decided the future of Nakuru. Eliot's instructions, as early as September 1903, not to make grants of land between Machakos and Fort Ternan, except of small plots, to Asians, marked the official beginning of the "White Highlands".³ The moderate climate, the fertile volcanic soil and an adequate water supply, made the Rift Valley, and Nakuru District in particular, one of the main areas which attracted European settlers. Lord Delamere, the eminent settler-pioneer, was one of the first to settle on his

¹ Annual Report of the Principal Medical Officer, 1908, p.29. EAS, 23.1.1909, p.10. N.Parker, Political and Social Aspects of the Development of Municipal Government in Kenya (London 1949), p.634.
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² EAS, 2.2.1907, p.14; 14.3.1907.

³ G.Bennet, Kenya: a Political History (O.U.P., London 1963), p.13.

farm some twenty miles west of Nakuru.¹ The peak of the first wave of settlement, which largely consisted of South Africans, was in 1908. By 1909 some two hundred and twenty European settlers lived in the area around Nakuru.² In the second half of the first decade of the century, however, there was little prosperity in Nakuru's agricultural hinterland. Agriculture on this virgin soil had to overcome many difficulties before offering favourable economic returns. Most of the farmers were, in fact, on the verge of bankruptcy.³ This hinterland could hardly have stimulated an accelerated growth of Nakuru. By 1909 Nakuru's population had risen to only fifty Europeans and three hundred people of "other nationalities".⁴ The major economic activity carried out in the small township in the second half of the first decade of the century was stock sales. In May 1908 a Nairobi firm opened stock yards in Nakuru and they soon entered a partnership with a local European firm, Thorne Brothers. Aderton and Bros. was another local firm which specialised in stock and farm-implement sales.⁵ It was significant that these two European firms which started with a typically agricultural trading pursuit branched off to other business spheres. As early as 1910 the Aderton Brothers opened the Highlands Stores selling general provisions spirits and safari equipment whereas Thorne Brothers became builders

¹ E. Huxley, White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the making of Kenya, vol. 1, p.135.

² RAE, 23.1.1909, p.10. L. Winston Coe and T.J. Lipscombe, The History of Kenya Agriculture (University Press of Africa, Nairobi 1972), p.35.

³ C.C. Wrigley, "Kenya: The Patterns of Economic Life 1902-42" in V. Harlow and E.M. Chilver, History of East Africa, vol. II (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1968), pp. 221-2. For Lord Delamere's experience, see E. Huxley, White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya (Chatto & Windus, London, 1970), pp.135-178.

⁴ RAE, 23.1.1909, p.10. "other nationalities" probably refers mainly to Asians.

⁵ RAE, 16.5.1908, p.13; 11.7.1908, p.4; 19.9.1908, p.17; 26.9.1908, p.17; 9.1.1909, p.9.

and contractors, wheelwrights and blacksmiths.¹ Asians also expanded their trade and notable among them was the Makuru branch of M.R. de Souza as general merchants.² In 1908 Makuru Hotel, owned by Lord Delemere, was opened and there were signs that Makuru was becoming a health and holiday resort.³

1908 witnessed the beginning of European participation in the running of the township, when Makuru's first committee headed by the administrative officer of the area was formed.⁴ Makuru was also becoming a centre of settlers' associations. In 1908, the Pastoralist Association was formed at a meeting at Makuru. The town dwellers and the farmers at this stage formed one integral community and it was significant that the Hon. Secretary of the Association was a Makuru businessman.⁵ In 1909 the Pastoralist Association launched the Makuru Agricultural Show which was to become an annual feature symbolising the increasing centrality of Makuru in the White Highlands.⁶

The years from 1910 to the outbreak of the First World War brought economic progress to the European settlers. Capital was now flowing into the country and the volume and value of exports increased. The settlers started to grow coffee and maize which in those years fetched high prices on world markets.⁷ The low-lying rich soil around Makuru became a maize growing area. Prosperity attracted new settlers. This time they came primarily from Great Britain and they brought with them

¹ EAS, 1.1.1910, p.13; 8.1.1910, p.5.

² EAS, 1.10.1910, p.1.

³ E.Huxley, White Man's Country, p.149; EAS, 14.3.1908, p.9; 8.1.1910, p.10; 4.6.1910, p.9.

⁴ H.Parker, Political and Social Aspects... (Ph.D.), p.677.

⁵ EAS, 16.5.1908, p.11; 19.2.1910, p.13.

⁶ EAS, 16.1.1909, p.11; 23.1.1909, p.11.

⁷ C.C.Wrigley, op.cit., pp. 223-5. KNA, NDAR 1912/13, p.3.

capital which the earlier settlers had so badly lacked.¹ This newly acquired prosperity in the countryside gave an impetus to the growth of Nakuru. By 1913 the town's population had expanded to include some nine hundred and fifty Europeans, Goans and Indians.² The opening, in March 1911, of the branch of the National Bank of India was indicative of the confidence in the economic potential of the White Highlands.³ Existing businesses expanded in this period and new ones were set up. The considerable increase in the building activity was indicative of the prosperity of Nakuru's business community and their belief in the town's future.⁴ The expansion of the township brought about an increase in the participation of European residents in the running of Nakuru. From as early as 1910 there was a local Sites Board which advised the Senior Administrative Officer in charge of the township in matters concerning plots allocation.⁵ In 1913 the area of Nakuru Township was expanded to include ten square miles.⁶ By 1914-15 the township was roughly divided into six separate divisions: the Government officers' quarters, the Indian Bazaar, the European business quarters, the European residence quarters, the Indian "coolies" lines and the Native lines.⁷

The First World War caused a severe setback to the settler economy. Many farmers were called up into the army and agricultural production

¹ E. Huxley, White Man's Country, p. 248.

² EAS, 4.1.1913.

³ EAS, 11.3.1911, p. 11.

⁴ EAS, 6.1.1912, p. 14; 17.8.1912, p. 28; 1.3.1913, p. 15; 10.1.1914, p. 31; KNA, NDAR, 1910/11, p. 6; 1911/12, p. 2; 1912/13, p. 5; KNA, Nakuru District Quarterly Report, December 1911, pp. 1-2.

⁵ KNA, Nakuru District Quarterly Report, March 1910, pp. 14, 15.

⁶ Report of the Local Government Commission, 1927, p. 128.

⁷ KNA, NDAR, 1914/15, p. 4.

fell sharply. For those who did return from the War many found their farms badly neglected.¹ The depression in the countryside and the war had immediate effects on Nakuru. Its expatriate population fell to a hundred and thirty Europeans and a hundred and eighty Indians and Goans.² By 1917/18 the European population fell further to eighty-five while the Asians increased to three hundred and ten.³ The African population increased from about five hundred in 1914-15 to about eight hundred in 1917-18. Economic activity in the town was greatly reduced.

As the War drew to its end plans were made to revitalize Kenya's settler economy and to double the number of European farmers. By 1919, the British East African Farmers Association, the forerunner of the Kenya Farmers Association (KFA), had been formed in Nakuru area. It was a farmers' co-operative which was formed to market the farmers' surplus maize but later developed into a big concern which also supplied farmers with farm implements and other farm requirements.⁴ Nakuru became the headquarters of the KFA. Reality, however, fell short of settler expectations. The short period of high prices for Kenya's agricultural exports which came to an end in the summer of 1920, was followed by a sharp recession which brought the European farmers close to ruin by 1922. By 1923, however, world trade had recovered and Kenya's agricultural exports began to enjoy high, stable prices. The

¹ C.C. Wrigley, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-3. L. Winston Come and J.F. Lipscomb, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

² KNA, NDAR 1914/15, p. 4.

³ KNA, NDAR 1917/18, p. 3.

⁴ E. Huxley, *No Easy Way* (East African Standard Ltd., Nairobi 1957), pp. 2, 35, 55. This book tells the full story of the KFA.

area close to Nakuru turned into a maize growing area but more distant areas in the District grew wheat and coffee and raised cattle and sheep. Nakuru's hinterland enjoyed stable prosperity until 1928.¹ An additional impetus to the growth of Nakuru was the Government's decision, in 1921, that the railway line to Uasin-Gishu would branch off the existing line a few miles west of Nakuru. Nakuru thus became an important railway junction.²

Nakuru's European business community responded to the prospect of post-war developments by forming, as early as 1918, the local Chamber of Commerce.³ In 1920, after a gap of six years, the Agricultural Show was again held in Nakuru and this time was on a much larger scale.⁴ The introduction of tractors to the District towards the end of the 1910s⁵ had a particularly strong impact on business in Nakuru. Agencies of international firms were established in Nakuru during the 1920s to supply the farmers with tractors and other agricultural machinery and motor vehicles. This in turn considerably stimulated the expansion of garages, some of which were owned by local residents and others were branches of Nairobi-based firms.⁶ With the expansion in the agricultural production the old and new auctioneers considerably increased the scale of their business.⁷ New firms came to Nakuru to deal with the export

¹C.C Wrigley, op.cit., pp. 232-43.
²W.McGregor Ross, Kenya From Within (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London 1968), pp. 239-55.
³EAS, 20.7.1918, p.16.
⁴EAS, 11.12.1920, p.18.
⁵EAS, 18.10.1919, p.26.
⁶EAS, 11.5.1918, p.21; 20.9.1919, p.20; 24.7.1920, p.11; 9.10.1920, p.8; 6.11.1920, p.22; 27.5.1922, p.27; 30.9.1922, p.6. 14.14.1923, p.8; 13.2.1926, p.1; 17.4.1926, p.28F; 29.5.1926, p.33; 15.10.1927, p.24; 15.10.1927, p.40; 5.11.1927, p.37; 31.12.1927, p.37; 21.4.1928, p.5.
⁷EAS, 12.6.1920, p.18D; 4.3.1922, p.18; 25.11.1922, p.25; 20.1.1923, p.15; 3.5.1924, p.4; 30.8.1924, p.26A; 20.9.1924, p.37; 7.11.1925, p.11; 12.2.1927, p.15.

of the agricultural produce.¹ The KFA also expanded its role of marketing farmers' produce and supplying them with their requirements.² In Nakuru by 1924 there were 27 European business plots in which twenty-three businesses were functioning.³ Among them were butchers-shops, general provision stores, chemists, clothing-shops, furniture-shops, book-shop, barber's saloon, restaurant, baker and so on.⁴ The increase of building activity naturally gave impetus to the building construction companies.⁵ Solicitors and accountants offered their services to the town businessmen and farmers alike.⁶ There was also an expansion of Indian business in the period of which not much is known. Nakuru thus emerged primarily as a county-town, a marketing, servicing and supplying centre for its agricultural hinterland. It was also a social centre for the farmers who had their Rift Valley Sports Club in Nakuru. It was during the 1920s that Nakuru acquired its reputation as the "capital of the Highlands".⁷

Despite the considerable growth of Nakuru's economy population expansion, especially of the expatriate communities, was rather slow. From eighty-five in 1917-18 the European community rose to only two hundred and nine in 1927. A more substantial increase occurred by 1931 when it reached five hundred and forty-six. The Asian community rose from three hundred and ten in 1917-18 to nine hundred and forty-five in 1931. The rate of expansion of the town's African population

¹ EAS, 21.5.1921, p.9; 12.1.1924, p.14.
² EAS, 3.5.1924, p.4. Interview: M. Blundell.
³ EAS, 25.10.1924, p.30.
⁴ EAS, 15.6.1918, p.12; 7.6.1919, p.23; 23.4.1921, p.26; 4.6.1921, p.9; 31.12.1921, p.10; 12.4.1924, p.30; 17.1.1925, p.3; 26.12.1925, p.3; 20.11.1926, p.12; 5.11.1927, p.55; 3.2.1927.
⁵ EAS, 29.1.1927; 2.10.1926, pp. 160, 37; 26.1.1929, p.51.
⁶ EAS, 30.4.1927, p.4. Interview: G.L. Bellhouse.
⁷ EAS, 25.10.1924, p.30; 27.11.1926, p.16E.

was much faster, from eight hundred in 1917-18 to three thousand five hundred in 1931.¹

The economic growth of the 1920s stimulated a developing interest in the town and its progress among the European community. The Europeans who struck roots in Nakuru were mostly private individuals who came to build their homes in the town. They were urban settlers, counterparts of the rural settlers. They had permanent interests in the town and they evolved organizations to safeguard and promote them. One such organization was the Nakuru Chamber of Commerce formed in 1928. Perhaps more important was the formation, in 1923, of the Nakuru Township Association which aimed at protecting the interests of Nakuru's residents and plot owners.² During the 1920s the Association was engaged in a struggle with Government over the abolition of racial segregation by the White Paper of 1923. The Association claimed that if there was free sale of plots there would be a danger of Nakuru becoming an Indian town.³ The Association was a member of the Convention of Associations, the settlers' political organization. H. Thackrah, a local auctioneer, and F. Watkins, Junior, a garage owner, figured prominently in the Association.

The need for an association protecting those who had permanent interests in the town was all the more obvious since the town was run by the Administration. The Sites Board which dealt with the most important issue of plots allocation consisted of five officials and two European unofficial members.⁴ The town was run by the D.C. who

¹ Report of the Local Government Commission, 1927, vol. II, p.28.
Annual Report of the Commissioner for Local Government, Land and Settlement 1931, p.17.

² EAS, 6.4.1929, p.15.

³ M.R.Dilloy, British Policy in Kenya Colony (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London 1966), p.121. EAS, 18.10.1924, p.30; 29.11.1924, p.30; 14.5.1927, p. . . ; 6.4.1929, p.15; 12.5.1928, p.17; 23.6.1928, p.21.

⁴ EAS, 25.10.1924, p.30.

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was assisted by a European advisory body which was known by 1920 as the Nakuru Township Board.¹ According to M. Parker there was a good deal of friction over the relative power of the advisory body and the D.C., and the town representatives were consistently demanding greater autonomy.² The Board was purely advisory and had no status under law. The final responsibility for the allocation of funds lay with the D.C. who also made the local by-laws and levied fees and rates.³

By 1926 the Government felt the need to grade townships according to their size and to give local municipal bodies greater executive powers according to their resources. In that year a commission known as the Feetham Commission⁴ was set up whose task was "To make recommendations as to the establishment or extension of Local Government for Nairobi, Mombasa and such settled areas as the Commissioners may consider suitable for the establishment of local Government".⁵ The Feetham Report published in 1927 recommended the establishment of four types of township. The two lower types were to be run by administrative officers and the two higher types were to be governed by municipal boards and municipal councils respectively. Nakuru together with Eldoret, Kitale and Kisumu were recommended for a municipal board.⁶ The Local Government (Municipalities) Ordinance of 1928,

¹ EAC, 25.10.1924, p.30.

² M. Parker, Political and Social Aspects (Ph.D.), p.678.

³ S.H. La Fontaine and J.M. Mower, Local Government in Kenya, its Origins and Development (The Eagle Press, Nairobi 1955), p.34.

⁴ Mr. Justice Feetham was the Town Clerk of Johannesburg.

⁵ Report of the Local Government Commission, 1927, vol. I, p.1.

⁶ M. Parker, Political and Social Aspects (Ph.D.), p.681; Report of the Local Government Commission 1927, vol. II, p.128.

empowered the Governor to declare urban areas municipalities under municipal boards or municipal councils.¹ In January 1929, the Governor nominated an interim Municipal Board for Nakuru consisting of the Senior Commissioner as chairman, eight Europeans and two Asians (one Hindu and one Muslim). Nakuru was officially declared a municipality on 30th April 1929 and on 4th June 1929 the first election for the six European unofficial members was held. On 2nd July 1929 the constitution of Nakuru Municipal Board (NMB) was officially proclaimed. It included two official members including the Senior Commissioner as chairman, six Europeans (unofficial elected), two Europeans (unofficial nominated), and one representative of Nakuru District Council.² The Asian leaders refused to join the newly formed NMB, probably on the grounds of being under-represented. It was only in March 1931 that Indian representatives were prepared to come forward for nomination. The constitution of the NMB was then amended to include three Asian members.³ The Asian members of the NMB were first elected by the local Indian Association and then submitted for nomination to the D.C.⁴

In March 1932 the NMB asked the Governor to be permitted to elect their own chairman, but the Government agreed to this only in November 1933. The first elected Board chairman was J. Couldrey, a local businessman, who also owned a farm in Njoro, and his deputy was the general manager of the KFA, C.G. Griffiths.⁵ The intimate relations

¹CO 533 382, File 15407, An Ordinance to Amend the Law relating to Municipal Government, 1928, p.6.

²EAS, 26.1.1929, p.41. Kenya Weekly News, 13.12.1963, p.26; M.Parker, Political and Social Aspects (Ph.D.), p.515.

³Annual Report of the Commissioner for Local Government, Land and Settlement, 1931, p.17.

⁴EAS, 23.8.193, p.26.

⁵EAS, 9.9.1933, p.33; 11.11.1933, p.38.

between town and country were thus reflected in Nakuru's municipal leadership. The European Board members tended to be at that time successful local businessmen, largely of the urban-settler type.

The prosperity of the settler economy from 1923 came to an end in 1928 with the first invasion of the locusts. From 1928 to 1932 Kenya's countryside was devastated by repeating locust invasions from all directions. In addition, from 1931 to 1934 there was a disastrous drought in Kenya. On top of all this there was the Great Depression starting in 1929 which resulted in a sharp fall in the prices paid for Kenya's agricultural exports on the world markets.¹ Many European farmers were reduced to subsistence farming and to a barter economy. Many of them could hardly afford to travel to Nakuru whose businesses thus lost much of their potential clientele.² The effect of the depression was very strongly felt by the Nakuru business community. An important result of the depression was that many of the small independent European businesses went bankrupt or disappeared. Those who needed a relatively high profit margin could not survive the recession. The branches of the big international or Nairobi-based firms like Gailley and Roberts, Hughes Ltd. or Motor Mart continued to operate. The result was that the group of economically independent urban settlers was greatly reduced. On the other hand, the Asian traders, used to low profit-margins, in fact benefited from the slump and came to monopolize lines of business like general provisioning and clothing which Europeans abandoned.³

¹C.C. Brigley, op.cit., pp. 247-50. E. Huxley, No Easy Day, pp. 91-4, 107-10.

²Interview: M. Blundell.

³Interview: M. Blundell. EAE, 5.9.1931, p.13; 23.11.1933, p.37; 10.6.1933, p.18; 9.1.1932, p.21; 18.6.1932. KNA, NDAR 1931, pp. 5, 11; 1932, pp. 5, 13; 1933, p.B(5).

The depression did not have a serious effect on Nakuru's population levels. The European population in fact increased from 209 in 1927 to 546 in 1931 and to 650 in 1934. The Asian population fluctuated greatly. It increased from 520 in 1929 to 655 and 1,200 in 1932 and 1933 respectively and dropped to 900 in 1934. The African population rose from 2,200 in 1926 to 3,500 in 1931 and then dropped to 3,000 in 1932 and rose again to 3,150 in the following year.¹

In 1936 there were signs of recovery in Nakuru resulting from the marked rise in the prices paid for the primary product grown in the District. This trend continued in 1937.² The prosperity of the latter part of the 1930s was in a way a result of the depression. Faced with collapsing world-markets farmers began looking for alternative profitable crops. Pyrethrum was the most outstanding introduction of the 1930s. The farmers realised that monoculture could not guarantee their economic security and prosperity. During the 1930s Nakuru District became an area of mixed farming. This was largely possible because of the varied climatic conditions and soil types in the District. In the second half of the 1930s Nakuru District farmers were growing maize, wheat and other cereals, sisal, coffee and pyrethrum. They also expanded ^{beef} cattle, dairy cattle and sheep farming. This had an immediate effect on Nakuru which was now a centre of a thriving agricultural area whose needs were much more varied.³ The Annual Report of 1938 observed: "There is an air of subdued prosperity about Nakuru which had been absent for some years subsequent to the fall in maize ^{and prior} prices/to the change over to mixed farming."⁴ But farmers had to pay

¹IAS, 13.7.1929, p.19; 28.4.1934. Annual Report of the Commissioner of Local Government, Land and Settlement 1931, p.17; 1932, p.28; 1934, p.33.

²KNA, NDAR 1936, p.2; 1937, p.2.

³Interview: M. Blundell, J.F. Lipscomb.

⁴KNA, NDAR 1938, p. B(1).

off mortgages and overdrafts before the full impact of the rural prosperity could be felt in the town. 1939 was a prosperous year for Nakuru business. Farmers were beginning to spend more money in the town and this was further stimulated by the declaration of the War and the fear of shortage of supplies.¹

The 1930s also witnessed the beginning of industry in Nakuru based on processing produce from the town's agricultural hinterland. In 1935 there was the Kenya Oatmeal Company in Nakuru producing breakfast cereals.² In 1938 the first roller mill for the production of granulated maize meal in Kenya was built by a local European businessman.³ In the same year a more ambitious enterprise was established on the border of Nakuru. It was the Nakuru Tannery which started to produce leather and boots in 1938 and wool blankets in 1939.⁴

The Second World War period was on the whole a good one for farmers and townsmen. There was an increased demand for agricultural crops like sisal and pyrethrum and Kenya became the granary for the allied forces in the Middle and the Far East. In addition, Kenya's farmers had to feed the numerous Italian P.O.W.s from Ethiopia who spent the War in the country. The farmers had, then, more money to spend in the town. In addition an Air Force training depot in the adjacent Lanet and a military base in Nakuru itself stepped up the demand for commodities supplied in the town. The only limit on the expansion of Nakuru's businesses during the War seems to have been the shortage of supplies. The position in this respect improved in the closing years

¹KMA, NDAR 1939, pp. 43-4.

²EAS, 16.8.1935, p.10.

³EAS, 20.5.1938, p.30.

⁴EAS, 13.5.1938, p.7; 29.9.1939, p.23. It was later known as Nakuru Industries.

of the war.¹

Nakuru European population, however, dropped considerably as a result of the war. There were altogether 438 Europeans in 1940 and 455 in 1945. The two other racial communities increased substantially at the same period. The Asians increased from 1,164 in 1940 to 1,815 in 1945. The Asians seem to have reaped the benefits of the war's economic boom more than the Europeans. The African population rose from 3,150 in 1936 to 8,041 and 8,762 in 1940 and 1945 respectively.²

Municipal politics between 1934 and 1945 were dominated by J. Couldrey who was, except for 1935, the NMB chairman throughout. The other dominant figure was G.C. Griffiths, a farmer and the general manager of the KFA, who was the chairman in 1935 and the deputy chairman until 1942. This then was a period when the interests of the farming area were close to the hearts of the municipal leadership. In 1936 and 1937 Asians were again dissatisfied with their position on the NMB and only one Asian, a Muslim, accepted nomination to the Board. In 1938 the Indian Association agreed to the nomination of two additional Asian Board members.³ The Asians who had extensive commercial interests in the town resented the fact that the municipal executive power was in the hands of Europeans who in many cases had conflicting interests with theirs.⁴ In 1937 the Hindus asked that the election of Asian Board members, which was agreed to by the Government that year, be applied in Nakuru, but the NMB turned it down. In 1941 the Hindu

¹KNA, NDAR 1939, pp. 51-2; 1940, pp. 22-3, 27; 1941, pp. 1, 23; 1942, p. 14; 1943, p. 20; 1944, p. 23; 1945, p. 12. EAS, 17.1.1939, p. 23.

²KNA, NDAR, 1940, appendix B. Report of the Commissioner for Local Government 1945, p. 17.

³KNA, NDAR 1938, p. 12. KNA, Municipal Annual Report (MAR) 1936, 1937, 1938.

⁴EAS, 7.8.1940, p. 6; 15.3.1944, p. 4.

which they were directly attacked. From 1943 to 1951 Nakuru was Board members raised the question again without results. The position was weakened by the antagonism between the more militant Hindu majority community and the Muslim minority. In 1942 the Commissioner, Devalla was the local member of Nakuru and Roberts, the Commissioner of Local Government presented a compromise which provided for the election of two of the three Asian Board members.¹

The end of the war was the beginning of a period of continuous development and prosperity in the settlers' sector which persisted until 1960. There were new post-war settlement schemes which increased the area under effective cultivation and generally settler agriculture became more intensive and effective than previously. Even the Mau Mau revolt could not seriously check the curve of development.²

The prosperity in the settlers' economic sector gave a considerable boost to the development of the "capital of the Highlands". At last the European population of Nakuru began to grow. From 480 in 1946 it rose to 1,159 in 1952, 1,500 in 1957 and 2,000 in 1959.³ But even then, both in absolute terms and in proportion to the other racial communities the Europeans remained a small minority. The type of European which Nakuru received after the war was perhaps more important than the actual increase in their numbers. They were a second wave of urban settlers, of young people who, either as businessmen or as executives, came to make Nakuru their permanent homes. They were unhappy with the pace of the town's development and soon clashed with the municipal leaders.

In 1945 the era of the early urban settlers with chairman Couldrey as the prototype came to an end. They had regarded the town solely as a marketing and servicing centre for the agricultural hinterland to

¹ ES, 5.3.1941, p.6; 7.5.1941, p.6; 3.9.1941 p.6; 1.4.1942, p.6.

² Interview: M. Blundell, J.F. Lipscomb, L. Winston Cone and J.F. Lipscomb, op.cit., pp. 97-9.

³ Report of the Commissioner for Local Government 1946, p.26.
ES, 28.11.1952, p.21; 12.4.1957, p.7; 27.5.1959, p.7.

which they were strongly attached. From 1945 to 1951 Nakuru was governed largely by C.E. Develin and F.H. Harraway who represented a new group of town dwellers, namely managers of branches of international firms. Develin was the local manager of Galley and Roberts, the engineering firm, and Harraway was the manager of Dalgety & Co., the agricultural firm. They were to serve their term in Nakuru and then move on, and did not visualize themselves spending their lives in the town. They were happy with the way the town was run and preferred to respond to reality rather than to change it. Indeed, an official report for 1947 pointed out the low standard of public services in Nakuru.¹ Develin and Harraway only filled, however, the gap between the period of the first and second waves of urban settlers.

The formation in 1948 of the Nakuru Township Association, reminiscent of its earlier counterpart which had existed in the 1920s, gave expression to new attitudes towards the town among its permanent residents. The association combined the newcomers as well as old residents who were interested in the development of the town. They declared "a war on apathy" and committed themselves to working for the progress of the town. Their most revolutionary idea was to turn Nakuru into a centre for secondary industries not necessarily based on processing agricultural products. Whilst recognising Nakuru's dependence on its hinterland they had a vision of Nakuru acquiring an independent urban momentum. They sought to influence the NMB's policy by acting as a pressure group and by promoting candidates in municipal elections. In 1949 two of the Association's leading members were elected as Board members. In 1951 N.H. Hardy, the most outstanding representative of the new urban settlers, was elected as the chairman of the NMB, and

¹Report of the Commissioner for Local Government 1947, pp. 7, 25.
KNA, NBAR 1947, p.8.

a new era in the development of Nakuru began.¹ Once its representatives controlled the town the Association itself withered away.

Upon being elected as chairman Hardy outlined his plans for the development of Nakuru: "From a long term point of view it is necessary that every encouragement be given to industrial and commercial organizations to establish secondary industries in the municipal area."² With determination and energy the new municipal leaders set out to achieve their goal. They first improved municipal services and developed an infrastructure which would attract industrialists to invest capital in Nakuru. They advertised Nakuru and tried to persuade Government to direct investors to Nakuru rather than Nairobi.³ But for all their efforts Nakuru failed to develop as an important centre for light industries. Investors and industrialists continued to prefer Nairobi. The municipal leaders attracted only one industrial enterprise, the E.A. Tobacco Company in 1951-2, but this factory closed down before 1963.⁴

Nakuru, however, developed considerably during the late 1940s and the 1950s on its original lines. It developed primarily as a marketing, servicing and processing centre for the agricultural hinterland. The KFA, a settler-controlled enterprise, considerably expanded its services in marketing farmers' produce and supplying farmers. Unga Limited, another settlers' co-operative, established processing plants for animal feed, cereal-foods and flour. The Kenya Creamery Co-Operative also opened a plant in Nakuru as did the Pyrethrum Board. Nakuru Industries developed its original lines of processing wool and leather. With the post-war settlement schemes and the increased mechanization of farming, the engineering firms and particularly those dealing with agricultural machinery,

¹ ibid., 21.5.1948, p.6; 29.7.1949, p.6; 19.9.1949, p.3; 16.12.1949, p.3; 1.6.1951, p.18. Interview: M.H.Hardy, M.Blundell.

² 28.7.1951, p.5.

³ 6.3.1955, p.11; 28.1.1955, p.12; 10.2.1956, p.21; 24.1.1958, p.7. 28.3.1958, p.4; 23.3.1958, p.6; 16.1.1959, p.5; 19.6.1959, p.8. Interview:

also got an additional councillor. The increase in the demand considerably increased the volume of their business. This vast increase of scale brought a large number of European personnel to Nakuru, mainly in managerial and professional positions; in turn this further stimulated building activity in the town. It was during the 1950s that Europeans began to expand their residential area to the slopes of the Menengai. During the same period Asian and African housing received a great impetus. The overall prosperity in the town and the countryside considerably increased the volume of the general retail and wholesale trade which was largely in the hands of Asians.¹ The increase of agricultural production in the District and the Rift Valley as a whole considerably stimulated the expansion of the railway services in Nakuru. The various governmental departments also expanded considerably after the war. It is interesting to note, however, that during the latter part of the 1950s and despite the continued economic progress in the countryside and the town, there was a sharp drop in the number of jobs offered to Africans.²

It was with the Asian community that the European municipal leaders repeatedly clashed during the 1950s over the implementation of municipal policies. In December 1952 the NMB was raised to a municipal council which gave the local authority greater financial independence.³ With the change of status the municipal constitution was changed to include an additional Asian elected councillor. The Africans who had got their first two representatives on the NMB in 1947

M. H. Hardy.

¹ Interview: M. H. Hardy, M. Blundell.

² E. Huxley, No Easy Way, pp. 152, 154, 186. EAS, 7.11.1947, p. 7; 13.6.1958, p. 17; 23.5.1960, p. 3. KNA, NDAR 1957, p. 24. Interview: M. H. Hardy. Kenya Weekly News, 16.5.1958, p. 74; 4.7.1958, p. 74.

³ See below, p.

⁴ Kenya Weekly News, 5.3.1952, p. 63.

also got an additional councillor.¹ The Europeans on the Municipal Council still had an undisputed majority of eleven councillors. The Asian community increased considerably from 1945. From 1,815 in that year they rose to 3,000 in 1952 and 8,000 in 1959.² Asians did not fail to respond to the economic opportunities which Nakuru offered. It is customary to think that Asians in Kenya and East Africa as a whole, were predominantly engaged in commerce. This was certainly not true in Nakuru. Asians did dominate the general retail and wholesale trade because they were able to operate on relatively low profit margins on which Europeans could not survive. But the Asians engaged in commerce in Nakuru formed only a small minority in their community. The majority of working Asians were employed as clerks, artisans, technicians and in low-grade managerial positions.³ They were the backbone of Nakuru's commercial and industrial enterprises. They performed a vital role sandwiched between the Europeans who had the capital and who held the top executive positions and the predominantly unskilled African labour force.

The municipal development plans were largely financed by money raised from rates and the municipal authorities had to repeatedly raise the rates in order to maintain the development momentum. Asians opposed increases in the rates and resented the fact that although they paid a large proportion of the total money raised by rates they had little influence on municipal policy. They also felt that they did not benefit from the municipal services as much as Europeans and that they were discriminated against in important matters like the allocation

¹ KENYA WEEKLY MAIL, 13.12.1963, p.26.

² EAS, 28.11.1952, p.21; 27.3.1959, p.7.

³ NHA, see for example, Indigen Voters' Roll 1956.

of plots. Throughout the 1950s Asian councillors were involved in conflicts with the European majority, mainly over taxation and representation, which were closely linked. These conflicts culminated in 1957-8 in a boycott of Nakuru Municipal Council (NMC) meetings by Asian councillors. The Asian stand was again weakened by the internal divisions between their sub-communities. In Nakuru there were the Indian Congress representing the Hindus, the Muslim Association and the Sikh Union. The Hindu majority normally adopted more militant positions than the two other communities who did not always follow their lead. Despite their efforts and the extreme measure they had taken Asians were unable to change municipal policies on the controversial issues between them and the European majority during the 1950s.¹ On certain issues Asian and African municipal councillors co-operated in opposition to the European majority, but even then the Asian and African view could not prevail.²

1960 marked the end of the period of economic expansion in the settler sector and in Nakuru. This was a direct result of the political uncertainties caused by the first Lancaster House conference in which, for the first time, the principle of African majority rule was accepted by the colonial government. The hopes of settlers to evolve a multi-racial state under European tutelage received a deadly blow.³ At a meeting in Nakuru in September 1960, M. Blundell urged Europeans to remain in independent Kenya,⁴ but at that stage he was no longer popular among farmers. The farmers' worst fears were of course that they were

¹ See for example, *EAS*, 18.2.1950, p.4; 21.2.1950, p.5; 7.3.1950, p.5; 30.5.1950, p.5; 3.9.1951, p.5; 3.12.1951, p.2; 30.6.1953, p.5; 28.2.1955, p.5; 30.3.1956, p.7; 30.11.1956, p.21; 4.6.1957, p.6; 9.8.1957, p.5; 6.9.1957, p.7; 23.4.1958, p.6; 23.8.1958, p.6; 6.6.1958, p.17; 27.6.1958, p.25; 4.7.1958, p.3; 9.3.1951, p.6; 1.6.1951, p.7. *KNA*, *KEJAR* 1957, p.11. Interview: J.M.Patel, M.R.Thakar, P.Singh, G.H.Gilani.

² See below, pp.

³ See below, pp.

⁴ *EAS*, 24.9.1960.

going to lose their farms without compensation. Some of them sold up and left the country while others were looking for buyers. Most farmers stopped all long-term development plans and concentrated on projects and crops which would give immediate profit. One result of their sense of insecurity was that they hung on to their money and spent very little. This had an immediate effect on Nakuru which was so dependent on the purchasing power of the farmers. Some of the bigger and well-established enterprises survived this reverse awaiting the emergence of African consumers, but many of the smaller establishments were in a difficult position. Asian traders were also hard-hit. Although there were bright signs for the town like the completion of a big pyrethrum extraction plant, the prospect was gloomy for the expatriate communities in particular. For the first time since 1945 there was a considerable decrease in the European and Asian populations. The European population dropped from 2,000 to 1,414 and that of the Asians from 8,000 to 6,203 between 1959 and 1962.¹ The African population of Nakuru suffered severely from an unprecedented rate of unemployment. Despite this the African population increased from 25,000 in 1959 to 30,984 in 1962. Confidence in the political future, population pressures in the reserves and the revocation of the State of Emergency in early 1960 were responsible for this.

In 1960 after the first Lancaster House conference had decided the political future of the country, the constitution of the KMA was changed at last. The Asians now had five elected councillors, the Africans had three elected and two nominated councillors and the Europeans six elected and five nominated.² A marginal European majority

¹ Kenya Population Census, 1962, Tables, Advanced Report, of Vol. I, II, p.39. LAS, 22.4.1960, p.23; 24.9.1960, p.5; 4.11.1960, p.4; 8.3.1962, p.3; 17.7.1962, p.5; 18.7.1962, p.5; 18.7.1961, p.5; 6.9.1961, p.5. KMA, NDAR 1960, p.13; 1961, p.1. KMA, Nakuru District Handing Over Report, Brown to Nottingham, July 1962, p.1. KMA, R.V.P. Annual Report 1961, p.13; 1962, p.1.

²KMA, NDAR 1960, p.6. See below, pp.

was still maintained. In ^{December} September 1963 on the eve of independence the first open municipal elections were held in Nakuru and the control of the town passed to the African majority.¹

The Development of African Administration in Nakuru

Until 1929, when Nakuru was declared a municipality, the local African population was under the sole authority of the D.C. There is little information about the administration of Nakuru's Africans prior to 1929, but one suspects that the D.C., having to administer the whole District could not have devoted much of his time to the small urban African population. From 1929 Africans became the responsibility of the NMB as provider of services to local residents. The Administration continued to deal with aspects like labour, law and order. In 1931, the same year, the Board passed its first Control of Persons By-Laws aimed at facilitating control over African migration into the town.² It seems, however, that in the first few years of its operation the NMB failed to make its authority felt. In April 1933 at a Board committee meeting the D.C. suggested the appointment of the labour officer as Native Affairs Officer of the NMB. This appointment, he argued, would make Africans understand that "the Board was the authority in which was vested the control of the location and of native affairs generally". The D.C. claimed that Africans continued to approach the Administration instead of the Board as the local authority. The suggestion was however turned down.³

In February 1934 the D.C. again took the initiative proposing the formation of a sub-committee of the Finance and General Purposes

¹ See below, p.

² See below, p.

³ KNA, NMB, minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&G.P.C.) meeting, 26.4.1933.

Committee to deal with the canteen and "native affairs" in general. He thought that it was premature to appoint a standing committee for these matters. This proposal was accepted.¹ The sub-committee was promptly set up but met only once during 1934.² "Native affairs" still occupied a very small part of the NMB's attention. The NMB's interest and activity in the African sector was stimulated by the opening, at the beginning of 1934, of the African canteen.³ In obtaining a monopoly of the sale of beer to Africans, the Board aimed not only at making profits but also at exercising greater control over the African Location.⁴ Indeed in 1935, authority was given to the four municipal askaris on duty in the canteen and in the Location to arrest people committing offences against municipal by-laws.⁵ As early as 1932 the NMB began to control the milk trade in the African Location.⁶ In 1937 such control was applied to trading in general in the Location.⁷

Soon the Board began to use the canteen profits for African welfare activities. The profits were deposited in the Native Trust Fund which had been in existence by 1935.⁸ In fact a principle was established

¹ KNA, NMB, minutes of F&G.P.C. meeting 21.2.1934.

² KNA, NDAR 1934 B(5).

³ KNA, NMB, minutes of F&G.P.C. meeting 22.11.1939.

⁴ KNA, NMB, minutes of F&G.P.C. meeting 15.2.1933.

⁵ KNA, NMB minutes of F&G.P.C. meeting 26.7.1935.

⁶ KNA, NMB, minutes of Works and Health Committee (W&H.C.) meeting 9.3.1932.

⁷ KNA, NMB, minutes of W&H.C. meeting 7.5.1937.

⁸ Annual Report of the Commissioner for Local Government, Land and Settlement 1935, p.33.

by which African social welfare was financed solely by the profits of the canteen. The extent of welfare services thus depended ultimately on the drinking capacity of Africans.¹ The first social welfare facility for Nakuru Africans was the infant welfare clinic set up and run by the European East African Women League from 1933.² As early as 1935 the municipal Works Superintendent was appointed to deal, on a part time basis, with the canteen and "native affairs" in general. It was, however, only as late as 1937 that the NMB made a modest beginning in providing social activities for Africans. In that year the Works Superintendent started to organise football matches for Africans.³ In 1940 the Native Trust Fund provided money for the building of an African Dance Hall.⁴ In the early 1940s with the increase in beer-profits more money was invested in services for Africans. A waiting room and a maternity ward were built in the Native Civil Hospital and housing was provided for municipal employees.⁵

Despite the increase in the African population during the war there was no change in the concept of African administration and African social welfare in Nakuru. It is true that in 1938 the Native Affairs sub-committee was elevated to committee status,⁶ but at the same time the control and the welfare of Africans continued to be ultimately in the hands of a part-time officer. As late as 1945 the Commissioner for Local Government reported that "the appointment of a Municipal African

¹ See a later reference to this principle in Report of the Commissioner for Local Government 1948-50, African Affairs, p.22.

² KNA, NMB, minutes of F.M.G.P.C. meeting 26.4.1933.

³ NMA (MAR) 1937, Native Affairs.

⁴ LAS, 13.11.1940, p.6.

⁵ NMA, MAR, Native Affairs 1940, 1942, 1943, 1944.

⁶ KNA, NMB, minutes of Native Affairs Committee 6.5.1938.

Affairs Officer, while desirable was not considered justified and the Board decided that the appointment of an officer with other duties who could devote a portion of his time to welfare work would be a preferable solution."¹

After the War, however, the situation was rapidly changing. On the one hand the African population was increasing steadily, presenting problems of amenities and services which could no longer be ignored or shelved. The most acute problem was that of housing. In the past the IMB had provided housing only for their own employees; the commercial and industrial enterprises had been responsible for the housing of their labour force.² Self-employed Africans and Africans who were not provided with housing by their employers had to find accommodation in the African Location. The houses there were built in wattles and daub or sun-dried bricks and were largely owned by Swahilis and Kionias who held their plots on Temporary Occupation Licences. In 1943 the Location housed about 2,000 Africans.³ With the influx of Africans into Nakuru and the great increase in the numbers of self-employed during the 1940s the Location became grossly overcrowded.⁴ Unhygienic and squalid housing conditions in the Location threatened to turn it into fertile ground for the spread of disease and crime to the town as a whole. By 1944 the position was grave enough to warrant the setting up of a municipal Native Housing Committee.⁵ As

¹ Report of the Commissioner for Local Government 1945, African Affairs, p.17.

² EAC, 11.9.1940, p.6; 7.5.1941, p.6; 2.7.1941, p.6; 3.5.1944, p.3; KNA, NMB, minutes of M.L.C. meeting 9.7.1941, 12.8.1942, 15.1.1945.

³ KNA, NMB, minutes of Native Affairs Committee (NAC) meeting 3.12.1943.

⁴ Annual Report of the Commissioner for Local Government, Land and Settlement 1931, Native Affairs, p.19. Report of the Local Government Commission, 1927, p.142. KNA, NMB Native Affairs, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949. EAC, 13.6.1947, p.12; 4.2.1950 p.5.

⁵ KNA, NMB, minutes of Native Housing Committee meeting 5.3.1944.

early as its second meeting the committee proposed the demolition of the location and called for the appointment of a European Location Superintendent.¹

On the other hand, after the war new ideas about Kenya as a multi-racial community were taking shape in European minds.² Africans were to be the junior partners in the multi-racial design and had to be incorporated into the system rather than being alienated from it. Many of those Europeans who came to settle in Nakuru after the war and guided the destiny of the town during the 1950s were converted to multi-racialism.³ Thus enlightened self-interest and ideological paternalism combined to move the NMB towards more positive policies towards African residents. It is in this context that one must view the formation of the Nakuru African Advisory Council as early as 1945 and the incorporation of African representatives in the NMB in 1947.

In 1947 Handfield, a European part-time Welfare Officer, and a full-time African Assistant Welfare Officer were employed by the NMB to deal with African welfare activity.⁴ These appointments resulted instantly in the considerable expansion of social welfare activity among Africans. In April 1948 Handfield was appointed as Municipal African Affairs Officer (MAAO) to cope with the unprecedented activity which he had generated.⁵ It may not have been entirely coincidental that in that year "African Affairs" replaced "Native Affairs"

¹ Ibid.

² See below, pp.

³ Interview: N.H. Hardy, M. Blundell.

⁴ NMA, NAR, Native Affairs, 1947.

⁵ NMA, NAR, African Affairs, 1948.

in the municipal jargon. Around the MAAO developed an African Affairs Department which by 1952 included, in addition to him, an Assistant MAAO, a Community Development Assistant I, a Community Development Assistant II, a chief clerk, a junior clerk, nine askaris and twenty other employees. In that year social activities which revolved around the new community centre built in 1951 included cinema shows, dances (there were twenty-two dancing clubs), evening social activities, radio relay service, quizzes, forum and debates and sports. The African Affairs Department also operated an information room, a library, a nursery school and a women's club. They were also active in the field of adult education holding evening continuation classes (arithmetic, English commercial and book-keeping to English-speaking Africans), general evening classes and women's adult literacy classes. They published a local newsheet (Bondeni) in Swahili and English.¹ The African Affairs Department steadily expanded the scope of its activities and in 1961 it employed one hundred and twelve people. In that year it changed its name to become the Social Services Department under the Municipal Social Services Officer.²

Towards the end of the 1940s with the change in the NMB's attitude towards the administration and welfare of Africans, the first steps were taken to solve the pressing problem of African housing. The NMB had been aware of the acute housing shortage from as early as 1944, but only in 1947 did it decide to take action. The Board resolved to take emergency measures to alleviate the housing shortage by building a temporary location in semi-permanent materials. This new location providing for three hundred and twenty-four single rooms was completed

¹ NMA, MAR, African Affairs, 1952.

² NMA, MAR, Social Services, 1961.

in 1948.¹ In 1952 the NCB launched a series of self-financing housing schemes. By 1956 it had completed 1,220 single rooms, 108 randavels and 50 two-roomed houses at a total cost of some £164,470.² As from 1953 capital investment was provided by loans by the Kenya Central Housing Board.³ Between 1957 and 1963 the NCB had completed an additional four major housing schemes. The big employers continued to provide housing for their labour force while the smaller ones used to rent rooms on the municipal housing estates.⁴ While not completely solving the housing problems these municipal housing schemes went a long way to alleviate them. The maintenance and control of the housing estates and the collection of rents from the occupants involved a considerable amount of administration which was carried out by the African Affairs Department.

General Introductory Observations

The historical study of colonial towns in Africa is a new venture. Emerging African urban societies in colonial and independent Africa have attracted a large number of social anthropologists interested in social change. But although their emphasis is on change their conclusions reflect a situation which in terms of time-span occupies a very short period in the life of the towns concerned. Furthermore, most of the anthropological studies of towns in Africa were mainly carried out from as late as the 1950s when towns were in an advanced stage of their development. On the other hand, the anthropologist has the advantage of observing the social processes which he studies first hand and of using current and therefore relatively ample data.

It is the historian, however, who can contribute to the study of African towns by tracing the change over a long period. Historians

¹ KNA, NAB, Native Affairs, 1947, report on African housing census, 3.6.1958.

² KNA, report on African housing census, 3.6.1958.

³ KAS, 11.8.1953, p.5.

⁴ KAS, 29.9.1952, p.2; 26.6.1952, p.4. KNA, NBAR 1953, p.28.

have tended to concentrate on the response of the tribal societies to the colonial impact as the keys to understanding of African history in the colonial era. While much of the African nationalist struggles revolved around the towns they were not related to the urban situation as such. But towns in colonial Africa were the most advanced positions on the front between the colonial power and African society. Africans living in towns were the most exposed to the impact of colonialism. It was largely in towns that Africans came into intensive contact with modernization and acquired the skills and experience essential for the transition from a pre-industrial tribal society to the modern technological era. It was in the towns that the more educated, articulate and politically minded Africans concentrated. Finally the towns, far from being isolated islands, were centres of networks of migration and communication which stretched from one end of the country to the other. Indeed many social, economic and political developments in African colonies cannot be understood without the full appreciation of the focal role which urban centres played.

Towns in a country like Kenya were particularly important. The few Arab towns which had flourished on the coast of what was to become Kenya had had little impact on the interior prior to the advent of colonialism. In the interior which came to dominate Kenya's history the urban phenomenon was completely new. Kenya as a whole is largely composed of segmentary tribal societies. With the exception, perhaps, of Musia's kingdom in Western Kenya, there were no centralised tribes which could, like the Baganda for example, take the initiative in their encounter with the colonial power, and become a central focus in the country's history. The towns, therefore, played a role which in other parts of Africa was also played by centralised traditional kingdoms, becoming the pivots around which many social economic and

political developments in Kenya revolved.

Nakuru, which during the colonial period was only third in size and importance in Kenya was deliberately chosen for a historical urban study. On the one hand it was big enough and was therefore the scene for most important urban developments which one wanted to study. On the other hand, it was not too big and one could hope to grasp the width of urban problems and pursue them throughout the history of the town.

Colonial towns owed their existence wholly to economic or administrative initiatives of the colonial power. Nakuru, as a representative of Kenya towns, was, additionally, a colonial-settler type of town. Nakuru was within the White Highlands and emerged as their unofficial capital. This gave the town a distinct racial character. Racially the town was divided into three levels. The Europeans at the top level controlled the municipality and its bigger economic establishments and top executive positions. The Asians in the middle had little influence in local government and controlled the retail and wholesale trade and the lower managerial and technical positions. The Africans at the bottom had even less say than the Asians in the running of the municipality and provided a cheap largely unskilled labour force. They also conducted a very minor part of the town's trade. In fact the control of the town's political and economic resources was in reverse proportion to the size of the three racial communities. In the 1950s and early 1960s after the Europeans had built houses on the Menengai slope the three-level system acquired topographical expression. The main European residential area was on the Menengai slope which was climatically and scenically the most congenial area of the town. Asians concentrated down below south of the Nairobi road and Africans lived further below towards Lake Nakuru where the dust and heat made life much less pleasant.

Although the official policy of racial segregation between Europeans and Asians came to an end with the White Paper of 1923,¹ the Europeans of Nakuru ensured, by unofficial means and pressures, that residential segregation between the racial communities was de facto in force.² There was no argument about segregation of Africans in the town. In 1938 a municipal by-law made it an offence for non-Africans to reside or even to spend the night in the African Location.³ It goes without saying that Africans were not allowed to reside in the European and Asian areas unless they worked there as domestic servants.

The position of Nakuru in the midst of the settled area was of great importance to the development of the local African community. In the first place the town was physically sea ed off from its hinterland. Peri-urban development similar to that of Nairobi which bordered the Kikuyu reserve was not possible in Nakuru because European farmers did not allow Africans working in town to live on their farms. Thus Africans working in town had to live in town and to be totally exposed to urban conditions. As far as Nakuru Africans were concerned the urban phenomenon was largely isolated from the towns-in rural hinterland. The nature of the interaction between town and country in Nakuru was different from that in towns which were situated either within a reserve or on its borders. While Africans in the reserves were largely peasants enjoying a large measure of freedom, the squatters who formed the human hinterland of Nakuru African community were rural proletarians who were perhaps the most oppressed group of Africans in the colony. This as will be shown in chapter three was to have far reaching consequences.

¹ H.R. Milley, op.cit., p.171.

² Interview: M.H. Hardy.

³ IMA, NDB, minutes of NAC meeting, 6.5.1938.

Makuru was built on a tribally neutral ground. The Masai who had sparsely inhabited the area were removed when it was decided to reserve the highlands for European settlement. Until the end of the 1930s Makuru's African community developed as a truly tribally mixed community dominated by three tribes, namely the Kikuyu, Luo and Abaluhya. It was only during the 1940s that the Kikuyu established their numerical superiority, largely owing to the influx of Kikuyu squatters to town. But even then Makuru remained basically a tribally mixed town with the same three tribes amounting for the majority of the African population and dominating most aspects of African life. In this Makuru was different from the smaller townships in the District which were totally dominated by the Kikuyu.

In a way the study of Makuru's African community is largely a study of the different responses of these three dominant tribes to the same urban situation. On the whole the Kikuyu proved themselves more adaptive to urban conditions and came to overshadow the other two tribes in most spheres of the urban activity. An attempt will be made to explain the different patterns of response in terms of both the traditional social structure of the respective tribes and their history during the colonial era.

The relations between these three tribes is of a particular importance because they came to play a central part in colonial and post colonial Kenya. During much of the colonial period political and socio-economic developments in Kenya had a distinctly parochial nature being largely confined to the respective tribal reserves. There was little contact at these levels between the different tribal groups. It was only during the early 1960s with independence so near that politics in the tribal reserves related directly to the national issues which were now to affect tribesmen wherever they were. The town was in this respect an important melting pot. The history of

the relations between the Kikuyu, Luo and Abaluhya in Nakuru dates back to the early beginnings of the town. It was here that tribesmen clashed or co-operated with one another at the personal, local and national levels. It was here that tribal stereotypes were evolved and inter-tribal attitudes formulated. In a situation of constant movement and communication between town and reserves these stereotypes and attitudes filtered through to the tribal reserves. Thus inter-tribal relations which developed in the town directly affected the national scene on the eve of independence and after it. Nakuru, in this respect may be viewed as a microcosm of Kenya as a whole.

In the more confined urban context an attempt is made to study the process of African urbanization and to trace the points of change in the process. Reference is made to Africans as tribesmen and as townsmen. These are not static categories; it would be indeed wrong to use static definitions in a study of such a dynamic historical process. These are rather the two poles of the urban continuum. At the one extreme there were those who, though working in town for a short while, were totally and exclusively committed to their tribal unit and who regarded their stay in town as entirely related to their needs as reserve dwellers. At the other extreme there were those who had completely cut themselves off from their tribal past viewing their existence exclusively within the confines of the urban situation. In reality, however, most Nakuru Africans were somewhere along the tribesmen-townsmen continuum often concurrently playing tribal and urban roles. It is often difficult to pin-point precisely the position of individuals or groups on the continuum.

This is all the more difficult because of the absence of adequate sociological data of a historical nature. In this situation it is possible to study the process of African urbanization through the development of urban-based organizations and institutions, be they

tribally or urban-orientated. Since we are dealing with a population largely composed of migrant workers the study revolves around the more stable element among them who took an interest in urban-based organizations. More specifically this study is largely, though not exclusively, concerned with the emerging local African elite whose members led most of the local organizations. The criteria of this elite were mainly education and economic success. Mau Mau, on the other hand, was the most outstanding of the few examples in which the urban masses emerged as a dominant factor and evolved their own leadership.

In Nakuru tribally urban and nationally-orientated organizations developed. It is important to emphasize at the outset that these three categories of organizations developed in parallel and not necessarily one at the expense of the other. The flourishing of urban-orientated associations and institutions did not mean a decline of the tribal associations. Similarly the zenith of the national political parties in Nakuru coincided with the zenith of tribal associations. The complex position of the individual between the two poles of town and tribe was clearly reflected in the creation of urban-based organizations. Indeed, at the level of leadership and membership, the same people were often involved in all three categories of urban organizations.¹

An urban study such as this is attractive also because of the abundance of available sources. The sources available in London for research on the history of a town like Nakuru are very limited, especially with reference to the development of the African sector. In the Public Record Office, information of only a general nature can be found in Annual Reports of the Commissioner for Local Government, the Kenya

¹ See, for example, below, p.

African Affairs Department and the Kenya Labour Department. In the State Paper Room of the British Museum some valuable statistical data was available. In the Newspaper Library of the British Museum there are copies of the weekly East African Standard, and copies of the Kenya Weekly News for only a few years. The information which can be derived from these sources relates mainly to the general development of the town and to the European and Asian communities. The Cambridge University Library possesses microfilm copies of Nakuru District and Rift Valley Province Annual Reports and Handing Over Reports which are useful but still do not give sufficient information about the African side of the story.

In Kenya, on the other hand, there is abundance of material from both official and private sources. Government sources in the National Archive and the D.C.'s office are of limited value. They do not even date back to the recent period of the 1940s and it seems that the more useful files have "perished". The Labour Department Reports from the late 1940s onwards were particularly rewarding. So were the Nakuru District Monthly Reports which unfortunately started only in the late 1950s. The archive of the Registrar of Societies in Nairobi contains useful information about tribal associations.

Not surprisingly, it was in Nakuru that I found the most valuable information. The Municipal archive contains minutes of the Nakuru Municipal Board and its successor and of their various committees, from 1955 onwards.¹ It also contains the minutes of the Nakuru African Advisory Council and its successor and many useful correspondence files. The files of the African Affairs Department² for the years 1948-1955

¹These are also to be found in the Kenya National Archive.

²From 1961 the Social Services Department.

contain detailed information mainly relating to social and economic developments in the African sector. The files of subsequent years have not survived.

The account of African political developments in Nakuru has been mainly based on African sources. For the earlier period extensive use was made of oral services, and for the period from 1955 files of political parties in private possession have proved very rewarding. Some files of tribal associations were recovered but they do not date very far back. The most useful were the files of the Abaluhya Association which date back to 1949. Oral information was also extensively used for the study of tribal associations.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of this research is the availability of abundant African sources for the study of African urban developments. These sources are easily accessible for the period until independence. The type of sources available, both written and oral, enables one to penetrate to the grass-roots level. Oral sources in particular have proved very useful in the study of developments on which official sources shed little light. Some eighty people, mainly Africans, who played active parts in different aspects of Nakuru's development were interviewed. People on the whole volunteered information willingly and without apparent inhibition. I found the general atmosphere in Kenya conducive to the gathering of genuine and reliable oral information even on subjects which may still be considered as "delicate". Regarding Mau Mau, for example, both ex-Mau Mau activists and "loyalist" collaborators expressed their original positions with few reservations. Inter-tribal relations which are still a relevant issue are also under no taboo.

Periodization of Social and Political Change in Nakuru

The thematic approach was preferred for this study primarily because it seems a better method of tracing and presenting the element of change in the different aspects of urban development dealt with. While every theme is treated chronologically, a short periodization of the social and political change in Nakuru's African community will be useful by placing the themes in the general chronological context. It will also give a general idea of the relations between the different aspects of urban developments.

1. 1910s-1944. The tribal era

During much of this period Nakuru's African population was very small. As late as 1936 it hardly exceeded 3,000. The rate of African urbanization at that period was very slow. The only Kenya up-country Africans who were fully committed to urban life were those few who had joined the Muslim Swahili community whose nucleus consisted of coastal and non-Kenya Africans.¹ The up-country Africans came mostly as short-term migrant workers. African initiative in trade was at an embryonic stage. There were, however, the few up-country tribesmen who had already chosen to stay in the town for longer spells. It was mainly such men who were instrumental in the formation of the first type of African associations in Nakuru, namely tribal associations. In fact the only associations which existed in that period were based on tribal origin. The Abaluhya seem to have been the first to form a tribal association as early as the late 1910s and they were followed by the Luo. These were basically social welfare associations aimed at facilitating the transition to urban life on a basis of mutual aid.²

¹ See below, pp.

² See below, Chapter One.

During the first half of the 1930s the Kikuyu of Nakuru opened a branch of the Kikuyu Central Association, basically a political organization.¹

2. 1944-1952. The Golden Age of Urban Associations and Institutions

During the 1940s Nakuru's African population increased considerably and by 1952 more than 15,000 Africans lived in the town. There was also during that period a tremendous expansion of African urban activity. Africans began in earnest to exploit the opportunities offered by the town. Educated Africans increased in numbers and began to occupy junior clerical positions. More Africans occupied skilled and semi-skilled jobs and semi-manual positions. There was a tremendous expansion of African business activity. This considerable increase in the scale of African participation in urban pursuits was immediately reflected in the patterns of organization in the town. This period witnessed an upsurge of tribally mixed urban and national organizations. In 1944 the administration set up the Nakuru Native Mixed Tribunal composed of elders from the main tribal groups in the town.² In 1945 Africans took the initiative when they formed a local branch of the Kenya African Study Union later to become the Kenya African Union, a national political party.³ In 1947 the first African trade union appeared in Nakuru to be followed by three others before the end of 1952.⁴ The Government at the same time encouraged

¹ See below, pp.

² See below, p.

³ See below, pp.

⁴ See below, pp.

the formation of staff associations to counteract the traders unions.¹ Traders also began to form into associations to collectively safeguard their interests.² Africans also formed associations to cater for their leisure: sports associations, dancing clubs, debating society and so on.³ African women formed their own association to promote their progress.⁴ During this period Africans were integrated into the municipal system. The Makuru African Advisory Council which had its origins in 1945 developed into a flourishing institution attracting the interest of many local residents.⁵ The most outstanding expression of the emerging urban spirit was the Makuru African Association which propagated the ideology of 'Nakuruism' and sought to persuade Africans to be loyal first to their place of residence.⁶ But at the same time the tribally-orientated associations which had had their origin in the earlier period continued to expand. The Luo and Abaluhya tribesmen developed associations at the clan, sub-tribal, and tribal levels which formed hierarchies at the head of which stood the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Welfare Association.⁷ The Kikuyu Central Association also continued its existence.⁸ Other tribes began to form their own tribal associations during this period.

¹See below, pp.

²See below, pp.

³See below, pp.

⁴See below, p.

⁵See below, pp.

⁶See below, pp.

⁷See below, pp.

⁸See below, pp.

3. 1952-1955, Mau Mau and the Height of the Emergency

In October 1952 the Government declared a State of Emergency as a preliminary to their intensive anti-Mau Mau campaign. Mau Mau in Nakuru dominated the political scene in 1952 and the first half of 1953.¹ The Kikuyu militant masses occupied the political foreground and dethroned the established political elite. The impact of the State of Emergency upon urban developments in Nakuru, continued to be strongly felt at least until 1955 when the backbone of Mau Mau revolt was broken. The Emergency brought disruption and decline. Political organizations ceased to exist as did trades unions. But even totally non-political organizations came to an end. This was the fate of traders associations, the Nyanza African Union, the Nakuru African Women Association and the Nakuru African Association. The Nakuru African Advisory Council which had flourished until 1952 began to decline in 1953. Even some tribal associations suspended or reduced their activities.

4. 1955-1960, A Period of Recovery

By the end of 1955 the tense atmosphere prevailing in the previous Emergency years had become more relaxed. In that year the Government allowed the formation of district political parties. The short-lived Nakuru African Progressive Party formed at the end of 1955 was Nakuru's Africans' first attempt to recover from the shock of the Emergency. The Nakuru District Congress formed in 1958 was more successful. It developed into an active and popular political party.² Branches of trades unions were established or revived during this

¹ See below, pp.

² See below, Chapter Four.

period.¹ The Nakuru African Chamber of Commerce intensified its activities representing the interests of the African business community.² Tribal associations continued their expansion. But the Nakuru African Advisory Council which became the General Ward Council continued to decline.³ On the whole, however, the level of urban activity of the pre-emergency period was not recaptured.

5. 1960-1963. The Paramountcy of National Politics

The early 1960s up to the year of independence were years completely dominated by the political rivalry between the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), the two national political parties. In Nakuru in particular the tension between the two branches was very strong. With independence approaching, Africans for the first time struggled for the control of the centre of power and domination in the exploitation of the country's resources. Politics became all-pervasive. Politics had penetrated all other spheres of urban life. It had a particular effect on tribal associations which had hitherto co-existed with national politics without getting too much involved. In the early 1960s, however, tribes as such had stakes in the outcome of the struggle for power and the tribal associations acted as agents of the respective parties which were basically tribal coalitions. The pervasiveness of national politics transformed inter-tribal relations and the early 1960s witnessed the introduction of what may be termed as tribal chauvinism into Kenya's life.⁴

¹ See below, pp.

² See below, p.

³ See below, pp.

⁴ See below, Chapter Six. M. Tamarin, "Tribal associations, tribal solidarity and tribal chauvinism in a Kenya town", in Journal of African History, xiv, 2 (1973), pp. 271-4.

The development of tribal associations will be dealt with first, not only because chronologically they developed first, but also because logically the urbanization process started at the tribal pole.

The area which today forms the basis for the urbanization of the British was the first around which the impact of these, however, was not felt until beyond their immediate neighborhood. For the sake of economy and security, they had to concentrate the majority of their population, the urban population, in one place. For the sake of the economy, the lives in small towns, even at that distance, the agricultural quality of urban life proved very positive. It was surely surprising that they were able to continue forward to build themselves an urban life, they thought it was forced by circumstances to leave their previous preferences, at least until the beginning of the 19th century, to migrate to the cities. It is not surprising, rather they had to migrate to them, gradually, until they had to progress and expand of their traditional life. For this reason, the country between regarded them as city people, and people's love their traditional modes and virtues. When they discovered the arguments of the city coming in the towns, they remained very cautious, making it clear to them that about 1850. As before the migration about twenty things in 1850-51 stated that the colonies were really better for him for more than for another.

The African population of Britain grew very slowly until the late 18th century. The Black African population remained small in

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Chapter One

NAKURU AFRICANS AS TRIBESMEN -DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBAL ASSOCIATIONS

The only towns in the area which became Kenya had known prior to the advent of the British were the Arab coastal towns. The impact of these, however, was not felt much beyond their immediate hinterland. For the tribesmen of central and western Kenya who came to constitute the majority of Nakuru's African population, the urban phenomenon was new. For the tribesmen of the interior, who lived in small-scale, face to face societies, the impersonal quality of urban life posed many problems. It was hardly surprising that they were slow in coming forward to commit themselves to urban life. Many Kikuyu who were forced by circumstances to leave their reserves preferred, at least until the beginning of the 1940s, to migrate to the white Highlands as squatters, rather than to settle in towns. Squatting enabled them to preserve many aspects of their traditional life. For some time up-country tribesmen regarded towns as evil places, where people lost their traditional customs and virtues. When they discovered the economic potential of wage earning in the towns, they responded very cautiously, coming to work in them for short spells. An Indian who employed about twenty Kikuyu in 1912-3 stated that his employees rarely worked for him for more than two months.¹

The African population of Nakuru grew very slowly until the late 1930s. The first African population estimate dates back to

¹P.R.O., CO 544 5, Native Labour Commission 1912-3, p.17.

1914-5 when it was about five hundred. By 1919-20 it rose to eight hundred and by 1926 to two thousand. Throughout much of the 1930s the African population averaged about three thousand. By 1940 it had considerably increased to about eight thousand. In 1948 the population census showed that 1,845 Africans lived in Nakuru. By the time the 1961 census was held Nakuru African population had reached 30,189.¹

The growth of the African population depended largely on the economic development of the town, which decided the demand for African labour. The population figures for the 1910s and 1920s reflected the slow rate of expansion of Nakuru's economy, whereas those of the 1930s reflected the stagnation of the depression years. The administration and the local authority made efforts to maintain a balance between available means of livelihood and the number of Africans residing in the town. This, as shown below, was not always possible to achieve.²

From the point of view of African settlement in the town it is important to note that Nakuru was not in a "tribal area". Nakuru District was part of the white Highlands reserved for European settlement. For Africans, Nakuru was a central point between the Kikuyu, Luo, Abahluhya and Kalenjin tribal reserves. Up to a point, however, the Kikuyu squatters in Nakuru District constituted a human hinterland favourable to the Kikuyu residents of the town. But, as long as the European farmers were there, free communication and dealings between the Kikuyu of Nakuru and the District were

¹ M. Tamarit, "Tribal Associations, Tribal Solidarity and Tribal Chauvinism in a Kenya Town", Journal of African History, XIV, 2 (1973), p.258.

² See below.

somewhat hamstrung.

In the early 1920s the Luo, Abaluhya and Kalenjin were the main tribal groups in Nakuru.¹ In 1936 the majority of up-country tribesmen in the town were Kavirondo, that is Luo and Abaluhya.² The Kikuyu established their numerical superiority during the 1940s. According to the 1948 census the Kikuyu accounted for about 43% of Nakuru's African population, followed by about 15% Abaluhya and 10% Luo.³ Migration of squatters into the town was largely responsible for this. Some put the proportion of ex-squatters among Nakuru's Kikuyu population by the late 1940s as high as 40%.⁴ Nakuru, as well as other townships in the District, attracted many of the squatters who were evicted from European farms.⁵ Others, mainly young, second-generation squatters, probably left of their own accord and settled in the town which by then was regarded as a better proposition. In 1962, over twenty-five Kenyan tribal groups were represented in Nakuru. By then, there were 13,937 in the town followed by 6,345 and 5,982. They were followed by the Kalenjin with 1,237, the Kamba with 795 and the Kisii with 301.⁶ In addition there were non-Kenya Africans mainly from Uganda and Tanganyika. The three largest tribal groups accounted for about 66% of Nakuru's African population in 1948

¹ Interview: S. Matoya.

² KN/ND H, 1936, p.4.

³ East African Population Census 1948, Nakuru District African Population at 23.8.1948, Main Tribes of Locations.

⁴ Interview: S. Mbote, W. Wamagata, J. Wanyoike.

⁵ See below.

⁶ Kenya Population Census 1962, Tables Vol. II, p.147.

and for about 85% of it in 1962.

Early African Settlement in Nakuru - the Somali and Swahili Communities

Earlier patterns of African settlement in Nakuru are less clear. The early African settlers in Nakuru were mainly Moslems, from the Coast, Tanganyika and Somaliland. The story of the Somali community is of particular interest because it remained throughout a defined and exclusive group within the African population in Nakuru. Most of Nakuru's Somalis originated from British Somaliland and were members of the Ishak Moslem religious community. Some of them settled in Nakuru as early as the first decade of the century. Among these were those who had come to Kenya as soldiers and chose to settle in the country after completing their service.¹ Similar communities existed in most of the Rift Valley Province townships. They were all connected to the complex network of the livestock trade which extended to the northern frontiers of Kenya. In Nakuru they had a cattle boma to keep their stock. In 1910 three Somalis were involved in a court case in connection with a permit to move over a thousand sheep from Nakuru to Naivasha.²

European stock owners, jealous of the Somalis' prosperous trade, tried to undermine their position.³ In 1931 the D.C. stated that it was, in the Administration's view, necessary to limit the number of Somalis residing in Nakuru. The Municipal Board, of which

¹ KNA/D.C./Nku/dep. 2/278, Nakuru Somalis to P.C., R.V.P., 14.7.1954.

² E.A.S., 2.4.1910.

³ E.A.S., 26.3.1932, p.34.

he was the chairman, approved his suggestion that location plots for Somalis should be limited to thirty.¹ In 1939 the number of livestock permitted to be kept in the Somali homa was fixed at four hundred sheep and goats and a hundred cows and calves.² In 1946 representations were made by European farmers to the Government to remove all cattle from Nakuru District townships.³ By January 1942 the Municipal Board had again restricted the number of livestock allowed within the municipal boundaries.⁴ In 1949 the pressures of European settlers at last brought results. Legislation in the Legislative Council and Nakuru Municipal Board made possible the total eradication of cattle breeding in the town.⁵

This was a serious blow to Nakuru's Somali community. Their economic position worsened considerably when in the second half of the 1950s the Somali Location was demolished.⁶ Somali house owners lost their income from renting rooms. When they moved to the new houses built for them by the Municipal Council, they could hardly afford to live in them.⁷

In Nakuru the Somalis had their own Headman who acted as a link between them and the Administration. This amounted to the

¹ KNA, Nakuru Municipal Board meeting, 9.9.1931. (Minutes)

² KN/Nakuru Municipal Board, Works and Health Sub-Committee meeting, 9.8.1939. (Minutes)

³ KNA/NDAB, 1946, p.12.

⁴ NMA/African Location 1946-8, Works Superintendent to Sheikh Musa Hussein, 1.11.1947.

⁵ KNA/NDAB, 1949.

⁶ NMA, 29.4.1954, p.2.

⁷ NMA, 18.11.1959, p.5.

recognition that the Somalis formed a distinct community. The Somali Ishak community in Nakuru, and in Kenya as a whole, was engaged in a long struggle with the Administration over their racial status. They persistently urged the Government to recognize them as Asians. In 1921 the Association of the Somalis in Gilgil and the surrounding district refused to abide by the kipande law which was applied to them. It declared: "We do not understand why the Government class us with the Natives of Africa? How will it suit any one to be placed in the same footing of low races."¹ In 1931 the Somalis threatened to stop paying taxes unless regarded as Asians.² In the same year a petition by the Ishak community in British Somaliland complained about the classification of Somalis in Kenya as Africans. It claimed that they were descendants of Sheikh Isak Bin Ahmed and consequently were not Africans.³ In 1938 the Secretary of State for Colonies refused a request from the Kenya Ishak community not to be considered Natives of Africa, and that they be excluded from the Native Authority Ordinance 1937.⁴ Nakuru Somalis reacted by refusing to pay Non-Native Poll Tax at a rate of Shs. 20/- which was the rate for "other non-Natives". They maintained that they were of Asian origin and therefore entitled to pay according to the Shs. 30/- rate.⁵ When in 1943 Sheikh Musa Hussein complained that, as Asians the Somalis had no representative on the Municipal Board,

¹ ES, 3.12.1921, p.8.

² ES, 10.10.1931, p.20.

³ ES, 17.1.1931, p.46.

⁴ ES, 13.5.1938, p.27.

⁵ KNA/NDAR 1938, p.5.

the Board stated that the Somalis were, according to the Local Government Ordinance 1928, natives of Africa, and resolved to incorporate the Somali Location in the Native Location.¹

Nakuru Somalis preferred to identify themselves with the small local Arab community. The two communities combined to establish a Moslem school and used to get together on social occasions.² The Somalis thus segregated themselves and were uninvolved in developments in the African sector. Their failure to prevent the demolition of their Location was largely due to their inability to mobilize African support. Bondeni Location was "saved" at the same time as a result of a concerted African pressure.³ As Independence approached and Asian status was losing its appeal the Somalis were forced to redefine themselves as Africans.

In the context of African urbanization, the Somali came to Nakuru as settlers. They brought their families and reared their children in the town which they regarded as their home. One expression of commitment to urban life was ownership of plots in town. The first plots were given to Somalis in 1916 under Temporary Occupation Licence.⁴ They developed the plots and became part of the African landlord group. They lived on their plots until they were demolished.

The other group of early African settlers in Nakuru was less defined in terms of origin. It was instead a mixture of Africans

¹ KM, Nakuru Municipal Board meeting, 29.9.1943. (Minutes)

² EAS, 18.9.1936, p.30; 26.2.1937, p.22.

³ See below Interview: S.L.Ojuka.

⁴ KM/1.5/Mu/dep.2/303, Somali Community to Municipal Council, 1953.

from different tribes and countries who were to merge to form the local Swahili community. The nucleus of this group consisted mainly, it seems, of Africans who originated from the coast, Tanganyika and Uganda.¹ They filtered through up-country Kenya along the railway line leading to Uganda and were settled in Nakuru during the first decades of the century. They were mostly Moslems. They were the first group of Africans proper to settle permanently in Nakuru. Even before the first World War they had evolved the Nakuru African Moslem community popularly known as the Swahili community.²

They were soon joined by up-country tribesmen who had severed links with their tribal homes and had committed themselves to urban life. The largest group of the early up-country converts to Islam was that of women from the Kalenjin group. Most of them were prostitutes who later invested their capital in plots and houses which they rented. Thus they acquired the second attribute, besides Islam, characterising most members of the Swahili communities, namely house-ownership. There were also odd Africans from other tribes who joined the Swahili community in its early days. During the 1930s an increasing number of Kikuyu began to convert to Islam thus joining the Swahili community. By the 1940s, if not earlier, up-country tribesmen formed the bulk of the Nakuru Swahili community. Among them the Kikuyu were the largest group. During the late 1940s and early 1950s the most prominent Swahili in Nakuru was Masor Kabero, a Kikuyu who was married to a Muluhya woman.

¹ Interview: Adija Chemwe, Masuni Didi, M.S. Shiraj.

² Interview: Adija Chemwe.

Many of the up-country tribesmen who joined the Swahili married outside their tribe. A few examples may help appreciation of the mixed nature of Nakuru's Swahili community. In 1948 we learn that Mohamed bin Salis's parents were Kamba, that Rajabu's father was a Kamba and the mother a Kikuyu and that Athumoni bin Juma's father and mother were Ngonda and Lumbwa respectively.¹ The father of Mohamed B. Shiraj was a Nyanzei and the mother a Masai. They moved to Nakuru from another District township in the late 1930s.² In 1956 Zakiah Mohamed was six years old, having an interesting origin. Her grandfather came from Madagascar, her grandmother from the Belgian Congo and her mother was born in Nakuru where she had lived ever since.³

The development of the Swahili community was an interesting phenomenon. It developed around a nucleus of a small African Moslem community consisting mostly of non-up-country tribesmen. It was significant that the earliest layer of African settlers in Nakuru was Moslem. The up-country tribesman did not settle permanently in the town in the early stages of its development, because his whole existence revolved around his tribal home and his tribal social structure and customs. By settling in the impersonal and mixed urban environment he lost the only social frame of reference he knew. Islam as a universalistic religion afforded its adherents a much wider range of choices and freedom of movement. In addition, the early Swahili settlers seem to have had urban experience prior

¹ KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/160, Inspector Police, Nakuru, to A.S.P., Nakuru, 10.2.1948.

² Interview: M.S. Shiraj.

³ EAS, 15.10.1956, p.5.

to their settlement in Nakuru. For them it was a choice between few urban possibilities.

While it may be argued that up-country tribesmen converted to Islam because it offered them a better understanding of urban life, it seems that the community aspect of Islam in Nakuru was its biggest attraction. When the early up-country tribesmen came to live in Nakuru the Swahili was the only organized and accessible African community in the town. Those who came to town for short periods faced few problems. They were still part and parcel of their tribal society into which they were soon to be re-integrated. But there were those who chose to live permanently in the town. Although their tribal origin still had meaning for them in a general sense, they could not rely on their tribal social unit for material or moral support. The tribe was not a well established urban category and tribesmen living in the town were slow to develop effective organizations for mutual help. The Swahili community offered Africans who joined it material help in time of need, in a situation in which they were left to fend for themselves. Furthermore, it could offer them a sense of security, familiarity and intimacy which they had left behind in their tribal society. A Khasi woman who converted to Islam in the 1930s stated that she did so because she was lonely and thought she would be helped by the Swahili community if she was in trouble.¹ It is important to note, in this respect, that there were very few Luo converts to Islam in Nakuru. The Luo as shown above exhibited a strong sense of solidarity and later

¹ Interview: Aisha binti Lantu. Community was largely composed of

developed the most effective network of social associations to look after tribesmen residing in the town.

The status of the Swahili as a community was further enhanced by the Administration's recognition. The appointment of a headman of the Swahili community from at least as early as 1933 was significant in this respect.¹ Sherif Abdulla bin Mwanab, the Swahili headman, acted as liaison between his community and the Administration. He was also the registrar for Moslem marriages.

The Swahili community did not, however, attract all that many Africans in Nakuru. At its peak during the 1940s it does not seem to have exceeded two hundred. Although the Swahili was the first urbanised African community, Islam did not become the religion of the African townsmen. Even though there is technically no racial discrimination or racial segregation in Islam, few Africans were induced to join it.

From the early 1920s African tribesmen began to organize themselves in tribal associations which aimed to provide similar social conditions and facilities as did the Swahili community. Tribal associations became extensions of the respective tribal units. Although as communities, the early tribal associations were certainly weaker than the Swahili community, even tribesmen who decided to live permanently in the town did not have to look for a new identity. The proximity of Nakuru to most tribal reserves, allowing relatively easy communication between the town and the home area, enabled Africans to stick to their tribal identity.

Islam, as seen by Nakuru Africans, suffered from an unfavourable image. The local Swahili community was largely composed of

¹KNA/NDAR, 1933; 1934; 1935, p.6; 1937, p.6; 1939, p.7.
KNA/D.C/Mw/dep.2/160, Inspector Police Nakuru to A.S.P. Nakuru, 10.2.1948.

"low class" Africans with a low standard of Western education at the time of this incident. I think it is partly due to the fact that many Swahili were house-owners did not change the image, because they were not really prosperous. Islam certainly did not have the aura of progress, modernity and Westernism which Christianity had. The Swahili community did not offer the educational facilities which Africans regarded as the key to progress. The only Mwalen school was confined to Arab and Somali. Educated Africans, in particular, were not attracted by the Swahili brand of urbanism. In addition the Swahili community developed no missionary zeal and seems rather to have responded to the converts' initiative.

Conversion to Islam declined in the 1950s. In fact there is some evidence of "de-Swahilization" in the late 1940s and thereafter. This was a by-product of the strengthening of tribal identity in the town. Then even members of the Swahili community began to express their identity as tribesmen. Kalenjin women joined the Mandi and Kipsigis Union.¹ The president of the Rift Valley Agikuyu Union from 1948 to 1952 was Mador Kahero, the prominent Swahili, as was another committee member, Salimu Sharifu.² Even Mohamed Shiraj whose father was a Nyam-eri joined the Tanganyika Brotherhood rather than the African Muslim Union.³ In 1948 there was some tension between the Swahili and Luo communities. The Inspector of Police who went into the matter offered his view of

¹Interview: Adijah Chemwe.

²N.M.S.O.F., Rift Valley Agikuyu Union meeting, 28.3.1949. (Minutes)

³Interview: M.S. Shiraj

the cause of this tension: "I think it is partly due to the fact that some of the so-called Swahili are mohamedanized [sic] Kikuyu whose sympathies are with the Wakikuyu and in view of a recent trouble in Nakuru between Kikuyu and Luo are probably trying to stir up some fitna."¹ During the political struggle between K. N. U. and K. D. U. in the early 1960s, the division among the Swahilis was on tribal lines. Kalonjin and Abalukya women supported K. D. U. and the Kikuyu followed K. N. U.² The growing tribal identity among the Swahilis tended to weaken their sense of community. It is significant that only twenty-four declared themselves Swahili in the 1962 population census.³

The Origin of Tribal Associations

Most of the up-country tribesmen, who came to Nakuru in the first two decades of the century, regarded their life in town as a temporary adventure. In terms of their economic and social interests they were totally committed to their tribal home. As much as they must have been bewildered by their experience in the town, lack of commitment to it obviated the necessity to formally organize themselves in urban associations. There is little doubt, however, that social life of these short-term migrants revolved around the focus of the tribe. This was a natural response to a multi-tribal situation. Kenya up-country tribes were mostly segmentary and decentralized. Because of paucity of members of the small-scale immediate kinship group in the town, there was a general tendency

¹ KNU/B.C/Mnu/dep.2/160, Inspector Police to A.S.P., 10.2.1948.

² Interviews: M. J. Hiraj, I. Kanyus, J. Kap Kang, Dijah Chame. See below.

³ Kenya Population Census 1962, Tables, Vol. II, p.147.

to associate with people of the same broad linguistic and cultural group such as the Luo, the Bantu of North Kavirondo and the Nilo-Hamitic cluster of the Rift Valley Province.¹ Within this general framework, however, there was always a preference for the sub-tribal or clan groups.

It took some time before this natural response began to express itself institutionally. Attention should be first focused on the Abalukya and the Luo who were to evolve the most elaborate network of tribal associations. Tribal associations began to develop when despite the rapid human turn-over the tribal presence in the town became a more continuous phenomenon. There were those, as early as the late 1910s and the 1920s, who, while not detaching themselves from their tribal societies, began to regard their life in town as a longer-term venture. Most, if not all of them, had their wives and children in the tribal reserve. The reserve and the town were two aspects of their economic and social existence. This small minority of early stable African residents formed a nucleus which offered an element of continuity to the otherwise highly fluid human environment.

It was around those who stayed in M'kuru for a few years or more that tribal urban communities began to evolve. This relatively stable element felt more strongly the need to regularize and institutionalize the inherent solidarity of the respective tribal groups. In fact, it was this element which precipitated the advent of tribal associations.

¹The Bantu of North Kavirondo later acquired the collective name Abalukya and the Nilo-Hamitic group was to be called Kalenjin.

The origin and development of Abaluhya Tribal Associations

There is evidence that in 1918 the people from Tiriki Location in North Kavirondo had an association or at least a committee.¹ This was the first known tribal association in Makuru. The association was joined by people from Bunyore Location who were represented on the committee. The people from Wunga and Kisa Locations, on the other hand, stayed out although they did not have associations of their own. The Abaluhya super-tribe² consisted of some seventeen sub-tribes. Not all of them had common customs and some even spoke mutually unintelligible Bantu dialects. There were among these tribes who were both traditional allies and enemies. The concept of Bantu Kavirondo as one tribe was non-existent at that time. The preference under these circumstances was to organize on the basis of the sub-tribe which was a more familiar social and cultural unit. The fact that at that early stage there were not enough members of a single tribe to guarantee a viable association acted as an inducement to merge with other sub-tribes belonging to the broad linguistic, cultural category. The first step in this direction was taken by the Abatiriki who joined with the people of Bunyore, their traditional friends. The committee met only when the need arose and dealt, apparently, mainly with arbitrating between members in cases in which women were involved.³

¹Interview: J. Lahiruli; Lahiruli came to Makuru in 1918 and found the association in existence.

²The name Abaluhya as a collective name for the North Kavirondo Bantu first appeared in 1935 but did not come into general use until the late 1940s. See J. Lonsdale, Western Kenya under Colonial Rule (draft), p.399. For the sake of simplicity the name Abaluhya will be used for the earlier period as well.

³Interview: J. Lahiruli.

There was by 1922 or thereabout in Nakuru a committee which included a wider representation of the abaluhya residents of Nakuru. It included representatives of six sub-tribes which accounted for most abaluhya in Nakuru, and was known as the Kakamega People's Committee.¹ This committee represented a definite widening of the scope of abaluhya identity and solidarity. Significantly the committee of the Tiriki continued its separate existence proving that the preference for the more familiar group was as strong as ever. The other locations did not evolve locational associations until much later. Their representatives on the Kakamega People's Committee acted as liaison with their sub-tribal groups.

The membership of the Kakamega People's Committee points to the vital role played by those committed to a long stay in the town, in the development of tribal associations. All the eight known members of the committee during the 1920s or the early 1930s resided in Nakuru for very long periods.² The committee members were mostly uneducated being employed in unskilled jobs. Only two of them occupied the prestigious job of office-messenger.

It would be wrong to think of these two associations or committees in terms of western, formal organizations. The concept of formal membership in an association, of proper elections of committees or office holders, or of regular committee meetings was foreign to the abaluhya tribesmen of Nakuru at that period. These were the beginnings of tribal associations and much of the work of

¹ Interview: E. Matoya; the sub-tribes were: Wang'a, Tiriki, Bunyore, Maruma, Maragoli and Isukha.

² Interview: E. Matoya.

the committees was carried out informally and on an ad-hoc basis. The associations at that early stage began to function as welfare organizations. By pooling the meagre resources of their fellow tribesmen they tried to assist those in need. They tried to assist members who got involved with the authorities or those who came to town seeking work. They organized burials of fellow tribesmen who died in town. A further vital function which they performed was arbitration between members on the basis of the customary law.

In 1936 there was a split in Nakuru's Kaluyia community. From about March 1936 there was on the one hand a Kakamega-Maragoli-Tiriki Association (K.M.T.). At the same time there was another association which the D.C. called the North Kavirondo Baraza (N.K.B.). The president of the Baraza was a Mwangi named Juma bin Haji. It is implied in a D.C.'s report that prior to the split the North Kavirondo Baraza covered the Kaluyia community as a whole, and that the people who formed the other association were not prepared to accept the leadership of a Mwangi.¹ It seems likely that the move by the Kakamega-Maragoli-Tiriki in Nakuru was inspired from Nairobi where the North Kavirondo Association was controlled by the Kakamega people.

In fact the K.M.T. Association included people from Kabras and Bunyore locations. It represented those originating from areas controlled by eight chiefs.² The N.K.B. embraced people from Mwangi

¹KN/D.C/Mu/dept.2/192, D.C. to G. P.O., 6.7.1937.

²KN/D.C/Mu/dept.2/192, Representatives of North Kavirondo Chiefs to D.C., 23.11.1936. Six of these Chiefs were, Mwangi, Mirimani, Mamuni, Mgorio, Mure and Odangu. Interview: S. Matoya.

Marama, Butseteo, Kisa, Samia and Bunyala locations. It seems that the division largely reflected traditional groupings of sub-tribes in the reserve. The nucleus of the M.K.B. consisted of the Wanga, Marama, Butseteo and Kisa with the Wanga playing a central role. These four sub-tribes had a common name, Vananda or Abananda, indicating a common origin. They were on friendly terms. The Kakamega, Maragoli and Tiriki were also traditional allies.¹ It also coincided with the geographical position of these groups in the reserve. The sub-tribes of the K.M.T. Association occupied the South Eastern part of the Abaluhya reserve, whereas the other group occupied the locations around Wanga in the centre and west of North Kavirondo.

The apparent cause of the division was in the judicial function of the common Abaluhya committee. Before 1936 the practice was that Juma bin Haji, assisted by a group of elders, settled minor cases affecting Abaluhya tribesmen in Nakuru. This "judicial" function was essential since there was no officially constituted native tribunal in Nakuru which could arbitrate or adjudicate in cases according to customary law. There was at that time only a Kikuyu Tribunal catering mainly for the squatters in the surrounding District.

The people from the K.M.T. group must have been dissatisfied with the justice dispensed by the Muranga Juma bin Haji, or with the general running of the M.K.B. The first step they took was to establish, around March 1936, a separate association. In September

¹ Interview: W. Mandwa, S. Matoya, M. Odongo.

1936 representatives of the new association approached the D.C. conveying their desire to establish a tribunal. The D.C. who had just assumed office urged them to wait. In November 1936 the association took the initiative urging the D.C. to consider their request. In this letter they stated their motives: "We experience many difficulties and chief difficulty being desertion and taking other men's women or wives. Besides this there are minor complaints which do not require to be dealt by you or the Resident Magistrate..."¹

The K.M.T. Association wanted to emulate the example of the Kikuyu Tribunal by securing Government backing for its judicial function.² The N.K.B., on the other hand, was satisfied with its committee's existing but unofficial judicial role without legal powers or imposition of fines.

The D.C. informed the K.M.T. Association that the idea of a sectional tribunal sanctioned by the Administration could not be entertained. A meeting of members of both associations, held on 6th December 1936 under the auspices of the D.C. in an attempt to sort out the differences between them, failed to bridge the gap. The D.C., however, warned the K.M.T. Association not to set up a tribunal without his permission. In fact the D.C. had no previous experience in dealing with urban tribal associations. It is doubtful whether the Administration had been aware of the activities of the tribal associations in Nakuru prior to this incident. The D.C. waited, therefore, for advice from Nairobi where the Municipal

¹ KNA/D.C/Mru/dep.2/192, Representatives of North Kavirondo Chiefs to D.C., 23.11.1936.

² KNA/NDAR 1936, p.4. KM/D.C/Mru/dep.2/192, D.C. to Jg. P.C. R.V.P., 6.7.1937.

African Affairs Officer was more involved with such associations.¹

The D.C. left the matter in abeyance even after he got the information about the position in Nairobi. He probably did not consider it to be of importance to warrant his initiative. It did, however, come to the open, with a big bang, around the middle of 1937. The clerk of the K.M.T. Association, after being discharged from his position, handed over to the Police all the association's books. Examining them, the D.C. found out to his dismay that since December 1936 the Association had had a tribunal delivering judgments, imposing fines and levying fees.

The manner in which the matter came out into the open forced the D.C. to re-formulate his views about the whole question. He dismissed the idea of a separate tribunal to the K.M.T. He argued that whereas the Kikuyu Tribunal catered for the Kikuyu living in the District the K.M.T. Association was concerned about their fellow tribesmen living only in the town. As if to emphasize this difference he pointed out that the K.M.T. were largely house and shop boys. He referred to them, somewhat derogatorily, as "a group of semi-detribalised natives". Expressing even opposition to the establishment of a tribunal for all North Kavirondo Bantu tribesmen, he argued that it would inevitably become both sectional and ineffective. He maintained that the setting up of a tribunal for the Bantu and Luo was inconceivable because they would not mix together. Having said this he, in fact, admitted that had the principle of providing Africans in the town with judicial facilities

¹ KNA/D.C./Knu/dep.2/192, MAMO Nairobi to D.C. Makuru, 5.4.1937, D.C. to Ag.P.C. R.V.P., 6.7.1937.

been accepted the establishment of a North Kavirondo tribunal was the only way to go about it. The argument that such a tribunal would have been ineffective, ignored the fact that for more than half a year even a smaller scale tribunal was effectively in operation without the Administration's blessing or assistance. The Administration at that stage did not apparently regard Africans living in a small town like Nakuru as entitled to basic services of good government. Africans were not yet regarded as an integral and legitimate part of the urban scene.

The D.C. suggested the extension of the authority of the N.K.B. with Juma bin Haji at its head, to all the Bantu of North Kavirondo. What exactly the authority and functions of this association were to be was not made clear. All the D.C. was prepared to allow was the holding of a monthly baraza "to discuss matters".¹ Hitherto tribal associations in Nakuru had been the exclusive domain of the Africans concerned. With their internal problems and divisions being thrust upon it, the Administration made an attempt to regulate and control their conduct. According to the principle guiding the Administration's policy in the reserve when faced with segmentary uncentralized tribal societies, the D.C. Nakuru tried to reduce inherent divisions to manageable proportions. The Administration regarded the Bantu of North Kavirondo as a potential category for the purpose of communication and control, even when they were divided among themselves. Such an attitude undoubtedly contributed to the growth of Abaluhya

¹ KM/D.C/Mu/dep.2/192, P.C., R.V.P., to D.C., 28.7.1937.

solidarity and unity.

The K.M.T. themselves were none too keen to share the secrets of their association with the Administration. When approaching the D.C. regarding their tribunal they failed to report to him that they had a functioning urban based association. They presented themselves as representing people belonging to eight chiefs in the reserve.¹ The Africans concerned may have thought it advisable to present themselves to the Administration as people of legitimate and recognized tribal authorities, rather than as "semi-detribalised". On the other hand, they may have genuinely regarded themselves, at that stage, primarily as an extension of their respective tribal units and authorities.

In its organization the K.M.T. association showed signs of modernity. Although the books of the association looked like "a jumble of entries apparently relating to the activities of the association and of the Tribunal hopelessly mixed up", to a British D.C. the mere use of written records by an association composed predominantly of illiterate people, was highly significant indicating a change in the concept of tribal association. It was no longer an occasional meeting of elders for the purpose of solving a dispute or helping a needy person, a mere urban translation of the customary way of doing things. Tribal associations were slowly modelling themselves on Western type institutions with all their formal and bureaucratic paraphernalia.

That the K.M.T. Association was slowly becoming a primarily urban-orientated is reinforced by its external links. The D.C.

¹ KN/D.C/Mu/dep.2/192, Representatives of North Kavirondo Chiefs to D.C., 23.11.1936.

pointed out that the Association was not inspired from the reserve.¹ It had on the other hand strong links with Nairobi. In Nairobi, the big town, tribal associations were much more developed, operating under the close supervision of the Municipal Native Affairs Officer. At this time in Nairobi there was a North Kavirondo Association controlled by the Kakamega people. The organisers of the K.M.T. association in Nakuru approached their Nairobi counterparts asking them to send representatives to open a branch there. The administration, however, was not willing at that stage to encourage what could have amounted to the beginning of Colony-wide tribal associations. The Nairobi North Kavirondo Association was duly informed that the Nakuru Association would have to be separate from that of Nairobi and under the authority of the local D.C.²

The K.M.T. Association, possibly following the example of Nairobi, made attempts to stabilize its finances. Besides the fines imposed by its tribunal, the Association collected funds from its inception. The D.C. informed the Association's leaders that on no account should they collect funds without his permission. He further expressed his opposition to the collection of funds by such associations.³ He seems to have over-reacted to an innocent attempt of the Association to give its welfare activities a sounder and more stable basis.

The D.C.'s suggested formation of one North Kavirondo association headed by Juma bin Haji was not implemented. The relationship

¹ Ibid.

² KA/D.C/Mu/dep.2/192, D.C., Nairobi, to D.C., Nakuru, 5.4.1937.

³ KA/D.C/Mu/dep.2/192, D.C. to Hq. P.C., R.V.P., 6.7.1937.

between the two rival associations was approaching crisis point around 1939, after Juma bin Maji, apparently a conciliating influence, had joined the King's African Rifles. It all started with a not uncommon problem arising from urban life. A Kakamega tribesman took the wife of a Wanga and hid her away. In the absence of arbitration or judicial machinery applying to both sub-tribes, the Wanga elders decided to take the law into their own hands. After having arrested him the Wanga elders ordered the Kakamega man to be beaten severely. Kakamega people were infuriated by what they regarded as interference in their own affairs.¹

The rivalry and tension between the two associations lasted until 1942. It was in that year that the Abaluhya Welfare Association (E.A.) Nakuru branch was formed.² The Abaluhya Welfare Association (E.A.) was established in 1940.³ The formation of the association in Nakuru brought to an end the open rivalry between the two Abaluhya factions and linked together the Abaluhya tribesmen in the town. The Abaluhya Welfare Association (A.W.A.) was very different from the Kakamega People's Committee of the early 1930s and thereafter. The Committee reflected an instinctive response of members of a broad linguistic and cultural group to a situation of rapid social change in a multi-racial and multi-tribal environment. The A.W.A. was a result of conscious efforts to evolve a tribe out of

¹ Interview: S. Matoya.

² Interview: S. Matoya, J. Otukho - Otukho came to Nakuru in 1945 and found the A.W.A. in existence.

³ J. Osoyo, A History of the Baluhya. OUP. Nairobi 1966, p.139.

the largely heterogeneous Bantu tribes of Western Kenya.

It is noteworthy that perhaps the least homogeneous of the major up-country tribes was the first to set up a unified network of urban tribal associations stretching throughout the colony and beyond. The Abaluhya sub-tribes could not evoke a common descent or a common history in the service of tribal unity. They could not claim common customs since there was strong Nilotic influence among a number of sub-tribes. Certain sub-tribes could not even claim mutually intelligible dialects. The Kenya-Uganda border, the Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic tribes surrounding the Bantu sub-tribes on the Kenya side and the British tendency to encourage the creation of large tribal groups in segmentary, uncentralized societies, were more significant in the emergence of the Abaluhya tribe than any positive common denominator.

The appointment, by the British, of Mumia, the Wangwa Mabengo,¹ as Paramount Chief of North Kavirondo in 1909, gave the Bantu sub-tribes of the area a first semblance of unity. The attempt, however, to copy the Uganda model by using Wangwa agents as chiefs in other locations, was not successful. The Wangwa regime aroused strong opposition and when Mumia retired in 1926 no replacement was nominated.²

The politically radical North Kavirondo Central Association, which was founded in 1932, regarded the unity of the North Kavirondo Bantu as an essential prerequisite for an effective political action vis à vis the Colonial Government. They faced, however, great

¹The Mabengo was the Wangwa king.

²J. Osoyo, op.cit., pp. 119-133.

difficulties in achieving it. They antagonised the local establishment which thrived on the parochial nature of the District's politics. In addition to the divisions between sub-tribes and clans, the District was further divided by the various missions operating within it. As a last resort they tried to rally the Abaluhya tribesmen around the tradition of the Wanga Nabongo which was given by them a much wider significance than he warranted. This lay behind their demand for effective local autonomy under a paramount chief. When they crowned one of Mumia's descendants as a paramount chief without Government consent, they were frustrated largely through the opposition of the established chiefs.

Another way in which the North Kavirondo Central Association sought to foster unity among the North Kavirondo Bantu was the search for a collective tribal name. This was the origin of the name Baluhya or Abaluhya. It was a conscious effort to create a tribe by inventing a collective name. Chiefs and elders in the reserve rejected the name as "an assertive appellation which a number of young men had given to themselves."¹ It was natural for chiefs and elders to perpetuate the parochialism which was the basis of their power. It was equally understandable why young radical politicians in conflict with the tribal establishment desperately strove to achieve unity at the grass-roots. Unity was an alternative source of internal power and unity meant position of strength in dealing with the Colonial Government. On the whole, the basic lack of unity among this group of sub-tribes explains both their desperate quest for it and ultimately their frustration and failure.

¹J. Lonsdale, Western Kenya, pp. 387-402.

It is not entirely surprising that both the name *abalukya* and the concept of *abalukya* unity found more success among the North Kavirondo Bantu tribesmen in the towns. The formation of the A.W.A. covering the whole network of urban tribal associations was the first breakthrough in the campaign for *abalukya* unity. Judging from the Nakuru situation, the role of the leaders of the tribal associations, most of whom were more or less committed to urban life, was crucially important. While not detaching themselves from their tribal units and while maintaining keen interest in developments in their respective tribal locations and sub-locations, they were not really involved in the internal politics there, which so intensified parochialism. Many of them were increasingly involved in a struggle for success in a largely urban status system. Tribal associations were valuable assets and could be used as bases for the furtherance of personal ambitions. The A.W.A. was potentially the most effective platform for the pursuit of both personal and tribal interests.

But even for the majority of the tribesmen in the town who probably had no vested interests in tribal associations, the concept of *abalukya* solidarity and unity had more meaning than for their brethren in the reserve. In the reserve the clan and to a lesser extent the sub-tribe were the only viable units of social order which the ordinary tribesmen knew. The interests of the more immediate kinship group very often prevailed and traditional rivalries were potentially political factors. In the frontier atmosphere of a multi-tribal town, the affinity which a tribesman felt towards members of the other sub-tribes transcended the traditional animosities which he might have brought with him from the reserve. whereas in the reserve he derived his sense of security from his

immediate kinship group, in the town, in his relations with members of other tribes, the wider tribal category offered a more useful base for interaction. This was so particularly because he often found in the town few members of his clan or even sub-tribe.¹ In any discussion of the development of Abaluhya unity the role of the Abaluhya townsmen is central.

The need for Abaluhya unity in the context of Nakuru was further accentuated by the fact that the Luo and the Kikuyu, the two other major tribal groups in the town, exhibited a larger measure of tribal solidarity and cohesion. Lack of unity stimulated the quest for an institutionalized form which might guarantee it. Unity was emphasized as a means by which problems could be solved and failure was pinned on disunity.²

At the level of the A.S.A. Nakuru a trend developed which could be described as a Pan-abaluhya movement. It related mainly to Bantu groups living among the Luo in Central Nyanza. This was a result of the complexities of the process of Luo conquest and settlement in the area bordering the Abaluhya.³ Attempts were made to re-unite these "lost tribes" with the main body of the Abaluhya tribe. This was, for example, the case of the Bantu who lived in Gem Location. There were eight Bantu clans related to the Banyole inhabiting the neighbouring Banyore Location. Most of them were almost completely assimilated. They often spoke the Luo language, followed their customs

(Rhodes-Livinstone Paper No. 21) Manchester University press, 1956.

¹ J.C. Mitchel, The Kalala Dance, p.30. Mitchel observed a similar development in Northern Rhodesia.

² Abaluhya Association Files (A.A.F.), Committee meeting 18.9.1949, (Minutes), General meeting, 16.3.1958. (Minutes)

³ B.A. Ogot, History of the Northern Luo, East African Publishing House, Nairobi 1967, pp. 135-90.

and intermarried with them. Traditions of origin, a sense of being discriminated against as a minority and, for some, cultural and linguistic heritage, prevented their total assimilation into Luo society. Those of them who came to Nakuru formed the Gcm Bantu Association. In 1949 it was a member of the A.W.A. After it ceased to exist until it was revived in 1961, as the Nakuru branch of Gcm Bantu (E.A.) Association. It tried to affiliate itself to the then Abaluhya Association, but most of the members found language an insurmountable barrier and the attempt failed. Their sympathies, however, remained with the Abaluhya and during the early 1960s they supported KADU, the tribe's party.¹

There was also the case of the Basonga sub-tribe inhabiting Basonga Location in Central Nyanza, and whose origin is not conclusively established.² While their language was Luluhya, their customs were greatly influenced by the Luo. In 1957 a call came from Busyala Society, Nakuru branch, to the Abaluhya Association's local branch, to invite the Basonga to join it. The Busyala Society complained that the Abaluhya Association did not care for the Abaluhya living in Central Nyanza: "The Abaluhya Association treat the Bantu in Basonga as Luo whereas they are our brothers."³ In 1958 it was ruled by the Nakuru branch of the Abaluhya Association that every Maluhya who lived in North Nyanza, Elgon Nyanza and Central Nyanza could join it.⁴ In fact, by 1957, the Basonga Union

¹ A.A.F., list of affiliated associations, 16.10.1949; Secretary to Registrar of Societies, 19.3.1958; Registrar of Societies Archive, Nairobi (R.S.A.), Gcm Bantu File; B.A. Ogot, History of the Southern Luo, p.222; Interview: C.P.Ochillo.

² J. Geago, op.cit., pp. 44-5, claims that the Basonga were of Bantu origin. B.A. Ogot, History..., p.164, claims that they are Nilotic by origin.

³ A.A.F., Busyala Society, to Abaluhya Association, 19.2.1957.

⁴ A.A.F., General meeting, 16.11.1958. (Minutes)

was an affiliated member of the Abaluhya Association in Nakuru.¹

The case of Basamia Union shows that Pan-abaluhya aspirations had a rather artificial limit. The Basamia lived on both sides of the Kenya-Uganda border.² In 1956 the Basamia residing in Nakuru had a Basamia Union whose aim was "to unite all Basamia of Uganda and Kenya to one thing."³ In 1959 the Union complained that whenever they asked for assistance the Abaluhya Association declined to give it to them saying that they were Ugandans "whereas we are real Abaluhya".⁴ Indeed, later that year the Basamia of Uganda formed their own Basamia Bagwe Uganda Society.⁵ In 1960 Basamia Kenya Union registered as a separate association.⁶ Political factors had their effect and the Abaluhya tribe and Abaluhya unity developed as purely Kenyan concepts.

But even within Kenya not all the related Bantu groups of Western Kenya were included. Foremost among them was the Kisii tribe of South Nyanza which was separated from the main body of the Abaluhya by the Luo belt of Central Nyanza. There was no attempt to incorporate the Kisii Union, Nakuru, into the Abaluhya Welfare Association. The Abaluhya tribe was thus limited to the main body of Bantu sub-tribes who were geographically contiguous, living in the districts of Central Nyanza, North Nyanza and Ilgon Nyanza.

¹ A.A.F., Committee meeting, 27.11.1957.

² J. Osogo, op.cit., pp. 96-100.

³ R.S.A., File 1181, Rules of Basamia Union, 29.5.1956.

⁴ A.A.F., Basamia Union to Abaluhya Association, 8.2.1959.

⁵ R.S.A., ^{File} 1181, Chairman to Registrar, 24.8.1959.

⁶ D.C/Mkw/Adm/15/12/59, 25.2.1960.

A mixture of ethnic, cultural, geographic and political factors joined together to create the somewhat artificial Abaluhya super-tribe.

There was one interesting attempt to deviate from the strictly ethnic, cultural and linguistic criteria for membership of the Abaluhya Association. In 1958 the Association invited the Teso Union to affiliate.¹ The Teso were a Nilo-Hamitic tribe living along the Uganda border and bordering on the Kenya side with the Abaluhya. It would have added a territorial element to an already complicated tribal fabric. The Teso Union, however, declined to accept the offer, preferring to remain distinct.

The formation of the Abaluhya Welfare Association in 1940 did not solve the problem of Abaluhya unity. It served as a platform from which the idea of unity could be propagated among the Abaluhya living in the towns; it was a nucleus around which a sense of Abaluhya solidarity could develop; it established an institutional expression for the attempts to achieve co-operation at the practical level between members of the various sub-tribes facing common problems. But the fissiparous tendencies and the parochialism characteristic of decentralized tribes had still to be overcome or accommodated in a way which would not render unity meaningless.

Around the time when the Abaluhya Welfare Association, Nakuru branch, was formed locational associations catering for the different Abaluhya sub-tribes began to appear on the scene. The first to take the initiative, establishing formal associations, were

¹ . . . F., Teso Union to Abaluhya Association, 5.2.1958; Abaluhya Association to Teso Union, 17.3.1958.

members of the Busyore, Butotso, Kisa and Tiriki sub-tribes during the first half of the 1940s. By 1949 fifteen locational associations had been formed.¹ This proliferation of locational associations was made possible by the increase of the Abalukya population in Nakuru during the 1940s and after the War in particular. There were enough members of these sub-tribes to justify the establishment of separate associations. There was also always the inclination to organize at a more familiar level. In the case of the Abalukya a further stimulus was the tribal football league of Nakuru. In 1951, for example, the Abalukya who exhibited a remarkable taste for football entered not less than eight locational teams, out of a total of twelve teams competing in the tribal league.² Football teams are universally renowned as foci of local patriotism. By 1958 there were seventeen affiliated locational associations in the Abalukya Association in Nakuru.³

These associations tended in fact to become sub-tribal rather than locational.⁴ In most constitutions membership qualifications were based on sub-tribal origin and not on the location as a geographical-administrative unit. In most cases it posed no problem, because the administrative locations largely coincided with the sub-tribal divisions. As a result of the pattern of Abalukya wanderings and final settlement there were in most locations clans originating from other sub-tribes. These on the whole were either absorbed or were numerically insignificant in the context of Nakuru.

¹ A.A.F., list of locational associations, 16.10.1949. The associations were: Tiriki, Maragoli, Isukha, Idakho, Kitoshi (Bukusu), Samia (Central Nyanza), Wanga, Bukhaya, Maruma, Gem Bantu, Busyore, Butotso, Marachi, Kisa, Samia Kisa.

² N.N.S.S.D.F., list of football teams, 24.10.1951.

³ A.A.F., Secretary to Registrar of Societies, 19.3.1958.

⁴ I use the term locational, because this is the one used by the Africans concerned.

There was, however, one exception in Mukuru. In the first half of the 1940s the people from Kisa Location formed an association. In this location there was a substantial minority of people originating from the Lamia sub-tribe, who lived in Mukuru in relatively large numbers. In 1947 they left the Kisa association to form their own Basamia association. Although it represented only a small part of Kisa Location, the association eventually acquired the status of a locational association within the S.W.A. Kisa Union was then restricted to members of the Abashika sub-tribe.¹ In the case of the Lamia sub-tribe mentioned earlier the reverse operated for the Kenya-Uganda border split the sub-tribe. The Lamia Kenya Union represented a location rather than the whole Lamia sub-tribe.

During the 1950s the Kakamega Society included two unrelated neighbouring sub-tribes, the Isukha and Idakho. In 1960, however, the Idakho broke away forming the Idakho Progressive Society, leaving the Kakamega Society to the Isukha alone.²

When a sub-tribe inhabited more than one administrative location the tendency was to make the sub-tribe the basis of the respective associations. This was so in the case of the Isukha sub-tribe which occupied two locations.³ In the 1956 constitution of the Wanga Union membership was restricted to those originating from the four locations of North Wanga, South Wanga, East Wanga and Buholo. In 1958 an amendment dropped the geographic-administrative qualification in favour of a sub-tribal one. Only Wanga sub-tribesmen

¹ Interview: F. Omyonga, W. Mandwa; A.A.F., Secretary to Registrar of Societies, 19.3.1958; R.S.A., File 2258.

² R.S.A., File 2864, Secretary to Registrar, 16.10.1960.

³ J. Geogo, op.cit., p.64.

were eligible.¹ The Wangu Union still included members from a few locations. But at the same time the Uholo Welfare Society was formed in Makuru for the people from Baholo Location.²

Indeed the sub-tribe in the Kaluhya traditional society was the widest unit of solidarity based on a common dialect, a common founder, shared historical experience and a common customary code.

Many of these associations probably had no sustained existence throughout the period until Independence. There were times when they became redundant or even ceased to exist until revived in a spate of enthusiasm. For some a change of name reflected an attempt at a fresh start. In 1945 the Tiriki adopted for the first time a formal name for their association, the Tiriki Ingavo Association. In 1958 they changed it to Tiriki Ndalo Association and in 1962 it became a branch of Tiriki Union (L.).³ Similarly the Buzasia Association which became redundant in 1956 gave way to a new one named Namasoli Burial Society. This existed only for one year and the Buzasia Friendly Society was formed in its stead.⁴

Locational associations began during the 1940s to make progress in terms of the effectiveness of their organization. The choice of a proper name whether society, association or Union, was one indication that they were beginning to think along the lines of modern formal organizations. They also began to demand formal membership and membership fees, though this was seldom easy to implement. The idea was totally foreign to the ordinary tribesman.

¹R.S.A., file 1091.

²R.S.A., File 1449.

³Interview: M. S. Maji; R.S.A., File 1885.

⁴Interview: W. Nandwa, R. Kuboka.

In the tribal society birth was perhaps the only known criterion of belonging to a sub-tribe or any other kinship group, and many could not understand why in town they were required to pay fees to become members of their respective associations. Others were simply unwilling to part with their money. The association's leaders at the same time found it difficult to disown non-members when they were in need and to operate only at the membership level. What seems to have developed in some cases was two levels of sub-tribesmen from the point of view of the associations. Whereas members were assisted from the association's funds the non-members were assisted by the association but had no access to its funds.¹ The Buryala Society, on the other hand, used its funds for assisting non-members as well. Not being able to cope with this situation, the Society requested the D.C. to authorise it to force all the sub-tribesmen in Nakuru to join it and pay fees.² While there is no reason to believe that the D.C. responded to this request, it showed the predicament in which an association found itself with two categories of natural and paid-up membership. The introduction of paid-up membership, with all the difficulties involved, gave the associations a relatively sound and stable basis for their operations.

The need for a financial basis stimulated the associations' leadership to make efforts to expand their paid-up membership. The figures relating to the membership of most locational associations were recorded only from the second half of the 1950s when they began to send annual reports to the Registrar of Societies. The biggest baluhya locational association was the Buryore Union whose membership

¹Interview: W. Mandwa.

²A.A.P., Chairman, Buryala Society, to D.C., 24.12.1957.

ranged from a hundred and fifty in 1954 to four hundred and twenty in 1962. The Banyole were the biggest Abaluhya contingent in Nakuru. One is struck by the degree of fluctuation in some associations' membership. The membership of Marama Burial Aid Society dropped from a hundred and forty five in 1958 to ten in 1961 and 1962. Kisa Union's membership on the other hand rose from fifteen in 1960 to seventy in 1963. Bunyala Society similarly increased its membership from twenty six in 1954 to a hundred and twenty three in 1959.¹ The largely migratory nature of the Abaluhya settlement in Nakuru was at least partly responsible for these fluctuations. So was the relative efficiency of the leadership of the respective associations.

Locational associations began during the 1940s to emulate the Western model of organization by institutionalizing their leadership. The concepts of committees and office holders were adopted with the result that associations soon had all the office-holding positions from chairman right down to the assistant treasurer or even auditor. The lead in this respect was probably given by the Abaluhya Welfare Association.

From 1952, the Societies Rules (1954) were applied to tribal associations. Most of the Abaluhya locations, however, registered in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The application of the Societies Rules gave impetus to the process of westernization of the tribal associations. A registered association had to submit a list of office holders and a detailed constitution. These constitutions

¹ See appendix I.

often included rules taken from the armoury of sophisticated organizations. The constitution regulated office-holders, membership, termination of membership, suspension of membership, meetings, elections and so on. Associations were also required to define aims and objects. In some cases the imitation of the Western model was taken ad absurdum as the following shows:

"Rule 10 - Trustees: All land and buildings and other immovable property and all investments and securities which shall be acquired by the society shall be vested in the names of not less than twelve trustees ... The trustees shall pay all income received from property vested in the trustees to the treasurer."

This was meant to apply to an association which had some forty members and most of whose office-holders were uneducated.¹ It certainly had no property, movable or immovable. It must have been difficult for some associations to follow these imposed rules. On the whole, however, from the 1940s up to 1963 there was a gradual improvement in the scope of activities and performance of most locational associations. This improvement was certainly not linear. But despite the ups and downs the general trend was towards efficiency.

The position of the Abaluhya Association as an association in its own right was rather precarious. It certainly failed to attract wide interest and support. Its meetings in 1950-2, which were not regular, were, on the whole, poorly attended. On average not more than a few score of tribesmen attended its general meetings with one exception of a turnout of eighty-five.² A circular letter

¹R.S.A., File 3574. This was in fact merely a clan association.

²N.M.S.A.D.F., Nakuru African Welfare Monthly Report (N.A.W.M.R.), 1950-2.

ment in 1956 to all locational associations voiced the complaint that baluhya tribesmen failed to join the A.W.A.¹ The membership of the Association was very thin, ranging from thirty-five in 1957 to ninety-five in 1962.² It is doubtful whether these figures even represented paid-up membership. In 1958 out of fifty-seven members only five were fully paid-up members.³ A letter to the Registrar of Societies in 1962 revealed a sorry state of affairs: "I regret to say that we have no paid-up members, but those who became members between 1957-9 are still regarded as members."⁴ The Registrar's reply was swift: "If you have not got paid-up members you are not a society."⁵ This statement, while representing the Rules of Societies, reveals a lack of understanding of the position of this super-tribal association. Even the Association's subsequent claim that it did have a paid-up membership could not mask its real nature.

The baluhya Association, like its predecessor the A.W.A., was basically a federation of locational associations. While this statement may not have been wholly true for the early 1940s, it was certainly so for the closing period of that decade. Although repeated attempts were made by the Association to increase its membership, it seems to have been resigned to the reality which made it impossible. People on the whole preferred their more intimate locational associations and it was difficult to convince them to pay double membership fees. Explaining to the Registrar

¹ A.W.A., baluhya Association to all locational associations, 17.11.1956.

² See appendix I; A.W.A., Membership list 1956. At the end of 1963 the rather exaggerated figure of three hundred and fifty was submitted to the Registrar. Since the evidence does not account for such a drastic improvement, this figure must be viewed with suspicion.

³ A.W.A., Secretary's Annual Report, 1958.

⁴ R.S.A., File 1734, Secretary to Registrar, 18.7.1962.

⁵ R.S.A., File 1734, Registrar to Secretary, 1.8.1962.

the position of the Association's membership in 1962, the secretary openly admitted that it had no independent existence: "The number of members could not be instituted since Abaluhya Tribe consists of seventeen major locations having associations of their own ... they only affiliate to the Abaluhya Association."¹

Whether it was constitutional or not the Abaluhya Association could claim to represent the Abaluhya tribesmen in M'kuru only through its affiliated locational associations. In fact, it was able to operate within the Abaluhya community only if it could enlist the support of these associations. The Abaluhya constitution was misleading in this respect because it did not refer to these essential relationships with the Association's affiliates. The membership clause allowed membership to any Omuluhya over the age of sixteen not mentioning the corporate membership of the locational associations.²

The constitutions of the affiliated members also evaded the issue. In fact, only three locational associations pledged themselves, in general terms, to co-operate with the Abaluhya Association.³ In reality the locational associations as affiliated members of the parent association paid collective membership fees which in 1957 amounted to Shs. 20/- per annum.⁴ The bond between the Abaluhya Association and its affiliates was further strengthened by the practice according to which the Association's committee was composed of

¹ R.S.A., File 1734, Secretary to Registrar, 5.5.1962.

² R.S.A., File 1734, undated constitution (around 1956).

³ R.S.A., File 1091, Wang'uta Union, File 1855, Tiriki Union; D.C/Moi/Am/15/12/59A, Lewin Kenya Union, 2.2.1960.

⁴ R.S.A., Committee meeting, 27.11.1957. /A list of locational associations, members of the A.K.U., 16.10.1949
(Minutes)

representatives of the different locational associations.¹ Only the office-holders were elected by the Association's general meeting irrespective of their sub-tribal origin.

When the secretary of the Abaluhya Association explained to the Registrar the position of its affiliates, the latter pointed out correctly that this was not confirmed by the constitution.² This misunderstanding brought to light the discrepancy between the ways in which tribal associations and the Administration viewed the constitutions. The purpose of applying the Societies Rules (1952) to tribal associations, was to regulate and control their activities. The Abaluhya tribal associations, for their part, do not seem to have taken their constitutions seriously. Drawing up a constitution on the British model was a prerequisite for registration, but it apparently had not dawned on the committee that it was actually supposed to regulate their affairs. The most important constitutional features failed to appear in the associations' constitutions.

In reality the Abaluhya Association was dependent upon the good-will and co-operation of the locational associations. There was no way in which it could make them toe its line besides appealing to the sense of tribal solidarity. In 1949 the Butsoiso Association refused to send representatives to the A.W.A.'s committee until they knew more about its running.³ In 1957-8 there were associations which had no representatives on the Abaluhya Association's committee.⁴ In 1950 the Buryore Union fell out with the A.W.A. because three of

¹ A.W.A., Committee meeting, 16.10.1949. (Minutes) Bukusu Union to A.W.A., 10.5.1951. Interview: W. Mandwa.

² R.S.A., Registrar to Secretary, 18.6.1963.

³ A.W.A., Butsoiso Association to A.W.A., 14.4.1949.

⁴ A.W.A., Secretary's Annual Report, 1958.

their football players had left to join the Abalukya Football Club.¹ In 1959 the same Union threatened to leave the Abalukya Association unless the latter reversed an action taken against a Bunyore woman.² The Wanga Union stopped paying its membership fees to the Association, in 1960, because they claimed they had been "deceived" by its secretary.³ In 1955, Bunyala Society had a grudge against the A.W.A. because a Mulukya appointed as an elder in the local African Court was not from their location.⁴ It was evidently difficult to keep all the associations happy.

Financially the Abalukya Association largely depended on its affiliates. Not having a large committed membership of its own, any fund-raising operation on a tribe-wide scale was well beyond its organizational capability. Consequently it used to delegate to its component associations the responsibility for collecting the required funds. This was done in cases such as a fund for building a local school, a scholarship for overseas studies or the entertainment of officials from the reserve.⁵

With the strong cross-cutting sub-tribal sense of solidarity characterizing the Abalukya, the Abalukya Association was somewhat ineffective as a co-ordinator. This was implied in 1955 in a letter of resignation of the Association's secretary who had hoped to revitalize it.⁶ It was openly admitted by the chairman in 1957:

¹ A.A.F., Bunyore Union to A.W.A., 18.7.1950.

² A.A.F., Bunyore Union to Abalukya Association, 1.7.1959.

³ A.A.F., Wanga Union to Abalukya Association, 24.3.1960.

⁴ A.A.F., Bunyala Society to A.W.A., 8.3.1953.

⁵ A.A.F., undated report on the Nakuru African Primary School Extension Fund; Abalukya Association to Bunyala Society, 19.12.1956; Kakamega Society to Abalukya Association, 27.11.1958.

⁶ A.A.F., D. Musonye to Chairman, 17.10.1955.

"Abalukya Association is very weak, even a small location might be more efficient than the Abalukya Association."¹ But it was still a nucleus around which Abalukya solidarity and unity could rally. As such there were sufficient interests to keep it going. There was a slow but genuine growth of a sense of tribal solidarity and unity at that level. This was not strong enough to inhibit all expressions of sub-tribal particularism, but it did establish among the Abalukya a sense of community via a via the other tribal communities in the town. This sense of community was stronger among the educated and urbanised than among the illiterate and migrant tribesmen. In addition members of the Abalukya elite could not have overlooked the advantage of having a wide basis for their political, economic or social ambitions. With the widening of the scale of African political activities Abalukya politicians appreciated the potential power base which a tribal constituency could become.

Since it was impracticable to turn the Abalukya Association itself into an effective mass organization, the efforts were concentrated on strengthening its federal structure. It was hardly surprising that Masinde Mũiro, the M.L.C. for North Nyanza (a future prominent KADU leader) was the one who came to Nakuru in 1958 to launch a campaign to forge the Association's federal unity. Although there was emphasis on the non-political nature of the meeting he addressed, Mũiro's motives were unmistakable. He put across the ideology of Abalukya unity in a language understandable by the simplest tribesmen:

¹ A.A.F., Committee meeting, 27.11.1957. (Minutes)

"He [Malina] advised the Abaluhya to know that Locational Associations are like fingers of the hand and that the Abaluhya Association is the hand. If one finger is ill then it would affect the whole hand. He therefore urged the Locations to unite for the sake of maintaining the strength of the Abaluhya Association. Such strength would enable the Abaluhya Associations in the Colony to combat the major problems which confront them to-day."¹

The chairman of the local branch added his own figurative version, stating that the locational associations were comparable to coaches of a train, the engine being the Abaluhya Association. "Therefore," he added, "unless Locational Associations unite, then automatically there would not be the Abaluhya Association."² An important source of strength to the Abaluhya Association was its recognition, by the Administration, as the representative of the Nakuru Abaluhya community as a whole.³

The close association between the Nakuru branch of the Abaluhya Association and KADU during the early 1960s invigorated the Association and intensified its activities. There was at that time a considerable upsurge of a sense of solidarity among the Abaluhya tribesmen in Nakuru, facing the Kikuyu-Luo alliance. Although the Abaluhya displayed, in those years, a greater cohesion than their brethren in the reserve, the Abaluhya Association could not force all the locational associations to toe their line. The Maragoli Society refused to commit itself to KADU and gave its members a freedom of choice. In the 1961 General Elections the Hamia Kenya Union supported Ochwada, their fellow sub-tribesman, who was a KNU candidate. The Union suspended its participation in the Abaluhya Association's meeting for the duration of the election

¹ A.S.F., General meeting, 16.3.1958. (Minutes)

² A.S.F., Secretary to Registrar of Societies, 13.3.1958.

³ The role of the Administration in consolidating the authority of tribal level associations is discussed below, pp.

campaign.¹

The ambiguity of Abaluhya unity was reflected at yet two additional levels. In 1997 the Vananda or bananda Association was formed in Nakuru. It combined four closely related sub-tribes, namely Wanga, Marama, Kisa and Butso. These sub-tribes formed the nucleus of the North Kavirondo Baraga in 1936-42. The Vananda Association was not registered, neither did it have its own membership. It was a co-ordinating body whose officers and committee members represented the respective locational associations. It is possible that this alignment came about because these four associations felt that they were inadequately represented in the Abaluhya Association's leadership which was largely dominated by people of Bunyore and Kakamega. The Vananda Association's committee met only when there was a common problem to solve. In the first place, it pooled the efforts and resources of the four component associations to solve welfare problems affecting their members. They also presented a united front in general meetings of the Abaluhya Association, particularly in re-elections of office-holders, creating "a lot of confusion and division".²

The fractious tendencies of the Abaluhya segmentary society revealed themselves at an even lower level of social organization in Nakuru. Solidarity at the sub-tribal level in the town had a viable basis in the equivalent socio-political unit in the reserve. But even the unity of the locational association could not be taken for granted. It had to be cultivated and even then it was not always

¹ See below.

² Interview: N. Odongo.

³ Interview: N. Odongo (N.O.), General meeting, 20.11.1994, 20.4.1995, General meeting, 10.6.1995, (N.O.)

⁴ N.O., General meeting, 28.5.1995, (N.O.)

achieved. The constant propagation of unity in the Tiriki Union during the early 1960s reveals a lack of it. There was the usual complaint that the sub-tribe lagged behind because of lack of unity. "There is trouble ahead, let us unite" was the message of the Union's chairman.¹ At a General Meeting of the Buryore Union in 1963 the theme was similar. The Union's chairman urged his fellow sub-tribesmen to re-unite promising that "if we are united no tribe [Sub-tribe] from other Location could defeat us in trade or politics".²

Disunity among the segmentary sub-tribes was, in fact, structural. Parochialism in the reserve went down to the clan and even sub-clan levels. In terms of social interaction there was always a preference for the most immediate kinship group. While the town provided a stimulus for identification on a wider scale it did not basically alter the scale of social priorities. There is little doubt that this social preference was operative at the personal level from the early beginnings of baluhya migration into Nakuru. Numerically, however, it was practically inconceivable to form associations at that level. As soon as the numbers allowed, clansmen responded.

This happened in the early 1940s and thereafter with the increase of the baluhya population in the town. It was a significant coincidence that the early 1940s, which saw the emergence of the A.W.A. in Nakuru as the ultimate expression of the tribe's structural unity, also witnessed the beginnings of clan associations. Buryore clansmen gave the lead forming the first clan association around 1943. Some five Buryore clan associations were formed during

¹ Tiriki Union Files (T.F.U.), Committee meeting, 19.11.1961, 26.4.1964; General meeting, 10.6.1962. (Minutes)

² B.U.E., General meeting, 31.3.1963. (Minutes)

the 1940s.¹ During the 1950s and early 1960s several additional Buryore clans formed associations.² The sub-division of the Buryore Union went, in fact, further down than the clan level with the formation of two sub-clan associations. The Abasundi, as sub-clan of the Abasutete, and the Abasikhale, a sub-clan of the Abasikwe, registered their associations in 1962.³ Again whenever it was numerically possible there was a tendency to organize at a lower and more intimate level. The eagerness to associate at this level was best demonstrated by the Abhando, a sub-clan of the Abasutete, whose members in Makuru attempted in 1960 to organize on an impossibly small scale. In a letter to the Registrar the chairman explained the failure of society: "The above society did apply for registration but later it was dispersed as its secretary left Makuru and some of its members left Makuru remaining only a few who at last joined Buryore Union."⁴ Most of Buryore clan and sub-clan associations were registered in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.

The Maragoli had two registered clan associations in 1962 and 1963.⁵ They had at least another unregistered clan association.⁶

¹ Interview: J. Otukho; there were the following clans: Abasutete, Abamangali, Abatongoyi, Abairatai and Abasikwe.

² These were: Abukanga Elukose, Nganga, Imbali, Abakanda, Abasuli, Abasikhale and Abasakaani. Interview: J. Otukho, K. Nyambeka. R.S.A., Files 1787, 3756, 1761, 2404. D.C/Mku/dm/15/12/171.

³ R.S.A., File 3534; D.C/Mku/dm/15/12/169. Interview E. Nyambeka.

⁴ KH/D.C/Mku/dep.2/167, Abhando Society to Registrar, 20.6.1960.

⁵ D.C/Mku/dm/15/12/138, Abasali Welfare Society 1962; R.S.A., File 4703, Vekali Youth Association, 1963; J. Ogo, op.cit., p.51.

⁶ Interview: Z. Imbisi; it was the association of the Buyonga clan.

The Tiriki had two unregistered clan associations, that of the Abalokhoba clan was formed as early as 1943 and that of the Abalokhomba clan in 1951.¹ The Busania of Kisa, who were, in fact, one big clan,² also had a few sub-associations. The case of the Buyonga sub-clan showed the transition from informal to informal social organization. In 1948 there were about six members of the sub-clan living in Nakuru. They used to meet together about once a month for social purposes. In 1950 when more of their sub-clansmen came to the town they set up a formal association.³

The committees of the Bunyore Union and the Busania Friendly Society and its predecessors were composed mainly of representatives of the affiliated clan or sub-clan associations.⁴ The case of the Tiriki Union indicates that account was taken of the various clans, even when most members were not organised in clan associations. In 1961 a committee member complained that in the last elections for office-holders only people from one area were elected. The committee agreed to hold another election with the view, presumably, to give representation to more clans.⁵

The case of Bunyore Union shows that clan associations occasionally fell out with the parent association, mainly on grounds of discrimination. Abasiakwe Union complained in 1954 that its members did not get assistance from Bunyore Union, whereas their Union assisted other clan associations. They further accused Bunyore

¹Interview: W. Mulogoli.

²J. Oango, *op.cit.*, p.88.

³Interview: W. Nandwa.

⁴B.U.F., Abasiratsi Friendly Society to Bunyore Union, 7.8.1962.
Interview: W. Nandwa, E. Nyambaka.

⁵T.U.F., Committee meeting, 26.3.1961. (Minutes)

Union of not inviting its members to its meetings.¹ In 1952 the banangali clan association stopped paying membership fees to Bunyore Union because one of their members failed to obtain assistance from the Union and because no clansman was selected for the Bunyore football team.² In 196 the Abasiratai refused to send two representatives to Bunyore Union committee because they did not like the Union's new constitution: "Why should we send two people who would be stooges."³ Even within clan associations harmony did not always prevail. In 1962 a member of the Ebiba sub-clan of the Abamutete clan complained that his people were unable to achieve unity with the Abamutete Society.⁴

While these conflicts did not constitute the main feature of the relationships within locational associations, they further highlighted the inherent tension between unity and particularism in a society in which loyalties are strongest to the lowest social unit. Representing social units in which kinship ties were strong the clan associations had, in comparison to the locational associations, certain advantages. It seems on the whole that a clan association was able to enlist proportionally more members than any locational association. Besides the obvious personal preference, members of a clan could bring more pressure to bear on individual clansmen to join the association. It could also exert more pressure on the individual to conform to the group's norms. Clan

¹B.U.F., basicke Union to Bunyore Union 21.11.1954.

²B.U.F., banangali association to Bunyore Union, 11.5.1957.

³B.U.F., basiratai Fellowship society to Bunyore Union, 15.8.1960.

⁴B.U.F., J. Oinde to bamutete society through Bunyore Union, 13.8.1962.

associations tended to show more interest in the wellbeing of their members.¹

Clan associations, however, had obvious limitations. First of all, they could only rely on the support of a limited number of people. In the case of the Bunyore some of the clan associations had relatively large memberships: Abasiokwe, 20-96; Abasiratai, 40-6; Nganga, 30-58; Abasundi, 30-50. This was near to independence when the Abalukya population in the town was largest. Bunyore, of course, was the biggest Abalukya sub-tribe in Makuru. Other Bunyore clan associations had an even more limited membership even at that period.² Bunyore Union at that time could count on up to four hundred members. Bunyore Union, furthermore, could operate when the need arose, within the Bunyore community as a whole. Among the Busamia of Kisa Location membership in the clan associations must have been very small indeed.

Operating among a population largely composed of migrants, clan associations were exposed to such fluctuations in membership which could, at times, jeopardize their very existence. The case of the Abhando Society which failed to establish itself because of this reason has been noted. The membership of Lankunda Society fell by 50% due to transfers or discharges which resulted in members going back to the reserve. In 1958 the society was further incapacitated by seasonal absence of most of its members:

"In January most of the people were still in holidays and in the meantime two office-bearers were still in their long leave until February. In March the secretary took his leave ... In

¹ A. Southall, "The Concept of Elites and their Formation in Uganda" in P.C. Lloyd (ed.), The New Elites of Tropical Africa, OUP, London 1970, pp. 353-4; D. Parkin, Neighbours and Nationals in an African City Ward, London 1969, pp. 150-1.

² See Appendix I.

the circumstances, both the chairman and vice chairman used to be in the reserve due to ill health of their home affairs [sic]."

Under these circumstances, the existence of a many clan associations, especially during the 1940s and the early 1950s, must have been ephemeral.

Additionally, the leadership of clan associations was, on the whole, of a lower standard in terms of urban status. The leadership of the locational associations could be very useful to clansmen in need and to the clan associations collectively because of their influence and better contacts in the town. The locational associations, by their size, were better equipped to organize social activities such as football teams or dances.

Lastly the locational association offered the individual member both the familiarity and the sense of security derived from belonging to a large group. In this context the weakness of the Abaluhya association stemmed from its remoteness from the individual tribesmen and from its almost total dependence on its constituent locational associations. In Nakuru the locational associations seem to have been, with all their deficiencies, the most solid link in the chain of Abaluhya tribal associations. The three levels of tribal association formed a skeleton of a system of communication and social control, which could, in time of crisis, mobilize the majority of the Abaluhya tribesmen in the town.

The Origin and Development of the Luo Tribal Associations

The development of the Luo tribal associations in Nakuru was

¹R.S.A., File 1787, Isakunda Society to Registrar, 1958.

similar in many respects to those of the Abalukya. The earliest information on the Luo, however, dates back only to 1934. By that year the Luo Union had been founded and was catering for all the Luo tribesmen in Mukuru. Its chairman, Moses Apinya, was an uneducated headman employed by the Kenya Farmers Association.¹ Compared with the Abalukya, which had in 1936-42 two mutually antagonistic associations, the achievement of unity at the tribal level among the Luo seems to have been a natural process.

The Luo tribe inhabiting the Districts of Central and South Nyanza, is, like its Abalukya counterpart, a segmentary tribe. It is composed of sub-tribes which are further sub-divided into clans and lineages. A sub-tribe was, traditionally, "a self contained land holding, political and ritual entity".² The concept of Luo unity had never had socio-political expression. Here, however, the similarity between the Abalukya and the Luo ends. The Luo in furthering the cause of tribal unity and solidarity, could invoke their common linguistic and cultural heritage. In the context of Kenya, they were the only Nilotic group in a sea of Bantu and Nilo-Hamitic tribes. This added an extra dimension to their distinctiveness. In a mixed town like Mukuru the Luo's distinct cultural identity was enhanced. The Luo, for example, were the only people who as a rule did not circumcise their boys or girls. Instead their initiation ceremonies involved the removal of the lower incisors. The Kikuyu, by contrast, abhorred the idea of uncircumcised adults. The Luo found it difficult to master Swahili, basically a Bantu language, which became the lingua franca of

¹ Interview: J. Olwoch.

² G. Wilson, Luo Customary Law and Marriage Law, reprinted Nairobi 1968, p.2.

ordinary Africans in a multi-tribal town.

In addition, the Luo could relate themselves to a common historical tradition. Historically the Luo of Kenya represented the southern thrust of the Nilotic expansion which had its origin in the Sudan. Apart from that, the Luo of Kenya relate themselves to the legendary figures of Pudho and Rumogi, the counterparts of the Biblical Adam and Abraham. These two mythical founders of the tribe were integrated even in clan genealogies. Rumogi Hill in Kadimo, where Rumogi is said to have settled, is regarded as the cradle of the Luo tribe.¹ Whereas the concept of balukya unity was largely the creation of educated tribesmen, Luo unity could count on a much more positive response at the grass roots.

Structurally, however, the Luo, organising themselves in the town, exhibited the same taste as the balukya for a proliferation of associations at different levels. By 1958 at least four local associations were in existence in Nakuru: Gem, Ugeya, and Kano.² The associations at that level also tended to form at the sub-tribal/^{level} rather than/^{at} the level of the administrative location. The Gem sub-tribe in the reserve was divided into two administrative locations, as were Ugeya and Kano.³ In most cases, however, there was an overlap between the administrative locations and the sub-tribal units. These four sub-tribes were represented in Nakuru in greater numbers than most other Luo sub-tribes. These associations were exclusive and were not joined by members of other sub-tribes. These were catered for by the Luo Union.

¹ E. A. Ogot, History, pp. 142-52; E. E. Evans Pritchard, "Luo Tribes and Clans," Rhodes-Livingstone Journal, No. 7, 1949, p. 33.

Interview: E. Maso, M. Okech, J. Oluoch.

³ E. E. Evans Pritchard, op. cit., p. 25.

In about 1939 Genu people formed a football team and Alego followed suit. These were the only Luo locational teams which played in the local league.¹ By 1940 a Luo Football Club was formed which was attached to the Luo Union. In 1941 the chairman of the Luo Union was Hosen Yimbo, a prominent Luo clerk.² In the early 1940s the main activity of the Luo Union was, according to one source, collection of money and organizing a tea party at the end of each year. In 1944 both chairman and vice chairman were local Luo tailors. It then became, apparently, a little more active.³ In 1946 the Union became increasingly interested in the problem of Luo prostitutes.⁴

In 1944 the members of the Nyakach sub-tribe formed the Nyakach Union. The Nyakach sub-tribe was also numerically strong in Nakuru. The other Luo locational associations were formed either in the late 1940s or during the first half of the 1950s. In 1956 some thirteen locational associations were affiliated to the Luo Union, Nakuru branch.⁵ In 1956 and 1957 the administration increased the pressure on tribal associations to register. Until then the Gen Rahuma Union, for example, was under the impression that they were covered by the registration of the Luo Union.⁶ Consequently most Luo locational associations registered in 1957 and the remainder in 1958. By then there were eleven associations of sub-tribes originating from Central Nyanza.⁷ In Nakuru there

¹ Interview: E. Meso.

² Interview: J. Oluoch.

³ Interview: J. Odada.

⁴ KN/D.C/Nku/dep.2/74, Secretary to D.C., 11.3.1946.

⁵ NH/African Affairs Committee, a draft of a speech by a Luo Union official, 3.11.1956.

⁶ Gen. Rahuma Union Files (G.R.F.U.), Secretary to Registrar, 28.6.1956. D.C. to Secretary, 19.7.1957.

⁷ Gen. Alego, Ugenys, East and West Kano, Nyakach, Asembo, Uyoma,

were relatively few Luo from South Nyanza and they were all organised by 1957 in one association, the Karachuonyo Milambo Union.¹

The Luo locational associations were not free from divisive tendencies. The Karachuonyo Milambo Union split in 1958 giving way to Karachuonyo Union, which included only the Karachuonyo sub-tribe,² and to Milambo Union, which catered for the rest of South Nyanza sub-tribes present in Nakuru. The split apparently occurred because the rest of South Nyanza tribesmen resented the way they were treated by the Karachuonyo majority.³ The split between the Kadimo and Yimbo from Yimbo Location reflected the rivalry between these two groups in the reserve. The members of Kadimo clan were indigenous to the area in which they lived but they were greatly outnumbered by the later immigrants, the Yimbo. The formation of the Kadimo Union in 1957 expressed their desire to be separated from Yimbo Location.⁴ The Yimbo Union carried on its separate existence. In 1959 the East Alego Sports and Welfare Association was founded as a result of dissatisfaction on the part of East Alego people with the running of Alego Ragar Union. They also felt that they were discriminated against.⁵

Numerically the different locational associations varied in strength. Membership on the whole fluctuated greatly. Gen Rahuma Union was the biggest with a steady increase from eighty-five

Sakwa, Yimbo and Kajulu.

¹R.S.A., Karachuonyo Milambo Union File. Milambo in Luo stands for south. Karachuonyo was the biggest South Nyanza sub-tribe in Nakuru.

²Karachuonyo sub-tribe occupied three locations in South Nyanza.

³KH./D.C./Mau/dep.2/165, Karachuonyo Milambo Union to D.C., 30.7.1958. Interview: B.L. Ojuka.

⁴R.S.A., Kadimo Union File. Interview: B. L. Ojuka.

⁵D.C./Mau/Adm/15/12/53, East Alego Sports and Welfare Association to

in 1957 to 422 members in 1961. It was followed by Ugenya Union which increased its membership from 175 in 1958 to 240 in 1963. Alego Ragar representing probably the biggest Luo sub-tribe in Nakuru lagged behind. From a maximum of 104 in 1959 its membership fell drastically to a mere 13 in 1960, apparently because of an increase of the membership fee to ten shillings a year.¹ At the other end of the scale there were the associations representing the smallest sub-tribes in Nakuru. Uyoma Union's membership dropped from thirty in 1959 to nineteen in 1961 and Kajulu Union was at the bottom of the list with a membership ranging from ten in 1959 to fourteen in 1963.²

In its role of leading its tribal community and in its relations with the constituent associations, the position of the Luo Union was much stronger than that of its Abaluhya counterpart. The position of the Luo Union in Nakuru was enhanced by the formation of the Luo Union (K.A.) in 1952.³ It is somewhat surprising that the Luo who possessed many attributes of tribal unity established a territorial structural unity so much later than the Abaluhya. On the other hand it is more than possible that the inherent sense of tribal unity lessened the need to overcome existing divisions. The first attempt to form a Luo Union covering the whole colony was made in 1946. The idea was conceived in Maseno Highschool in the Luo reserve by Oginga Odinga, Richard Arina and Walter Odede,

D.C., 25.9.1959. Interview: O. Oganji.

¹R.S.A., File 1792, Alego Ragar Union to Registrar, 27.4.1961.

²For a detailed membership of the Luo locational associations, see Appendix II.

³NM/African Affairs Committee, a draft of a speech by a Luo Union Leader, 3.11.1956. Oginga Odinga, *op.cit.*, p.131, claims that the Luo Union (K.A.) was formally established in August 1953.

teachers at the school. Regarding themselves as representing the Luo educated elite, they wanted Maseno to become the centre of the Union. The initiative failed as a result of what appears to have been a rift between town and country. The Luo Union, it should be remembered, was formed as an urban organization catering for Luo living in the towns. The Luo Union Nairobi refused to accept the leadership set up in Kisumu, insisting on Nairobi as the headquarters of the colony-wide Union.¹

In 1952 the transformation of the Luo Union into the main vehicle of Luo unity throughout East Africa, gave the Nakuru branch a considerable boost. The local branch was inspired by the leaders of the Luo Union (E.A.). Oginga Odinga the president of the Union addressed in 1955 a general meeting of the local branch, propagating the aims of the Union.² The Luo Union was no longer a mere local affair. Local leaders began to view their role in a wider perspective: "The position was changed in 1952 when the Union was brought under one roof and Headquarters changed to Kisumu. Today this union is fighting to improve its people socially, educationally and morally."³ The local branch was activated by projects initiated by the headquarters. The main one was the Ofafa Memorial Fund for the building of Ofafa Memorial Hall in Kisumu. This fund which was launched in 1955 involved all the Luo tribal associations under the direction of the local branch of the Luo Union, until Independence and beyond.⁴

¹ Oginga Odinga, *op.cit.*, p.87.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., *Hurumo* (Nakuru), 15.11.1955, p.1.

³ NW/African Affairs Committee, a draft of a speech of a Luo Union Nakuru branch leader, 3.11.1956.

⁴ Oginga Odinga, *op.cit.*, p.132. Interview: S.L.Ojuba.

In such an undertaking, however, the local branch of the Luo Union was wholly dependent upon the co-operation of its affiliated locational associations. These collected the money, competing for a cup donated by a prominent Nkuru Luo. The Luo Union, Nakuru branch, depended on the financial assistance of the locational associations for other purposes as well.¹ The Luo Union's committee, like that of the balukya association, was composed of representatives of the various locational associations, only the office-holders being elected by a general meeting.²

On the whole, the Luo Union was basically a federation of locational associations. Its position vis-à-vis the locational associations was, however, much stronger than that of the balukya association. Ugenya Union, which was one of the strongest Luo locational associations in Nakuru, confirmed this in a letter to the Registrar: "The above Union has ever since been under the Luo Union Nakuru Branch. It is entirely dependent on it and any general meeting must always be authorized by the chairman or secretary of the Luo Union."³ The case of Gem Rahuma Union shows that locational associations had a positive attitude towards the Luo Union and Luo unity in general. Referring in 1958 to Gem Rahuma Union's relations with the Luo Union the former's secretary said: "Most of our activities are co-ordinated with the Luo Union. We work hand in hand because it is essential for the whole Luo as a tribe."⁴ In

¹ G.R.U.F., Secretary to Luo Union, October 1955.

² L.R./Ncu/ dn/15/12/53, Alego Nagar Union meeting, 1958. (Minutes)

³ R. . . ., File 1408, Secretary to Registrar, 12.10.1956.

⁴ G.R.U.F., Secretary's Annual Report, 1958.

a Union's general meeting the chairman urged people to join the Luo Union: "All Luo people should be members of Luo Union, this is essential because development depends on unity."¹

In fact the Luo Union attracted much more popular support than its baluhya counterpart. In 1950-2 the general meetings of the Luo Union were both more regular and better attended. In most of these meetings there were over one hundred participants and twice the attendance reached a maximum of two hundred and fifty people.² In the early 1960s, when figures became available, the Luo Union's membership ranged from two hundred and thirty eight in 1960 to four hundred in 1963.³ Only Gen Rahuma Union claimed a slightly bigger following. The Luo Union thus had an independent existence backed by a good measure of popular support. This partly explains its position of authority in its relations with its affiliated locational associations.

There were cases, however, in which the Luo Union's authority did not prevail. It was not able, despite its efforts, to prevent the splits between Kadimo and Yimbo and between Karachucayo and the rest of South Nyanza Luo.⁴ On one occasion in 1958 Gen Rahuma Union defied the Luo Union's chairman, because he exhibited favouritism towards one particular locational association.⁵ The Luo Union also had to combat the usual rumour campaigns against its officials.⁶

¹G.R.U.F., Gen Rahuma Union to editor of Nusori, 10.6.1957.

²N.M.S.C.D.F., N. W.M.R., 1950-2.

³See Appendix II.

⁴Interview: S. L. Ojuka.

⁵G.R.U.F., Gen Rahuma Union to Luo Union, 15.4.1958.

⁶G.R.U.F., Luo Union to Gen Rahuma Union, 28.11.1963.

Like the baluhya association, the Luo Union in Nakuru formed a pyramid divided into three levels. At the top was the Luo Union, below it the locational associations and at the bottom the clan associations. The Luo clan associations originated in the first half of the 1940s, with the increase in the Luo population in the town. Around 1945 or a little earlier the Luo from Eca, Ugenya, Nyakach and presumably Igo as well, who formed the bulk of Nakuru's Luo population, began establishing clan associations.¹ It was a gradual process since not all the clans present in Nakuru had sufficient clansmen to warrant the formation of an association. Gusa people for example started with two associations around 1945.² With the steady increase of the Luo migration into Nakuru in subsequent years more clan associations were formed. During the 1950s their number increased and they formed an elaborate network of associations at the Luo grass-roots.

The case of Ugenya Union shows that the initiative of the parent locational association could play an important part in stimulating the spread of clan associations: "The small sub-locations have been asked by the Union to form their sub-committees under each separate names discussing nothing at all, but matters concerning Ugenya Union and tied up with the Union's Rules and Regulations."³ These clan associations were regarded by the Union as integral parts of it, forming sub-branches under its roof. There is an indication that Ugenya Union's initiative was motivated by a desire to facilitate fund raising for the Ofafa Memorial Fund.⁴ In 1957, after the

¹ Interview: E. Meso, M. Okech, J. Odada, H. Ouyango.

² Interview: E. Meso.

³ R.S.A., File 1408, Ugenya Union to Registrar, 11.7.1957.

⁴ R.S.A., File 1408, Ugenya Union to Registrar, 12.10.1956.

Administration had begun to press for the registration of tribal associations, Ugenya Union requested to keep its clan associations covered by its own constitution. The Registrar, however, insisted that all existing associations be registered separately.¹ By 1957 Ugenya Union had under its umbrella thirteen clan associations.² The Union claimed that at that time some of the associations did not have more than six members.³ In 1960 the association of the Boro clan had fifty six members, that of the Kager clan had ninety nine members and Nyamuot Union's membership in 1963 was only twenty.⁴ As it turned out, only five of the Ugenya clan associations had been registered by Independence.

Alego Ragar Union was much more thorough in registering its clan associations. By 1958 nine of them had been registered and another was registered in 1963.⁵ In membership they varied from a maximum of fifty to a minimum of ten, and there were the usual fluctuations.⁶ Registration did not always stimulate clan associations to activity as the case of Kochieng Gangu, in 1960, indicates: "I, as a secretary, have done my level best to form this union but I have been unable due to uninterested people."⁷

Gen Rahuma Union, on the other hand, had a declared policy not to register its clan associations, for fear that it might prejudice

¹R.S.A., File 1408, Ugenya Union to Registrar, 1.7.1957; Registrar to Ugenya Union, 3.8.1957.

²R.S.A., File 1408, Ugenya Union to Registrar, 1.7.1957. They were: Masat, Masiro, Kobiero, Sega, Boro, Kager, Siranga, Ugolwe, Kanrembo, Kanywa, Kateg, Karadolo and Nyamuot.

³KNA/D.C/Nku/dep.2/167, E.C.Oduor to D.C., 23.5.1957.

⁴See Appendix II.

⁵R.S.A., Files 1572, 1875, 1876, 2344, 1871, 1872, 1870, 1792, 4801. They were: Mur, Sigoma, Kalkhada, Kochieng Gangu, Karapul, Kaluo, Luganga and Karuoth.

⁶See Appendix II.

⁷R.S.A., File 1873, Kochien Gangu to Registrar, 28.6.1960.

its own membership. They possibly also feared that the registered clan associations might become more independent. When in 1959 one affiliated clan association went about registering itself, it was invited to explain its action.¹ By 1959 Gem Rahuma Union seem to have had some seventeen affiliated clan associations.² The membership of some of these associations was so low as to render them completely ineffective. Accordingly Gem Rahuma Union attempted in 1960 to merge Jhono, Jagan, Jima and Ulumbd into one association and Luanda and Malira into another.³

Nyakach Union had during the 1950s and early 1960s some eight clan associations.⁴ Two of them, Kabodho Young and Old People Association and goro Nyando Association were registered in 1958 and 1961 respectively.⁵ Kabar Kogola Union which was registered in 1963 combined four sub-clans from East Kano Location.⁶ Kisumu sub-tribesmen living in Nakuru were exceptional in that they did not have^a locational association. Although their numbers were very small, they preferred to form two small clan associations, rather than one stronger locational association. The Karuten clan had an association by 1951⁷ and the Karkwa clan registered its Karkwa Kisumu Union in 1959.⁸

¹G.R.U.F., Kokwiri Young and Old People Association to Gem Rahuma Union, 22.10.1959.

²G.R.U.F., General meeting, 1.11.1959. (Minutes)

³G.R.U.F., General meeting, 29.3.1960. (Minutes)

⁴Interview: J. Odada.

⁵R.S.A., Files 1547, 2954.

⁶R.S.A., File 4454.

⁷Interview: S. L. Ojuka.

⁸R.S.A., File 2464.

The Tribal Elites - Analysis of the Leadership of the Luo and Abaluhya Tribal Associations

Since the development of the Luo and Abaluhya tribal associations was in many respects similar, certain aspects of them may be discussed in conjunction. Despite the inadequacy of the information certain trends may be observed in the development of the leadership of the Abaluhya and Luo tribal associations. As seen earlier, the leadership of the Kakamega People's Committee during the 1920s and early 1930s had a distinct profile.¹ They all had very little or no formal education and they were all unskilled workers. This is not at all surprising since at that time Nyanza tribesmen were required in Nakuru only for this type of job. Neither had the Africans at that time developed any sort of modern economic enterprise. The result was that there was very little socio-economic differentiation, if at all, among the Nyanza tribesmen, or other up-country tribesmen for that matter. The modern African elite with its attributes of education, prestigious employment and economic affluence was non-existent in Nakuru.

The only distinguishable group among the Abaluhya, and other up-country tribesmen, residents of Nakuru, was that of the people who committed themselves to a longer stay in the town. They stood out in the midst of the majority of short-term African migrant workers. It was hardly surprising that these people were the founders of the early tribal associations and that the leadership of the Kakamega People's Committee was dominated by them. It was they who had the interest to evolve urban based associations aimed

¹ See above.

at facilitating life in the town. It was they who had the experience of what life in town was all about and therefore could help others in need. Considerations of modern status in the choice of leaders were on the whole unimportant. The Tiriki people chose a house boy as their chairman in the early 1930s, apparently because he had more free time than others.¹ The most educated among the leaders of the Kakamega People's Committee had achieved Standard IV level of education and was employed as an office messenger.

Among the Abaluhya the position during the 1930s does not seem to have changed basically because there had been no major change in the socio-economic position of Nyanza tribesmen. Nakuru's stagnant economy during the 1930s did not provide the stimulus for rapid socio-economic change. Juma bin Haji who headed the association common to the Abaluhya as a whole before 1936 and the North Kavirondo Baraza in 1936-9 was a cook who had lived in Nakuru for many years.² Among six of the founders of the Kakamega-Maragoli-Tiriki Association in 1936, three were houseboys, one was a tailor, one was an unskilled worker and another an office messenger. Most of them had no formal education. They had all lived in Nakuru for not less than ten years each.³

In the Luo Union in 1934 and a few years thereafter the position was quite different reflecting the beginnings of socio-economic differentiation. The chairman of the Luo Union from 1934 was employed as a headman by the Kenya Farmers Association. Two of his

¹ Interview: B. Matoya.

² Interview: B. Matoya.

³ Interview: B. Matoya. KN/D.C/Mau/dsp.2/192, Representatives of North Kavirondo Chiefs to D.C., 23.11.1936.

officials were headmen in the employment of the Kenya and Uganda Railway. They marked the beginnings of a differentiation among the mass of unskilled Nyanza labourers. It did not involve new technical skills or education. The appointment for the pseudo-managerial post of headmen was made primarily on the criteria of leadership qualities and loyalty to the employer. It was, however, a new urban African status. More significantly, two of the Luo Union officials in those years were clerks with at least a record of upper primary school education. They were the forerunners of a future generation of educated African clerks who were to play a central role in Nakuru generally and in leading tribal associations in particular. The fact that it was an uneducated headman, however, who was elected as chairman, showed that education and the prestigious clerical job was not yet a prerequisite or even the most important criterion for position of leadership.¹

The first chairman of the Abaluhya Welfare Association, S. Oanya, was an unskilled labourer with a few years of formal education.² The chairman of the Luo Union in the first half of the 1940s, Hosea Yimbo, was a chief clerk.³ This reflected the growing importance of education and a good job as attributes of membership of Nakuru's tribal elite. During the 1940s with the steady expansion of European and Asian economic enterprise there was a growing demand for African clerks. Around 1945 the chairman of the Luo Union in Nakuru was J. Bita, a self-employed tailor.⁴ The

¹ Interview: J. Oluoch.

² Interview: S. Matoya, J. Otukho.

³ Interview: J. Odada.

⁴ Interview: J. Odada.

1940s saw the beginning of economic enterprise among Nyansa tribesmen. J. Bita was at that time one of the more successful self-employed Luo. His rise marked the emergence into prominence of yet another elite category, that of the successful entrepreneurs.

In 1946 the chairman of the Luo Union was S. Odada, a teacher in the local Catholic school who had lived in Nakuru for many years. The other recorded leaders of the Union in 1946 had secondary school education and were employed as chemist and medical assistant respectively. A third was, on the other hand, a watchman who had lived in Nakuru for a long time.¹ The watchman became the chairman of the Union towards the close of the 1940s.² The preference for the attributes of education and economic enterprise for positions of leadership had not yet been rigidly established. Among Union members who were predominantly illiterate, indigenous and perhaps ascribed qualities of leadership were still equally valid.

In fact there was no consistent trend in the development of the Luo tribal elite. In 1949-50 all the Union's officials had some formal education. The chairman was a clerk, the secretary was a senior clerk, the vice-chairman a medical assistant, the assistant secretary a medical dresser and the assistant treasurer a chemist employed by the Veterinary Department.³ In 1951, on the other hand, Gaitano Ogunde, the uneducated watchman, became once again the chairman of the Luo Union. His treasurer too was an uneducated cook. Both the secretary and his assistant were clerks. It is interesting to note that the assistant to the uneducated treasurer was

¹ KH/B.C./Moa/dep.2/74, Luo Union to D.C., 14.5.1946. Interview: J. Oluoch.

² Interview: J. Odada.

³ Interview: J. Oluoch.

himself an educated clerk.¹ Both the chairman and treasurer had lived in Nakuru for a long time. Without the attributes of members of a modern elite, they had time on their side, in which they could cultivate social networks in their tribal community, which proved useful in the struggle for leadership.

Among the Kaluhya leadership with their more humble beginnings, the process of monopolisation of the tribal leadership by the modern urban elite was virtually complete by 1949. Out of twenty-one recorded committee members of the A.W.U. in that year, fourteen were clerks, one a medical assistant, one an assistant probation officer and another was a senior teacher. There was also one office messenger and one watchman.² There was a noticeable absence of representatives of Kaluhya economic enterprise, largely because most Kaluhya engaged in trade in that period were petty traders who barely had more prestige in their local tribal community than the ordinary labourer. A pattern was set in which the Kaluhya urban elite, composed almost exclusively of educated people in clerical and allied jobs, dominated the Kaluhya Association.

But even among the Luo, the days when those with a low level of attainment could rise to prominence in the Luo Union were soon over. S. P. Okall and J. Jwang the chairmen of the Union in 1953 and 1954, were educated clerks. In 1954 the position was taken over by S. L. Ojuka, at the time a clerk and later a successful businessman.³ In 1957 three of the Union's officials were clerks employed by the East African Railway and Harbours, one had a senior

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., Luo Union meeting, 7.1.1951. (Minutes)

² A.A.F., Committee meeting, 25.9.1949. (Minutes)

³ Interview: S. L. Ojuka.

position in the Municipal African Affairs Department, one was a typist and one a successful self-employed carpenter.¹ In 1959 the chairman was again S. L. Ojuka, his secretary was a clerk and his treasurer was an educated municipal overseer. In 1960 E. Mamo and S. L. Ojuka, the chairman and vice-chairman respectively, were successful businessmen, the secretary and his assistant were clerks, the treasurer was the same as in the previous year and his assistant was a bus inspector.² E. Mamo, who had a low standard of education, had lived in Nkuru since 1937 and was one of the most respected elders of his tribal community. Until 1958 he was the president of the local African Court. Success in business and education thus established themselves as prerequisites for leadership in the Luo Union.

In the Abaluhya Association the pattern established in the late 1940s persisted. In 1955 both chairman and secretary were clerks.³ In 1958 five of the association's office-holders were clerks, the sixth being an educated court interpreter. In 1959, despite some personal changes, the picture remained virtually the same. In 1960 all the five officials were clerks.⁴ The reason for the lack of representatives of abaluhya entrepreneurs among the association's leaders was that successful abaluhya businessmen had failed to emerge even by that stage. The abaluhya community depended, therefore, for its elite solely upon the educated clerical and allied class.

¹R.S.A., File 1657.

²R.S.A., File 1657.

³A.A.F., Secretary to Chairman, 17.10.1955.

⁴R.S.A., File 1734.

Thus during the 1950s the modern attributes of urban status consolidated their position as prerequisites for leadership among both the Luo and Abaluhya communities. This is true, of course, only for the Abaluhya Association and the Luo Union which were at the apex of the respective hierarchies of lesser tribal associations. A few factors can explain this phenomenon. During the 1940s and more so during the 1950s and early 1960s the pace of socio-economic differentiation among Nyanza tribesmen, and the African population as a whole, was increasingly intensified by the economic expansion of Nakuru. Those who rose above the mass of ordinary unskilled African workers were those with educational qualifications who could get the more prestigious and lucrative jobs, and those who through success in business rose economically above their fellows. Among the Nyanza tribesmen the elite was composed predominantly of people belonging to the former category. Generally and among the Nyanza in particular education seems to have been the key to social status. People of these categories were also more urbanized than the ordinary Africans. As such they were involved in a wide and complex struggle for urban status. Office within tribal associations representing defined and recognized tribal categories provided potentially useful stepping stones in that struggle. The Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association, embracing these big tribal communities in control of the pyramid of tribal associations, offered these people the most promising platform. The career of S.L.Ojuka demonstrates both the scope of competition in a town like Nakuru and the way in which leadership in a tribal association was part of it. Ojuka came to Nakuru in the early 1950s and was employed as a clerk by the East African Railway and Harbours. He soon became involved in the Luo Union. In 1953 he was nominated to the Municipal

Council. As such he also became a member of the Nakuru African Advisory Council. In 1954 he became the chairman of the Luo Union. He remained active in the Union throughout most of the decade, becoming the chairman again in 1959 and serving as vice-chairman in 1960. In 1954 he left his employment and embarked upon a business career making good use of his contacts in the town. He was very successful in his municipal career as well, becoming an Alderman and the Deputy Mayor in 1962. In fact he failed to become Mayor of Nakuru in that year mainly because of the opposition of two Luo Councillors who were then the chairman and secretary of the Luo Union. In those years of the early 1960s Ojuka lost his position in the Luo Union. Earlier, from 1958-60, he was the treasurer of the Nakuru African District Congress and in 1960 he was among the founders of K-NU Nakuru branch and an interim officer. While his is an outstanding example it was by no means unique.

Seeing that the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association were not directly concerned with welfare and that they were not traditional units of solidarity, the bulk of the people who were attracted to them were members of the emerging local elite. This was more so in the case of the Abaluhya Association which lacked widespread popular support. This may partly explain why the elite dominated the Association. Even by the late 1940s, the Luo Union had much larger membership. This perhaps accounts for the election of two illiterates to the post of chairman and treasurer as late as 1951. But even in the Luo Union the elite group came to dominate the leadership. Among these elite groups the attributes of leadership were predominantly

urban and modern. In the election of officials therefore the urban social status of the candidates was of primary importance. The case of two of the Luo Union chairmen may help to prove this point. S. L. Ojuka could not mobilize any traditional support. He originated from Kisumu Location which had few people in N. Kuru. He belonged to a small clan association which was not even registered. J. Odir-Odera, the Luo Union chairman in 1961-2, came also from Kisumu Location and was the secretary of Kank-a Kisumu Union, a clan association with a membership ranging from twelve to twenty. In the Abaluhya Association the chairman in 1963 was E. Kuboka, a member of the relatively small Susania community from Kisa Location. These people ~~had~~ had little kinship or sub-tribal support, and must have owed their prominence mostly to their urban social status.

The way in which leadership in the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association was part of a wider urban scene is also reflected in changes which took place in the early 1960s. In the years 1961-3 the Luo Union's leadership underwent important changes. In the elections for offices held in July 1961 a new element came to prominence with the removal of Ojuka and Meso from the scene. The two latter were figures of the past, being identified with the European authorities in the town. Their good contacts with the authorities had been helpful to the Union in many ways. Connections with the colonial Administration in the early 1960s ceased to be an asset. The new chairman, J. Odir Odera, and the new secretary, J.B. Arara, represented a different category of Luo leaders. They were members of a younger generation of educated Luo and had not been involved on the side of the Administration. They began their leadership careers in 1958 after African political activity was again allowed under the Emergency Regulations. They were prominent leaders of the

Nakuru District Congress and J. Odir-Odera was among the founders of KNU Nakuru branch and one of its first officials. They could now cash in on their nationalist record claiming to represent the future. They had another reason for joining the Luo Union's leadership. In 1960-1 J. Odir-Odera, at least, was relegated from the first rank of leadership in KNU. They both played only secondary roles in the local branch. Disappointed by the removal caused by the militant Kikuyu, they retreated to their tribal stronghold to cultivate it as a possible power base. They were also in those years Municipal Councillors, and might have regarded leadership in their Union as useful to a political career at that level. They both maintained their positions in the Union until independence. In all other respects the profile of the Union's leadership remained as before.¹

Politicians began to take an interest in the Abaluhya Association as well. R. Kuboka became the assistant secretary in 1962. He was the ex-chairman of the Nakuru District Congress and a frustrated KNU leader who had been pushed aside by the Kikuyu militants. In that year he shifted his interest to local government politics and was elected as a Municipal Councillor. Although he was not a member of KADU, the Abaluhya party, leadership in the Association was a potential asset especially since he was falling out with KNU. The other politician who joined the Association's leadership in 1962 was M.O. Mushiya, the leader of the Abaluhya Political Union in Nakuru. In 1963 R. Kuboka was elected as chairman of the Abaluhya Association. E. Iabisi, the new secretary, and D. Yusuf, the new organising secretary, held identical positions in KADU Nakuru branch. S.M. Ogoni,

¹R.E.A., File 1657.

the new vice-chairman, was a trade unionist, who was to contest the municipal elections later that year.¹ In all other respects the Abaluhya Association's leadership did not change in those years. Both among the Luo and Abaluhya, then, politicians came to regard the respective tribal associations as useful power bases, in those years of increasing uncertainty and out-threat political struggle.

Officials at the tribal level tended also to be office holders in their respective locational associations.² This tendency was more established in the Abaluhya Association. In 1958 and 1960 four of the six office holders were also officials in their locational associations. In 1959 they were five out of six and in 1962-3 all the office holders of the Association acted in similar capacities in their respective locational associations. In the Luo Union in 1960-2 four and in 1963 five of its six officials were leaders in their locational associations. Leadership in the locational associations evidently was a stepping stone towards the more prestigious leadership positions at the tribal level.

The criteria of leadership in the locational associations were on the whole lower than those at the tribal level.³ There were, however, considerable variations from one association to the other. On the Luo side the standard of Gen Rahuma Union's leadership was

¹H.S.A., File 1734.

²This relates to the late 1950s when data becomes more available. It must be taken into account that data is not available for all locational associations.

³Reliable information about officers of locational associations is available only from the second half of the 1950s and even then not for all the associations. There is more information about the Abaluhya Associations than about the Luo ones.

fairly high. In 1957 the chairman was a successful self-employed carpenter, three officers were clerks, one was a headman and one was a driver. In 1961 the chairman was a clerk as were four of his officers, the two others being a headman and a head office boy.¹ The leadership of Ugenya Union which was also numerically strong, was of a somewhat lower standard. It was shared by educated men, semi-skilled workers and those occupying low grade managerial positions.² Among the Abaluhya the associations of Bunyore and Kakamega gave the lead with a high proportion of educated office-holders in clerical employment. Bunyore Union, whose people were more inclined towards business than members of other Abaluhya sub-tribes, had traders among its officers.³ At the lower end of the scale was the Marama Burial Aid Society. In 1958-60 their chairman was a watchman and among the remaining six office-holders, two were office boys, one was a headman, one was a train driver and two were clerks.⁴

In Alego Kagar Union a fair proportion of the office-holders were also officials in their respective clan associations. In 1958, 1960 and 1962 they were three out of seven, in 1961 four out of seven, and in 1959 one out of seven.⁵ In Bunyore Union, on the other hand, only one office-holder in the late 1950s and early 1960s is

¹R.S.A., File 1473.

²R.S.A., File 1408.

³R.S.A., Files 687, 2199.

⁴R.S.A., Rift Valley Marama Burial Aid Society file.

⁵R.S.A., Files 1792, 1872, 1876, 1870.

known to have been an official of a clan association.¹ The case of Ugenya Union points to a possibility of clan politics playing a role in deciding the Union's leadership. In 1958 and in 1961-3 the chairmanship was in the hands of two officials of the Kager clan's association.² None of the locational associations' officials known to have used the clan association as a stepping stone ever rose to positions of leadership of the tribal level association. J. Odir Odera, who was the secretary of the Kankwa clan's association did become the chairman of the Luo Union, but the Kisumu Location to which he belonged did not have a locational association. A. Awoko, on the other hand, was an official of the Luo Union in 1957, becoming the treasurer of Alego Ragar (Kaluo Sub-Branch) in 1961-3.³ On the whole, then, the horizon of those who started their leadership careers at the lowest level was rather limited.

In the Kampala of the early 1960s Parkin observed that the leadership of clan associations tended to be below the socio-economic average of the respective tribal population in the town.⁴ The same does not fully apply to the situation in Nakuru although there was a definite drop in socio-economic standards between the leadership of locational and clan associations. There were many clerks, semi-skilled and skilled workers and headmen among the officials of clan associations in Nakuru. These were certainly at least slightly above the socio-economic average of Nyanza tribesmen

¹R.S.A., Files 687, 3404.

²R.S.A., Files 1408, 2345.

³R.S.A., Files 1657, 1870.

⁴D. Parkin, Neighbourhood, p.153.

living in Nakuru. Many others, it is true, were house boys, office boys, chamba boys, watchmen and manual labourers. On the whole the limited information shows that the standard of leadership at that level was lower among the Abaluhya clan associations than among their Luo counterparts.¹

The Functions of the Luo and Abaluhya Tribal Associations

Coming from a similar tribal background and facing the same urban reality, the Abaluhya and Luo response in establishing networks of tribal associations was virtually identical. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the functions performed by the associations of both tribes were very similar. Basically the functions of these tribal associations reflected the dichotomy inherent in their members' existence in the town. Nyanza tribesmen, in particular, including those who had lived in the town for many years, were intimately linked to their tribal homes. In their functions, as in their very structure, these associations were as much reserve as they were town orientated.

In their urban role, tribal associations have been regarded as adaptive mechanisms facilitating the process of adjustment of the migrants to urban life.² They helped tribesmen to cope with the revolutionary transition from a rural way of life to the turmoil of urban existence. They set out to deal with problems facing their tribesmen, which were ignored by employers, the local authorities and the administration. Employers, be they Government, the big settlers controlled firms like the Kenya Farmers Association, or the smaller

¹R.S.A. Files 3534, 3404, 1761, 3756, 1787, 3571, 1870, 1572, 1876, 1875, 2344, 2437, 4623, 2345, 3332.

²E. L. Epstein, "Urbanization and Social Change in Africa", Current Anthropology, 1967, vol. 8, no. 4, p.281. D. Parkin, "Urban Voluntary Associations as Institutions of Adaptation", Man (N.S.), 1966, vol. 1, no. 1.

European or Asian businessmen, regarded the African population in the town as primarily a reservoir of cheap labour. Neither they nor the authorities operating in the town provided Africans with sufficient wages or adequate social services and security. Poorly paid Africans could not cope with emergency cases, encountered in the town, which required more money than they possessed. Most of such cases called for human as well as financial help. Being left more or less to their own devices, Africans had to seek solutions to their problems through their own efforts and ingenuity. Tribal associations pooled financial and human resources and experience which could be directed to the individual in need. This was basically a transformation of the social functions carried out in the reserve by the immediate family and kinship group.

When a member or someone from his family became ill and needed treatment or hospitalization the appropriate tribal association was an address to which he could apply for assistance. Help in case of sickness was a declared object in the constitutions of most associations.¹ These were associations whose constitutions spoke generally about assistance in cases of difficulties and hardships.

Death in town was another emergency which called for the attention of the tribal associations. Around 1950 tribal associations began to transport the dead to their home areas in the reserve. Burial at home was very important to both Luo and Abaluhya, and is explained in terms of the traditional concept of death and the

¹ R.B.A., Files 1091, 1885, 2475, 1792, 1572. B.U.F., A member to Bunyoro Union, 23.3.1952.

belief in joining the ancestors in the after-world.¹ Before 1950 bodies were buried in the town because the associations were too weak to carry out such an expensive undertaking. During the 1950s and early 1960s this was a major financial burden on the associations. Between June 1954 and February 1955 Bungore Union was involved with the burial of two members and two members' children. This Union had a special "Grave Fund".² For the smaller associations a death of a member presented difficult problems. Explaining the delay in replying to the Registrar's letter the secretary of the Masundi Brotherhood Society wrote: "We tried very hard to send the corpse home for burial in accordance with our tribal custom. For this reason we had to spend more days for discussing the way for selecting another member who could take over the said corpse."³ It was, however, a task in which an association took pride. Referring in 1963 to a funeral of a member's child the chairman of Gem Rabuna Union said: "The Union organised the funeral at home. There was a very good response and sympathy from the Union and committee members attended. This is the proper and real purpose of the Union, helping people in time of trouble."⁴ As if to emphasize the centrality of burial in the associations' activities one association was named the Rift Valley Marana Burial Society.

Heinemann, London 1970.

¹J. S. Mbiti - African Religion and Philosophy, pp. 25, 152-5.
Interview: J. Abiya, W. Nendwa, E. Meso, M. Okech.

²R.S.A., File 687. See also D.C/Mra/Am/15/12/53, Kaluo Union General Meeting, 23.2.1958. / G.R.U.F., General Meeting, 4.5.1958. (Minutes)

³R.S.A., File 3534, Society to Registrar, 1.10.1962. (Minutes)

⁴G.R.U.F., General Meeting, June 1963.

In cases of members' involvement with the authorities, the associations found themselves in a delicate position because they obviously did not want to be regarded as supporting law breakers. While most associations avoided the issue by referring to trouble in general terms, some addressed themselves to the problems. East Alego Sports and Welfare Association specified the categories of offences which did not qualify for assistance: "theft, corruption, intentional tax defaulters, committing indecent assault."¹ The constitution of Senia Kenya Union referred to assistance in cases of "other lawful misfortunes which are not criminal in nature".² Uyema Union's Constitution, on the other hand, allowed assistance in the case of minor offences such as "drunkenness and fighting etc."³ When in 1958 a person from the Gem sub-tribe was fined Sh. 700/- for possession of Nubian gin the Union gave him only Shs. 30/- for sending his belongings to the reserve. On the other hand, when a Union's member was fined Shs. 50/- in the same year for selling illegal beer, his fine was paid by the Union.⁴ A member could also approach his tribal association for assistance in regard to payment of Poll Tax in his home area.⁵ Tribal associations also assisted tribesmen who had lost their jobs by contributing

¹D.C/Nku/Adm/15/12/53, 1959.

²D.C/Nku/Adm/15/12/59, 1960.

³R.S.A., File 1828, undated constitution (around 1958).

⁴G.R.U.F., Chairman's Report 1958.

⁵B.U.F., A member to Buryore Union, 2.5.1952.

to-wards their fares back to the reserve.¹

For newcomers to town tribal associations acted as employment bureaux offering them jobs through associations' members already in employment.² On one occasion in 1952 the chairman of the A.W.A. was thanked and praised for helping Abaluhya to get employment in the Municipal Board.³ In this respect associations' leaders in influential positions in the town were very useful. This practice was partly responsible for the concentration of members of tribes or even sub-tribes in certain places of employment.

Another important function of the tribal associations was arbitrating in disputes between members. This function was of a particular importance before the establishment, in 1944, of the Nakuru Native Mixed Tribunal. This Tribunal could deal with disputes arising between Africans in the town, having on it elders or assessors from all the major tribal groups of Nakuru. Before 1944, Nyanza tribesmen had no official legal institution to resort to. Tribal associations had no alternative but to take on this function. The whole issue of the Kakamega-Maragoli-Tiriki Association in 1936-7 revolved around the judicial functions of the Association. In the early 1940s the D.C. Nakuru, recognised the legal authority of the A.W.A. and gave it his support. In fact the idea of a mixed tribunal in Nakuru stemmed from official dissatisfaction with the operation of tribal justice.⁴ But even after the establishment

¹ B.U.F., a member to Bunyore Union, 13.4.1952; a member to Bunyore Union, 16.3.1954. R.S.A., File 1885, Tiriki Ndalo Association Constitution, undated.

² Interview: W. Nandwa; J. Oduca.

³ A.W.A., A.W.A. to chairman, 4.4.1952.

⁴ Report on Native Tribunals (Phillips Report), Nairobi, 1945, p.153.

of the mixed tribunal, there were Africans who preferred to settle their disputes outside the official legal machinery. One of the aims of Gem Rahuma Union was "to regulate the relations and settle the disputes between members and non-members by amicable agreement whenever possible."¹

Parkin and Southall observing the functioning of the Luo and Abaluhya tribal associations in the early 1960s, stated that the clan associations dealt with the welfare of the individual whereas the locational associations tended to be community-orientated in their activities.² Historically problems of individuals' welfare were originally the concern of associations at the sub-tribal and even tribal level. During the 1940s as locational associations multiplied and became effective, they developed as the main custodians of the individual welfare of their sub-tribesmen. The Luo Union and the A.W.A. did indeed become more community-orientated. But even then they still concerned themselves at times with individuals who did not have a locational association in Nakuru. There were also cases in which locational associations applied to the tribal association for financial help in solving an individual's problem.³

The first clan associations appeared in Nakuru in the first half of the 1940s, but they only became widespread during the 1950s. Even then there were many sub-tribes which, due to paucity of members, did not evolve clan associations. These sub-tribesmen continued to rely for assistance in cases of need on their locational associations. But even in the case of sub-tribes like Gem, Alego and Ugenya

¹R.S.A., File 1473, 1962.

²A. Southall, "The Concept of Elites and their Formation in Uganda" in P.C.Lloyd, The New Elites in Tropical Africa, pp. 353-4.
D. Parkin, Neighbours, pp. 153-4.

³A.A.F., Marama Burial Aid Society to Abaluhya Association, 14.3.1956.

on the Luo side and Bunyore on the Abaluhya side, which developed an elaborate network of clan associations, these did not completely take over the concern for the individual. It is true that clan associations representing more immediate kinship groups in the tribal area gave, on the whole, a more intimate framework. While the leaders of the big locational associations could hardly have been expected to know all the sub-tribesmen or even their members, leaders of the clan associations knew each and every one of their clansmen in the town intimately. There was in addition more compassion at this level.

Most of the clan associations, however, were too small to be financially self-sufficient. Burial of a dead member in his tribal home, for example, was beyond the financial resources of most of the clan associations. Collection of money for such purpose included at times members of other sub-tribes.¹ In Bunyore Union, at least in the late 1950s, the Funeral Fund was a common enterprise for the sub-tribe as a whole.² There were, however, cases in which a big clan association like that of the Abasundi in 1962 could organize burials at home independently.³ In any case in which dealings with the Administration were involved, the leadership of the locational association was more qualified because of their higher status and because they could mobilize, if

¹ Interview: W. Nandwa.

² B.U.F., Abamangali Association to Bunyore Union, 12.3.1959.

³ R.S.A., File 3534, Society to Registrar, 1.10.1962. The Society had fifty members in 1962.

needed, the support of the tribal level association. When the treasurer of Gen Ramula clan association misappropriated the association's money, they asked Gen Rabuma Union to help them in taking him to court. Gen Rabuma Union also acted on behalf of the Kanykwaya clan in similar circumstances.¹

Tribal associations catered for their members' leisure as well. In the first place they organised sports teams and sports competitions. Nyanza tribesmen were renowned for their love for sport. Wrestling was the traditional sport among the Luo and Abaluhya alike and they introduced this sport to Nakuru. As one case in 1935 shows, inter-tribal wrestling competitions sometimes became the prelude to an inter-tribal fight.² In the late 1930s football was introduced with the encouragement of the Municipal Works Superintendent who was in charge of native affairs. The Abaluhya were more inclined towards this sport than the Luo. By 1951 eight of the twelve teams competing in Nakuru's tribal league were Abaluhya Locational teams. By 1952 the Luo had entered two teams in the league, the Luo Union and Luo Ramogi.³ In 1954 the tribal league was discontinued. In the second half of the 1950s the Luo Union introduced inter-locational competitions. Supporting the locational football teams was one of the most important activities of the Abaluhya locational associations.⁴ Bunyore Union had its own Football Association in 1950 and Gen Rabuma Union had a Sports Club by 1962.⁵ By 1950 the A.W. had a Football Club

¹G.R.U.F., Gen Ramula to Gen Rabuma Union, 13.11.1961. Gen Rabuma Union to Obungu, 24.10.1959.

²ZAS, 23.3.1935, p.44.

³N.H.E.S.D.F., list of teams competing in Downing League, 24.10.1951. Nakuru African Football Association, fixtures Downing League, 12.3.1952.

⁴Interview: W. Kundwa.

⁵A.A.F., Bunyore Union to A.W., 19.7.1950. G.R.U.F., Secretary

and the Luo Union had a Luo Football Association.¹ One of the items on the agenda of a general meeting of the A.W.A. in 1949 was "How Abaluhya Football Teams should get playing uniforms".² Tribal football teams were important foci around which tribal and sub-tribal identity and solidarity developed.

Entertainment was another sphere in which tribal associations were active. There were the big dances organized by the Luo Union and the A.W.A. in which hundreds of people participated. In the period 1950-2 these were held fairly frequently, in some cases even twice a month by the same association.³ In that period there were few dances organized by locational associations. These were more common during the late 1950s.⁴ There was also a variety of tea parties, farewell parties and traditional dances held mainly at the locational and tribal levels. Tribal associations also entered teams for Western dancing competitions organised by the M.A.O.⁵

Tribal associations were, in many respects, extensions of the respective tribal groups in the reserve. Playing this role the Nyanza tribal associations operated as guardians of their tribal moral values. This was reflected primarily in their attitude towards prostitution among their womenfolk living in the town. Prostitution in Nakuru, as elsewhere in Kenya, was an inevitable by-product of urbanization. With the great imbalance in the sex ratio there was

² Gen Kabuma Sports Club, 3.12.1962.

¹ A.A.F., Bunyore Union to A.W.A., 19.7.1950. N.M.S.S.D.F., N.A.W.M.R., April 1950.

² A.A.F., A.W.A. to Asst. Superintendent of Police, 2.6.1949.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., N.A.W.M.R., 1950-2.

⁴ N.M.S.S.D.F., African Affairs Department, lists of dances, 1957, 1958, 1959.

⁵ NMA/General Ward Council, Ugenya Union to G.W.C., 7.12.1957.

an obvious incentive to indulge in this trade. The town, additionally, was a place of refuge for girls who wished to evade parental and kinship control and to leave behind the tedium of rural life. In Nakuru the problem of African prostitutes became acute during the 1940s and thereafter as a result of the steady increase of the African population. The European authorities were not always over-concerned about the problem. The M.A.O in 1947-56 claimed that he regarded prostitution as a safety valve in a predominantly male society.¹

Africans, and Luo and Kalenjin in particular, were not so understanding of the problem. The attitude of Nakuru's Luo and Kalenjin, being integral parts of their tribal groups, towards prostitution must be partly viewed in terms of traditional social structure, marriage and bridewealth customs and the moral values underpinning them. In both Luo and Kalenjin society the bridewealth received by a lineage for its daughters determined the ability of their sons to marry. The males of the lineage thus had a clear incentive to ensure that the value of their lineage's girls in terms of bridewealth would not depreciate. While absolute insistence upon virginity might have lost ground, the respectability of the girl and her good upbringing were still very important. Traditionally when virginity was still crucial it was a stigma for the girl and a disgrace for the parents if she was not found virgin. The clansmen in the town thus acted against prostitution on behalf of the kinship group as a whole in a matter which strongly suited town

¹ Interview: J. Mandefield, N.M.S.D.F., Memorandum by the African Welfare Officer, 21.1.1948. The municipal policy was to control the prostitutes and to check them regularly for V.D.

and reserve dwellers. It seems, however, that the attitude toward prostitution was influenced and reinforced by European, Christian attitudes as well. This was particularly true for the more Westernized Africans.¹ A prostitute was not only a loss of money for, but also a disgrace to, the clan, the sub-tribe and the tribe as a whole.

It is interesting to note that in the cases of both the Luo and the Abalukya, the initiative to deal with prostitutes in a big way came not from the grass-roots but from the top. In the case of the Abalukya, it was decided in 1946 by the A.W.A. Headquarters in Kakamega that action be taken to eliminate Abalukya prostitutes from the towns. The matter was consequently brought before the Local Native Council in the reserve which approved the decision that "no girl or woman shall, without a certificate enter the train for coming down country, other than those who get their husbands or fully known as a mother of any one in down country". The A.W.A. Nakuru branch, acting on the decision, requested the D.C. in March 1946 to grant them authority to repatriate Abalukya prostitutes. The D.C. declined.²

In the same month the Luo Union Nakuru approached the D.C. asking him to repatriate a Luo prostitute, the Union paying the fares. This case was interesting because the girl was apparently induced to practice her trade by a relative who shared her profits, while according to the custom he was expected to look after her

¹ Interview: E. Muleri.

² KN/D.C/MW/dep.2/74, A.W.A. to D.C., 4.3.1946; D.C. to A.W.A. undated; A.W.A. to D.C., 14.3.1946.

morals. The Luo Union, with no direct interest in the matter took it up. After inviting the girl twice, without response, to attend a Union meeting and answer the allegations, the Union, as a last resort, sought the help of the Administration.¹ The associations at the tribal level acted here as guardians of tribal customs and the tribe's good name. The lower level associations, who had a more direct interest in the problem, were at that stage too weak, if they existed at all, to pursue such matters which increasingly involved the Administration.

But even during the 1950s and early 1960s when the whole network of tribal associations was well in operation, the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association continued to play a central role in the struggle for the elimination of prostitutes. Clan associations were normally the first to detect a "loose woman" among their ranks. They tried to convince the girl to return to her home in the reserve. They preferred to solve the problem themselves because they did not want to be publicly disgraced. If the girl refused to abide by their decision, the clan association would refer the matter to their locational association. In 1958, for instance, Gen Rahuma Union repatriated two girls belonging to two clans which had their own associations.² If the locational association failed to convince the girls to accept voluntary repatriation they would in turn refer the case to the tribal level association. The Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association sought, if necessary, the help of the Administration. In 1999 the Abaluhya Association made rules regarding the procedure of repatriation. Locational associations were authorised only to

¹ KM/D.C/Moa/dep.2/74, Luo Union to D.C., 21.3.1946.

² G.R.U.F., Chairman's Report 1958. Interview: J. Odada, the same procedure applied to Nyakach Union as well.

advise the girl in question to change her ways or to urge her to voluntarily go back home. Should she prove stubborn the locational association had to refer the matter to the Abaluhya Association which would take legal action against her.¹ The procedure in the Luo Union was similar.²

In September 1954 the A.W.A. initiated strong action against Abaluhya "loose women". The Association's action was aimed not only against unmarried girls but also against married women who had left husbands and children behind in the reserve. It was, then, not only a question of bridewealth. The main complaint was that these women by their practices "defame our dignity". The A.W.A. asked the M.A.O. not to issue or renew residence permits to Abaluhya women without a letter from the Chief or the D.O. from the reserve. The police were asked to arrest the existing "loose women" and return them to their respective tribal homes.³ Subsequently in October 1954 the Association provided the police with a list of twenty-six Abaluhya "loose women" for repatriation and declared that another list was in preparation.⁴ Repatriation was carried out not on the ground of prostitution, which was difficult to prove, but for vagrancy and lack of residence permits. This anti-prostitution campaign was apparently successful by 1955.⁵ In 1958 the Association

¹ A.A.F., Abaluhya Association to all locational associations, 9.6.1959; Bungore Union to Abaluhya Association, 5.3.1957.

² Interview: B. L. Ojuka, J. Abiya.

³ A.A.F., A.W.A. to Ag. Commissioner of Police, Nakuru, 13.9.1954.

⁴ A.A.F., A.W.A. to Ag. Commissioner of Police, R.V.P., 1.10.1954.

⁵ A.A.F., A.W.A. to Superintendent of Police, R.V.P., 12.9.1955.

authorized the Nakuru Town Chief,¹ himself a Maluhya, "to arrest, deal with, and whenever necessary bring before the authorities of the said Association, characters of the Maluhya, especially females who seem to have no valid ground of staying in Nakuru Township". From its own motives the Maluhya in fact concurred with the official view that Africans should be allowed to live in the town only if they had something useful to do. In 1959 the Association took up the question of Maluhya "loose women" with the Homecraft Officer in charge of the Homecraft Training Centre in Nakuru. The Association claimed that Maluhya girls participating in the Homecraft course financed their studies by resorting to "immoral ways".² The Maluhya Association's branches throughout the country formed a network which traced and returned women who deserted their husbands.³

In conclusion it is difficult to determine the relative strength of the motives behind the persistent efforts of the Luo and Maluhya tribal associations at all levels to control their womenfolk in the town and to repatriate the "loose" ones. In fact, every single association had it as one of its expressed aims. Anthropologists would perhaps lay the emphasis more strongly on an explanation which has the traditional social organization and bridewealth customs as its basis.⁴ The evidence from Nakuru indicates, however, that

¹ A Chief over the entire African population of Nakuru was appointed in 1957.

² A.A.F., Maluhya Association "to whom it may concern", 27.5.1958.

³ A.A.F., Maluhya Association to Homecraft Officer, 27.2.1959.

⁴ A.A.F., A.W.A. Eldoret to J. Muruli, 19.8.1955.

⁵ D. Parkin, *Neighbours*, pp. 92-4. A. Southall, *Introductory Summary*, in A. Southall, *Social Change in Modern Africa*, OUP London 1969 pp. 65-6.

there was a new element at play which was not necessarily directly linked with tradition. The fact that the campaign against prostitution was initiated and carried out to a large extent by the tribal associations at the highest level is significant. The local Luo Union and Abaluhya Association which were increasingly monopolised by the educated urban elite, strove, together with their counterparts in the reserve, to inculcate among the tribesmen the ideas of tribal unity, solidarity and "patriotism". Combatting immorality and upholding tribal customs and moral values, could also be regarded as a by-product of an emerging sense of tribal "nationalism".

Before 1950 tribal associations seem to have been preoccupied with responding to problems affecting individual tribesmen and with providing for their entertainment and recreation. During the 1950s they were changing their roles by adopting a more positive, progressive orientation. They were laying more emphasis on the self-improvement of both individuals and the community. In 1956 a Luo Union's leader in Nakuru spelt this out: "Our aim your worship is to abate poverty and ignorance. We want to avoid going to the Government every day, every week for help and support. We want to stand on our own."¹ This outlook found expression in the associations' constitutions. One of the aims of Butso Progressive Union was: "To organize better means through which members can progress socially, educationally and economically."² Ugenya Union's constitution expressed this aim in identical terms.³ The same idea was repeated in

¹ KMA/African Affairs Committee, a draft of a Luo Union leader's speech, 19.8.1955.

² R.S.A., File 2322, 1959.

³ R.S.A., File 1408, undated.

constitutions of clan associations as well.¹

The encouragement of education was a recurrent theme in almost every single constitution of Nakuru's Nyanza tribal associations. Education was conspicuously regarded by Africans as the key to progress. Tribal associations committed themselves to the financial support of their members and their children's education whether in Kenya or overseas and the Alego Ragar Union had a special Education Secretary to deal with this subject.² Tribal associations in Nakuru received applications for such assistance from tribesmen living in other parts of the country as well.³ In 1958 and 1959 Alego Ragar Union assisted two of its members in their studies in the U.S.A. For one of them who was an officer of the Union a special "Achieng Education Fund" was launched.⁴ In 1959 the Abaluhya Association organised a large-scale, fund raising campaign to assist its secretary in his higher education in the U.S.A.⁵ Not every member received the same assistance as did officers and on the whole the tribal associations had their financial limitations. The will to help, however, was there.

Another field in which some tribal associations tried to help the progress of their people was trade. Success in business was another sign of emulating the modern world. Luo and Abaluhya tribesmen

¹ B.U.F., File 3571, Mukanga Mukose Society, 1961; File 2464, Kamwa Kisumu Union, 1959; File 2347, Boro and Family Association, 1961.

² D.C./Adm/15/12/53, Education Secretary, Alego Ragar Union to D.C., 10.4.1959.

³ B.U.F., G.W. Timbwa, Nairobi to Bunyore Union, Nakuru, 12.7.1962.
 A.A.F., J.M. Wasamba, Marigat to Abaluhya Association Nakuru, 29.3.1960.
 G.R.U.F., J. Mofume to Gen Bahum Union, 6.10.1958.

⁴ D.C./Adm/Adm/15/12/53, Alego Ragar Union, General Meeting 16.2.1958; General Meeting 25.3.1959; General Meeting undated./ Education Secretary to D.C., 10.4.1959. (Minutes)

⁵ B.U.F., Abaluhya Association to Bunyore Union, 27.5.1959. A.A.F., Abaluhya Association to African District Council of Elgon Nyanza, 6.7.1959.

did not exhibit, on the whole, a particular taste for, or talent in, business which made promotion of trade a particularly important task. During the emergency years from 1953 to 1960 when many Kikuyu traders lost their business there was an opportunity for the Nyanza tribesmen to fill the vacuum. Both the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association actively encouraged their members to seize this opportunity to enter trade. Leaders of the tribal level associations who had access to information about available business licences and future economic plans used to disseminate such at association meetings.¹ There were associations which tried to go beyond this. As early as 1949 the A.A.A. set out to form a co-operative business enterprise.² In 1959 Bunyore Union was apparently in the process of establishing a co-operative hotel.³ In 1963 Gen Rahuma Union proposed to go into business.⁴ It seems that none of these enterprises came to fruition. Individuals used to apply to their associations for help in obtaining trading licences or for loans to start businesses or to overcome set-backs in existing ones. In 1958, for example, Gen Rahuma Union gave a loan of shs. 400/- to a Gen businessman operating in the town.⁵ It can not be fully established whether or not the increase in the Nyanza tribesmen's interest in

¹Interviews: E. L. Ojuku, D. Mungonye, E. Imbiai.

²A.A.A., A.B.A. to D.C., 3.5.1949.

³E.U.F., member to Bunyore Union, 29.2.1957.

⁴G.R.U.F., Gen Rahuma Union Nakuru to Headquarters, 11.7.1963.

⁵G.R.U.F., Treasurer to E. Heso, 31.8.1958. See also, A.A.F., member to Abaluhya Association, 5.3.1957. T.U.F., Letter to Baraza (Swahili Newspaper), 16.5.1961. Interview: M.A. Maji.

trade during the 1950s and the early 1960s was a result of the urging and assistance of the tribal associations. On the whole, however, Nyanza tribesmen did not take full advantage of the emergency conditions.¹

During the 1950s, when Nyanza tribal associations became more forward looking, they began to take active interest in the progress of their tribal areas. There had always been a keen interest in what was going on in the reserve. Before 1950, however, there were not the means, neither was there the vision, to transform the urban tribal associations into levers for the development of the reserve. The ascendancy of the educated elite in the leadership of tribal associations in the late 1940s and early 1950s was, in this respect, highly instrumental. In fact, because of the structure of job opportunities in Kenya as a whole, most of the educated sons of the different Nyanza tribal groups lived more or less permanently in the towns.

During the 1950s the tribal urban elites began to regard themselves as guardians of their respective tribal areas. The Luo Union (L.A.) had as one of its aims "to find ways and means of improving the Luo country generally, socially, educationally and economically."² Similar aims appeared in the constitutions of associations at the sub-tribal and clan level.³ Nyakach Union was much more specific than the others, having as one of its aims: "To perform any duties

¹ See below.

² G. J. Gertzel, M. Goldschmit and D. Rothchild, Government and Politics in Kenya, East African Publishing House, Nairobi 1969, pp. 35-6.

³ R.S.A., Files 2200, 3971, 2464, 1877. T.U.F., Letter to Baraza, 16.5.1961.

for the benefit of the Location people and for the growth and development of Nyakach Location. It shall help in building schools, dispensaries and maternities, halls and community development centres for both women and men of Nyakach Location, and in preparing roads and bringing water in the Location."¹

Gen Kahuma Union, Nakuru branch, wrote in 1961 to the Chief of Gem Location asking him to take up with the Administration the Union's following requests: "an upper primary school for girls only, no standard school uniforms, every sub-location to have its own upper primary school, a youth centre to teach trades, development and water projects in the Location and the building of a maternity home and a dispensary".² In the late 1950s and early 1960s when locational and clan associations were forming themselves into country-wide associations it became possible for them to conceive of practical projects of self-improvement in the reserve as well. Thus in 1963 Gen Kahuma Union's Headquarters launched a project of building a secondary school in Gem Location. The Nakuru branch was requested to contribute a substantial sum of money.³

The Tiriki Union began, at least by 1961, to take a keen interest in Tiriki Location. They demanded that the Government provide the Location with a secondary school, a large hospital, four dispensaries and a post office. It also urged the African District Council, North Nyanza, to employ young Tiriki claiming that the latter were discriminated against in employment.⁴ They also started to agitate

¹ D.C/Mw/ dn/15/12/43, undated constitution.

² G.R.U.F., Gen Kahuma Union, Nakuru to Chief Nikanor Oyugi, 10.12.1961.

³ G.R.U.F., Gen Kahuma Union, Nakuru to H., 24.12.1963.
(Minutes)

⁴ T.U.F., Committee meeting, 26.4.1961; letter to Baraza, 16.5.1961; Tiriki Union to L. Maganga, 26.2.1962.

for the return of Kaimosi Farm and the forest of Kitiri Kaimosi Mission to Tiriki Location.¹ In this matter Nakuru Tiriki leaders proved to be more extreme than some of the leaders in Tiriki Location. They introduced to the issue a militant urban jargon and flavour: "You know the land mentioned above was taken from us without our prior permission by the British Imperialists and handed over to American Colonialists, so when we want the land to be returned back for our own use it is a very insulting idea to hear that there are certain uncalled for people in Tiriki Location who deny our right to ask for the land..."² In 1962 Tiriki Union (E.A.) started to raise money for building a secondary school in Tiriki Location, Nakuru branch played an active part in this.³

At the tribal level the Luo Union was very active as from 1955 in collecting money for the building of Ofafa Memorial Hall in Kisumu. There is no evidence for a similar project by the Kalukya Association. On the whole, the interest shown by the urban Nyanza tribesmen in the improvement of their home areas was natural since so many Nyanza tribesmen living in the town had their families and some economic interests in the reserve. When, for example, they urged the authorities to build more schools, it was the education of their own children that they were concerned about.

Concurrently, during the 1950s, tribal associations began, more consciously, to cultivate and foster close relationships with the respective tribal groups in the reserve. Chiefs and other dignitaries

¹This area was alienated and handed over to an American-based mission.

²T.U.F., Letter to Baraza, 16.5.1961; Tiriki Union to E. Maganga, 26.2.1962; General Meeting, 10.6.1962. (Minutes)

³Interview: M.S. Muji.

from the reserve were invited to visit Nakuru and were entertained by their people's tribal associations.¹ In 1957, East and West Kano Union cordially sent copies of its constitution to the Chiefs of these two locations.² A cup won in 1953 by the Bunyore Union football team in Nakuru was sent to Bunyore Location Chief. A Union member asked that the cup be shared by all the sub-locations which contributed players to the team.³ In 1959 the Union again sent a cup won by them to the Location Chief suggesting that it be used for inter-school competitions. In addition, the Bunyore Union, Nakuru football team planned to come to the reserve over Christmas to compete against the Location team.⁴ In 1958 the Gem Rahuma Union also discussed the donation of a cup for inter-sub-location football competitions.⁵ In 1960 the Abamutete Society, affiliated to Bunyore Union, hired a bus to go to their sub-location to attend a memorial ceremony for a Sub-Chief who had died.⁶

Nyanza tribesmen living in the town, who had a considerable stake in their tribal group in the reserve, had little or no influence on the running of the administrative tribal Institutions, Districts, Locations and Sub-Locations. In 1959 Bunyore Union tried

¹ E. U. F., Kakamega Society to Abaluhya Association, 1958. G.R.U.F., Gem Rahuma Union to Chief Mikanor Oyugi, 16.11.1961; Chief Mikanor Oyugi to Gem Rahuma Union, 25.1.1962. B.U.F., Bunyore Union to Chief, Bunyore Location, 16.4.1962.

² R.S.A., File 1443, East and West Kano Union to Registrar, 21.3.1957.

³ B.U.F., a member to Bunyore Union, 24.11.1953.

⁴ B.U.F., Bunyore Union to Chief, Bunyore Location, 4.1.1959.

⁵ G.R.U.F., Committee meeting, 9.3.1958. (Minutes)

⁶ B.U.F., Abamutete Society to Bunyore Union, 28.7.1960.

to rectify this situation by asking of the Bunyore Location Chief that one member of the Locational Council be a long standing town-dweller who would be able to represent the townsmen's point of view.¹ Otherwise the only thing the town dwellers could do was to court the good will of the tribal leaders and of the Chiefs in particular. When in 1954 the association of the basiratsi also wanted the Bunyore Union to assist two of their members, they promised to tell the Location Chief that Bunyore Union's leaders were good people.² This highlights the sensitivity of the tribal association to their relationships with the tribal establishment in the reserve.

The associations' efforts in this respect were not always successful. The association of the Tiriki had great difficulties with Chief Ezron Makenya who assumed office in 1947. The chief resented the Tiriki urban associations to such an extent that he asked the Government to ban them altogether.³ The relationship between the Bunyore Union and the Location establishment was apparently also far from happy despite the Union's efforts. A Union member who went home for a visit in 1959 reported that the Chief and others in the Location did not like the Bunyore Union and urged the Union's leaders to write to the Chief informing him that the Union was a "good" organization.⁴

These attitudes pointed to a basic undercurrent of tension between the tribal establishments and the urban tribal elites. It

¹ B.U.F., Bunyore Union to Chief, Bunyore Location, 1959.

² B.U.F., basiratsi to Bunyore Union, 29.10.1954.

³ Interview: M.S. Muji.

⁴ B.U.F., A member to Bunyore Union, 25.7.1959.

may have been the result of a clash between a countryside "simple mindedness" and urban "sophistication". This was accentuated by the fact that most educated young men lived in the towns and that many of the urban tribal leaders were of a higher educational calibre than members of the administrative establishment at home. Chief Eron Makenya of Tiriki Location apparently feared that the "clever fellows" from the towns would eventually want to replace him.¹ It is possible also that there was an element of generational struggle between the young of the towns and the old of the reserve. Some Chiefs also probably resented being patronised by the urban associations.

On the whole, by maintaining a high level of contact with the reserves and cultivating good relationship with their leaders, tribal associations facilitated the re-integration of the migrant townsmen into their tribal homes.

It is not suggested that the functions described above were performed by all the Nyanza tribal associations and throughout the whole period. It is, however, an ideal-type which fairly represents the scope of interests and activities of these associations. More functions were performed by the clan and locational associations, the latter being the more stable and effective on the whole. The Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association were mainly concerned with the tribal communities as a whole and were largely dependent on their ability to mobilize and control the locational associations. The locational associations were both individual and community oriented. The clan associations were primarily concerned with the

¹ Interview: M. E. Maji.

problems of their individual members.

The Administration and the Consolidation of the Authority of
the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Associations.

Despite the apparent weaknesses of the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association, they both emerged during the 1950s and early 1960s as viable organizations, capable, more or less, of mobilising and manipulating the network of associations of their respective tribal communities. The growing sense of tribal identity and solidarity and the interest of the urban tribal elite have already been suggested as contributing towards the viability of the two tribal level associations.

In addition the attitude of the Administration towards the tribal level associations played an important part in promoting the growth of the Luo and Abaluhya sense of tribal identity and in consolidating the authority of the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association.

As we have already seen, the attitude of the Administration towards the Kakanega-Maragoli-Tiriki Association in 1936-7 was that of suspicion. Neither the D.C. Nakuru, nor the P.C. Rift Valley Province seemed to see any benefit which the Administration might draw from such an association. Neither did they see any benefits in the wider context of African urbanization and legitimate needs arising thereof. In 1939 this attitude became even clearer in connection with the formation of a Luo association in Eldoret. The D.C. could not see a useful purpose for the association: "The whole thing will simply lead to unnecessary litigation and I would ask your authority to have the association wound up immediately." The P.C., while pointing out that there was no legal

ground to dissolve the association, suggested other means to achieve the same end.¹

This attitude was changing during the early 1940s when the Administration began to regard existing tribal associations as legitimate representatives of their respective tribal communities and as potentially useful agents. In those years, with the steady growth of the African population, a more positive attitude towards governing the African town dwellers developed. Good government involved some form of communication with the governed. The main division within the African sector of the town at that time ran along tribal lines. To reduce tribal divisions to manageable proportions the Administration preferred a division based on broad cultural similarities. These broad divisions were used by the Administration as the main units of communication within the African population. Even in 1936-7 when the D.C. was forced to intervene in the dispute between the two antagonistic North Kavirondo Associations, he tried to effect a merger between them. The four major tribal groups in Nakuru based on the broad cultural divisions were the Kikuyu, Luo, Abaluhya and the Kalenjin and the attitude of the Administration acted as a stimulus towards the development of a sense of identity along these lines.

At one time in 1942 the D.C., appreciating the genuine need of the African tribesmen for some sort of legal machinery, endorsed the legal authority of the A.W.A. in minor disputes between Abaluhya tribesmen. This was the first time that a tribal association was recognised as representing the tribesmen at that level. The

¹ KM/D.C./Mm/dep.2/200, D.C. Uasin Gishu to P.C., R.V.P., 31.7.1939; G. P.C., R.V.P., to D.C. Uasin Gishu, 1.8.1939.

Nakuru Native Mixed Tribunal was established in 1944 after consultation with tribal elders representing the main tribal groups. The composition of the Tribunal was also based on representation granted to these groups.¹ It was hardly surprising that when in 1948 a Mulukya was not included in the reformed Tribunal, the A.W.A. repeatedly urged the D.C. to rectify this position.² and when the D.C. responded to their request in 1953 it was the Association which submitted the names of the candidates for the post. The A.W.A. in turn asked the locational associations to submit names for consideration.³

In the Nakuru African Advisory Council there was reserved representation for the four major tribal groups in the town until 1952. The tribal Councillors were elected by the respective tribal associations.⁴ Even when tribal representation was abolished in 1952, the Nyanza associations continued to take an interest in its tribal composition. In October 1952 the Luo Union discussed the question of candidates for the Advisory Council under the new system of election.⁵ The Mulukya Association complained in 1957 about the elections to the then General Ward Council apparently because no Mulukya was elected. When subsequently there was a vacancy the Association approached the D.C.: "We realize that nominations to the Councils are not on a tribal basis. But as there is no Mulukya

¹ KNA/D.C./Mcu/dep.2/192, D.C. to P.C., R.V.P., 20.12.1943.
² KN/D.C./Mcu/dep.2/192, A.W.A. to D.C., 31.5.1948. A.A.F., D.C. to A.W.A., 24.12.1952.
³ A.A.F., A.W.A. to D.C., 20.4.1953; Marama Burial Aid Society to A.W.A., 7.3.1953, Maragoli Society to A.W.A., 27.3.1953.
⁴ See below.
⁵ N.H.S.S.D.F., Luo Union to Asst. Superintendent of Police, 21.10.1952.

member on the General Ward Council, we are compelled to put this request to you." The request was to nominate a Maluhya to the vacant seat.¹

In 1946-52 the Nakuru African Advisory Council was developing as the main channel of communication between the European authorities in the town and the African population. Tribal interests were represented on the Council by tribal representatives.² Both the M.A.O and the D.C. participated regularly in the Council's meeting and could therefore use it effectively as their main channel of communication with the Africans. With the abolition of tribal representation in 1952, the role of the tribal associations as representatives of their communities and as communicators seemed to decline. The Advisory Council promised to become a purely urban institution and the sole representative of Nakuru's African population.

This, however, did not happen. The Advisory Council which reached its zenith as a lively and popular institution in 1952, declined in the subsequent years, whereas the tribal associations enhanced their position as spokesmen of their respective tribal communities. The D.C. gradually opted out of the Advisory Council and seemed to prefer to consult the tribal associations. This process seems to have, at least partly, been a by-product of the Mau Mau revolt and the State of Emergency. Mau Mau being regarded as a Kikuyu rather than an African revolt, the Administration seem to have viewed the situation generally with an increasingly tribal bias. When two local Luo Union leaders had been found in 1954 to be involved with Mau Mau, the Administration regarded it as the Luo affair. It saw a danger that the Luo tribe might be "contaminated". It consequently

¹ A.A.F., Abaluhya Association to D.C., 25.3.1957; Abaluhya Association to D.C., 6.12.1957.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., Nakuru African Advisory Council, Finance and General Purposes Committee, 16.9.1949; T.F.G.Kanyua to P. Gathii, 12.7.1949. See below.

convened, in conjunction with the local Luo Union branch, a meeting of the Luo community in which local Luo leaders and dignitaries from the Luo reserve attacked Mau Mau and preached loyalty to the Government.¹

The Administration thus saw Africans as divided on tribal rather than on socio-economic lines. Tribal baraza and baraza with leaders of tribal associations became normal procedure during the 1950s. Tribal associations in response established themselves as an important channel of communication between the Administration and the African population. In 1957 tribal level associations were requested to nominate three representatives to the Chief's Baraza which seems to have become a regular institution.² The agenda of one meeting, held in May 1959, included two matters which were more appropriate for the General Ward Council. The one was the building of a nursery school in the African Location and the other related to African representation on the Municipal Council and the proposed "Parish" Council to replace the General Ward Council.³ The appointment of a Chief for the entire African population of the town was of a particular importance, because he cultivated the tribal associations as channels of communication with the African population.

The tribal level associations were consulted on a variety of matters, some of which were very important. When in 1955 Ole Tameno resigned his seat in the Legislative Council as Member for the Rift Valley, the Luo Union, the A.W.A. and the Nandi-Kipsigis Union were asked to nominate three delegates each to the District Advisory

¹ N.M.U./African Affairs Committee, Baraza, Luo Community, 20.2.1955. Interview: S.L. Ojuka, H.D. Odaba.

² A.A.F., Abaluhya Association to Nakuru Town Chief, 7.2.1957.

³ A.A.F., Nakuru Town Chief to Abaluhya Association, 12.5.1959.

Nomination Committee for the by-election.¹ The A.W.A. took the opportunity to propose its own candidate for the vacant seat.²

In 1957 the Abaluhya Association was asked to nominate its representative to the committee, composed of representatives of other tribal associations as well, which was to select the Chief for Nakuru Town.³ In order to ensure the success of the population census in 1962, the D.C. convened a meeting of representatives of tribal associations, including locational associations, to explain the procedure of the census and to seek their co-operation.⁴

The municipal administration which normally operated through the Advisory Council and its successors also made use of tribal associations. The Nakuru African Parents Association, operating under the aegis of the municipal African Affairs Department, was composed, by 1957, of their representatives.⁵ The Nakuru Primary School Extension Fund in 1956 was also organized through them.⁶ Even in 1951, at the peak of the Advisory Council, their assistance was sought for the compilation of a list of the African destitutes.⁷ In 1954 the MAAO sent a letter to the Luo Union, the A.W.A. and the Mandi-Kipsigis Union pointing out that of about ninety children attending the Municipal Nursing School seventy-four were Kikuyu

¹A.A.F., D.C. to A.W.A., 22.9.1955.

²A.A.F., A.W.A. to D.C., 27.9.1955.

³A.A.F., Abaluhya Association to D.C., 24.9.1957.

⁴B.U.F., D.C. to Danyore Union, 25.2.1962.

⁵A.A.F., Abaluhya Association to O. Mwaniki, 24.9.1957.

⁶MMA/General Ward Council, Luo Union to General Ward Council, 21.7.1956.

⁷A.A.F., J.F.G.Kanyua to A.W.A. 20.11.1954.

and only four from their tribes.¹

Thus the European authorities to some extent built up the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association as the legitimate representatives of their tribal communities. These associations came to regard themselves as guardians of the interests of their urban tribal communities. They were not satisfied, however, with playing a passive role by responding to European initiative. Soon they began to act when they thought that their tribal communities' interests were in jeopardy. The Abaluhya Association as noted had demanded the appointment of a Maluhya to the African Mixed Tribunal and to the General Ward Council and in 1959 it appeared as the guardian of tribal custom: "We as Abaluhya Association of Makuru are strongly opposed to the setting up of this commission on marriage, divorce and status of women. Having our own customary law pertaining to this particular subject we feel that the commission will have no useful purpose."² In 1961 the same Association strongly complained against the tribal bias in the Makuru District Special Loans Committee demanding that a Maluhya be appointed to it.³ In 1963 it complained about a tribally unfair distribution of tickets for the Kenya Independence Celebration.⁴

The European authorities, by turning the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Association into the main channels of communication with the respective tribal communities, gave a boost to their prestige

¹ A.A.F., NAAO to A.W.A., 3.5.1954.
² A.A.F., Abaluhya Association, unaddressed, 1959.
³ A.A.F., D.C. to Abaluhya Association, 17.2.1961. KHA/D.C./Ncu/dep.2/473, E. Kubeka to M. Maliro, 14.4.1961.
⁴ A.A.F., Abaluhya Association to the Regional Government Agent, 9.12.1963.

and helped them to strengthen and entrench their positions at the head of the respective hierarchies of the locational and clan associations.

The Kikuyu Tribal Associations

The Kikuyu responded differently to the same urban conditions in terms of tribal social organization. The first Kikuyu tribal association was formed as late as November 1948.¹ It was a tribal level association. Significantly even then its formation was not the result of Kikuyu initiative. It was precipitated by a discussion in the local African Advisory Council on the problem of African prostitutes. It was decided at that meeting that five tribal committees, including a Kikuyu one, be formed to assist the Municipal Board in repatriating prostitutes to their reserves.² The man who was to become the first secretary of the Union visited Mombasa and saw how its Kikuyu Committee, which had been in existence since 1945, was operating.³

The circumstances of its formation left a very strong imprint on the Union and its activities. Although there were thoughts of emulating the Nyanza tribal associations, these never came to fruition. Throughout its existence the Rift Valley Agikuyu Union (RVAU) was obsessed with the question of Kikuyu prostitutes in the town and the District as a whole. Within a very short time of its inception the Union began to concentrate its efforts on the vigorous elimination of Kikuyu prostitution. Within a few months the Union clashed with the authorities over the harsh measures they were using against prostitutes.

¹ N.M.S.B.D.F., Rift Valley Agikuyu Union (RVAU) to D.C., 14.1.1949.

² MU/Native Affairs Committee, 17.1.1949. N.M.S.B.D.F., MAAO to Superintendent of Police, R.V.P., 18.11.1948.

³ Interview: J. Warui, M. Parker, Political and Social Aspects of

The Union was unhappy with the measures taken by the police against prostitutes who had been denounced by the Union. In January 1949 the Union rounded up a few score of women, making use of the services of their own askaris. The women faced the Union's Committee which disowned the allegations made against them. The committee decided to repatriate eight women. These were locked in a cell guarded by the Union's Askaris until their repatriation. The Red Cross branch, which became involved, reported the harsh conditions in this illegal prison to the police. By the time the whole matter came to the notice of the police, the Union's Askaris were marching the girls to the Hospital for a medical inspection to ensure that they would not transmit venereal diseases to the reserve. At the Hospital they were intercepted by the police who released the girls, who then complained of maltreatment by the Union. The whole matter blew up and the Union was told that it had no authority to arrest or repatriate forcibly. They were expected to submit the names of the undesirable women to the D.C. and the M.A.O.¹

From then on the Union ceased to repatriate women against their will. They, however, continued their anti-prostitution campaign. The Union's definition of prostitution was very broad. By April 1949 the committee took the following course: "All the women prostitutes who are in Nakuru township doing nothing, have been asked to be prepared to leave before the 5th of May 1949. These include unemployed young girls and others who have been in the town less than three years."² But from then on they had to rely mainly on the police to

(C.O.)

Municipal Government in Kenya, p.41.

¹ N.M.S.E.D.F., RVAU to D.C., 14.1.1949. Interview: E.M. Ig'atha.

² N.M.S.E.D.F., RVAU to D.C., 28.4.1949.

whom they submitted lists of undesirable women.¹ They also acted through the MAAO who controlled the issue of residence permits.² They also tried to effect their policy regarding prostitution through the Advisory Council. In June 1949 they submitted a memorandum to the Council which was aimed at preventing landlords in the old African Location from renting rooms to prostitutes. They also called for action against men who lived off their profits.³

This indirect way of dealing with the Kikuyu prostitutes seems to have had an initial success.⁴ Without the authority to use force, the Union introduced in 1949 a thenge to be sworn in public and aimed at enhancing the Union's prestige and discouraging people from tolerating prostitution.⁵ By October 1950, however, the Union became dissatisfied with the situation and demanded more authority. It requested that no residence permit be granted to Kikuyu women without its recommendation. They further requested that the Government give them the authority "to stop juvenile and women who are coming to town without reasonable affairs in future and return them to their reserves or to the place he/she came from."⁶ This apparently was not granted. In the beginning of 1952 in the wake of an increase in the number of Kikuyu prostitutes in Nakuru the Union set

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., RVAU to Chief Inspector of Police, Nakuru, 13.5.1949, 11.1.1950.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., RVAU to MAAO, 7.11.1950.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., RVAU to Chief Inspector of Police, Nakuru, 24.6.1949.

⁴ N.M.S.S.D.F., RVAU to Asst. Superintendent of Police, Nakuru, 20.8.1949.

⁵ N.M.S.S.D.F., RVAU to D.C., 28.4.1949. The thenge is a traditional Kikuyu oath.

⁶ N.M.S.S.D.F., RVAU to General Meeting, 28.10.1950. (Minutes)

up a sub-committee to interview the women who had recently come to town. This time they asked for a municipal askari to help them rounding up the women. The MAAO was expected to cancel residence permits on the Union's advice.¹ Yet, despite the Union's efforts, the Kikuyu prostitutes remained a major problem, because the Union also was unable to deal with the socio-economic conditions which created this trade.

Although the Union was primarily concerned with the problem of prostitution, it set out to combat other expressions of deviant behaviour among members of the tribe. They showed a particular concern about Kikuyu juveniles. In November 1950 the Union requested the MAAO that Kikuyu men under the age of twenty should not be permitted to drink beer at the Municipal African Social Club, because it was contrary to the tribe's custom.² In December 1950, following a meeting in Nairobi of representatives of Kikuyu associations throughout the colony, the RVAU passed the following resolutions which indicated its main spheres of interests: "Women should not drink carelessly, teenagers should not be allowed to drink at all; should a Kikuyu girl fall in love with a man from another tribe the marriage would be according to the Kikuyu custom; Kikuyu ruffians and hooligans are condemned by the Union; Kikuyu drunkards and thieves are condemned; Kikuyu children are not wanted in the town especially when employed by Indians instead of going to school; the Union does not want Kikuyu girls to wear short dresses; men should

¹ N.M.S.E.D.F., RVAU to MAAO, 21.2.1952.

² N.M.S.E.D.F., RVAU to MAAO, 1.11.1950.

not women's jobs; we do not want women to be brought secretly to town and become prostitutes; shameful things (sexually) should not be done publicly by Kikuyu men or women; that the Government be asked to pass laws regarding African prostitutes similar to those applied to Asian and European prostitutes..."¹

The RVAU thus emerged as the guardian and protector of the tribe's morality and purity. In this context the campaign against prostitution was not the result of pressure from the grass-roots, but rather the initiative of the tribal elite. In carrying out the operation the Union was not assisted by sub-associations at the kinship level which might well have been concerned with bridewealth and the interests of the immediate kin. In fact many of the Kikuyu living in Nakuru and many of the prostitutes themselves, had come to the town from the squatter population in the surrounding District. These had not lived within the traditional social framework in the reserve for a long time. Even in dealing with those prostitutes originating from the reserve, there are indications that their motives were not derived from the sphere of kinship interests. According to one source, as many of the prostitutes from the reserve had come from Kiambu District, the Kiambu people were the least happy about the measures taken against them.² It is also significant that the Kikuyu elected as the Union's chairman a Swahili landlord of Kikuyu origin, because as such he had access to information about prostitutes who rented rooms in the old African Location.³ Unlike

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., RVAU General Meeting, 10.12.1950. (Minutes)

² Interview: J. Ward.

³ Interview: S. M. Ng'ethe.

the Nyanza tribesmen the Kikuyu were apparently unable to rely on kinsmen to trace their "loose women".

The whole operation was a centralized affair directed by a relatively small group of the local Kikuyu elite. Of thirty-five recorded Union's meetings between February 1950 and October 1952, thirty-one were committee meetings with an average participation of about fifteen people. The attendance in the four general meetings ranged between 145 and 250. The election meeting held in December 1951 was attended by 145 people.¹ This represented a very small proportion of a Kikuyu population of over five thousand. The Union's leadership clearly had not received a mandate from their tribe.

The profile of the Union's leadership further bears this out. As it emerged in 1950², it was distinctly different from that of the Luo Union or the A.W.A., which tended to be dominated by the educated. The RVAU's leadership was composed of members of the educated and the business establishment. J.P.O. Kanyua, the most educated and prominent Kikuyu in Nakuru, was the Union's vice-president. J. Warui a municipal Welfare Officer and S.M. Ng'ethe, the Registrar of the Nakuru African Mixed Tribunal, were the secretary and vice-secretary respectively. The treasurer and vice-treasurer were, appropriately, leading Kikuyu businessmen. The President was Masor Kahero, the Swahili landlord of Kikuyu origin. It was significant that all the committee members originated from the reserve. The Kikuyu local elite at that time was monopolized by the reserve people. The ex-squatters who formed a large proportion of Nakuru's Kikuyu population had no voice in the running of the Union. It seems that

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., N.A.W.M.B., February 1950-October 1952.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., RVAU General Meeting, 28.10.1950. (Minutes)

at least some of the leaders derived their moral positions as much from Western as from traditional sources. They represented the elite aspect of a general wave of tribal "nationalism" which swept the Kikuyu at that period. Tribal morality and purity were attractive goals for all the streams of Kikuyu "nationalism". Yet, despite the determination and occasional militancy which this leadership exhibited it was on the whole politically moderate.

The Kikuyu were relatively free of the fissiparous tendencies prevalent among the Nyanza tribesmen. The only three leader associations which developed in the early 1950s were based on the three administrative districts of Central Province. These were more than mere administrative divisions. The three districts represented three stages of Kikuyu expansion and settlement. Around these administrative and historical divisions there developed three distinct Kikuyu sub-identities.

The first of these associations was the Nyeri Kikuyu Education Society, formed in July 1950. It was a branch of a society which had been operating in Nyeri and Nairobi. The initiative came from the H.Q. of the Society.¹ The main object of the Society, as indicated by its name, was to encourage education in Nyeri District and to collect funds to support students from Nyeri in their overseas and local studies. It had two additional general aims: "To foster unity and moral advancement of the community by removing social evils and to improve and encourage African way of life and culture both socially and economically."² In Nakuru the Society apparently also dealt with

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., Nyeri Education Society, Nairobi, to L.O.J. Maina and A. Kinyua, Nakuru, 21.7.1950; A. Kinyua to Labour Officer, 25.7.1950.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., Draft Constitution of the Nyeri Kikuyu Education Society, 28.3.1950.

the major problems of prostitution and destitution.¹

The Muranga (Fort-Hall) Warahuri Association² was formed in October 1951. The immediate reason for its formation was the wish to assist a Muranga student who was going overseas for further studies.³ This association also took a wider interest in its community's well-being. For example, it tried to help Muranga people in trade.⁴ Lastly the Kiambu Kikuyu Education Society was formed in the middle of 1952, the name again indicating its main interest. It was very active until the end of 1952.⁵ On the whole, the general impression is that the leadership of these district associations was dominated by members of the local Kikuyu elite.

While in existence the E.V.U. was much more active, at least at the leadership level, than the Nyanza tribal level associations. Its committee used to meet as many as four times in a month. Its peak from this point of view was in 1951.⁶ In the second half of 1952 it began to decline, finally coming to an end with the Emergency. Some leaders feared that being active in a Kikuyu organization would result in their arrest or harassment by the security forces. Others did not want to become collaborators should the Government decide to make use of the Union in its anti-Mau Mau campaign.⁷ This was also

¹ Interview: P. Ndirangu.

² Meaning "wake up Muranga".

³ N.H.S.S.D.F., J. Warui to Superintendent of Police, 31.10.1951.

⁴ Interview: J. Warui.

⁵ N.H.S.S.D.F., N.A.W.M.R., June-September 1952; Kiambu Kikuyu Education Society to MAAO, 4.10.1952; Kiambu Kikuyu Education Society to Asst. MAAO, 20.12.1952.

⁶ N.H.S.S.D.F., N.A.W.M.R., February 1950 - October 1952.

⁷ Interview: J. Warui.

the fate of the District associations. The Kiambu Kikuyu did not, initially, intend to dissolve itself. As late as December 1952 they sought to arrange their registration.¹ But with the administration seeing Mau Mau behind every bush, Kikuyu associations were doomed.

During the Emergency in 1952-60, no form of Kikuyu association, besides the loyalists organizations, were allowed. The Makuru loyalists under the leadership of the Kikuyu Chief of the town became the channel of communication between the administration and the Kikuyu residents of the town. As shown below, the loyalists tried to perform the functions of a welfare association by tackling some of the social problems generated by the Emergency.²

With the disintegration of the loyalist movement toward the close of the Emergency, the D.C., viewing the African population essentially as tribesmen, felt that he had lost contact with Makuru's Kikuyu: "I am aware that there is a considerable number of Kikuyu Shauria [i.e. problems] which require attention. At the moment there is no Kikuyu Association or advisory body of Kikuyu which can make specific recommendations on these matters."³ The importance of the tribal associations in the thinking of the Administration again emerges. The D.C. took the initiative suggesting that until a Kikuyu tribal association was permitted, an ad hoc Kikuyu committee be allowed to meet and make recommendations regarding problems affecting Kikuyu. He suggested strict measures to ensure that the committee was properly supervised and controlled. This committee of

¹ H.M.S.S.D.F., Kiambu Kikuyu Education Society to Asst. MAAO, 20.12.1952.

² The post of the Kikuyu Chief existed in Makuru in 1955-7.

³ See below.

⁴ KM/D.C/Mau/dep.2/93, D.C. to Chief, Makuru Town, 12.8.1959.

Kikuyu elders met at least once, in December 1959.¹

In July 1960 a Makuru branch of the Kikuyu Welfare Association was formed and applied for registration.² The aims of the Association were quite in line with those of the Nyanza associations with the emphasis on promoting tribal customs and welfare. In Makuru it dealt increasingly with the grave social problems among the Kikuyu which had accumulated during the years of the Emergency.³ The Association was also concerned about the demoralized state of the tribe in the aftermath of the Mau Mau revolt.⁴

The Association's leadership was a mixture. On the one hand there were representatives of the Kikuyu establishment. Two were involved with Moral Re-orientation and one had been a leading member of the loyalist Torchbearers Association. On the other hand two officials were leaders of the militant KNU Youth wing.

The Association, however, was becoming the bastion of the politically moderate Kikuyu establishment of Makuru. This came to light when it became involved in the internal struggle within KNU. In the 1961 General Election it officially supported its moderate vice-chairman for the Makuru Open Seat in opposition to the official KNU militant candidate.⁵ In spite of its moderate nature and composition, the Association's repeated attempts to get registered failed. The official reason for the refusal was that "a number of complicated issues have arisen out of the application for the registration of your society..."⁶

¹ IMA, African Affairs Department Monthly Report, December 1959.

² R.S.A., Kikuyu Welfare Association, Makuru branch File, 1960.

³ KNU Makuru Branch Files, Secretary to Kikuyu Welfare Association, 1.2.1961. R.S.A., Kikuyu Welfare Association File, Association to Registrar, 8.7.1961.

⁴ R.S.A., Kikuyu Welfare Association File, Association to Registrar, 28.12.1960.

⁵ See below.

⁶ R.S.A., Kikuyu Welfare Association File, Registrar.

In 1962 the Nakuru-based Kikuyu General Union, the successor of the Association, was finally allowed registration. One of its first important activities was to submit a memorandum to the Boundaries Commission, representing the views of the Kikuyu residents of the District as a whole.¹ No attempts were made, at that period, to revive the Kikuyu district level associations.

Kikuyu and Nyanza tribal associations - the Origins of Differential Responses

It is both important and intriguing to attempt to account for the widely different response of Nyanza and Kikuyu tribesmen to an identical urban situation. Some anthropologists dealing with Kampala, where the Nyanza tribesmen were also found, and with urban centres in other parts of Africa, have emphasised the distinction between centralised and uncentralised tribes as the main differential explaining tribesmen's social organization in the town.² While neither the Kikuyu nor the Nyanza tribes are centralised there are important variations between them which ought to be considered.

In pre-colonial times, the Luo were divided into twelve or thirteen tribes or sub-tribes, which were composed of groupings of patrilineal clans or large lineages which were, in turn, sub-divided into smaller patrilineages. At the same time there was a large measure of overlapping between territorial and lineage groupings. There also seems to have developed within the sub-tribe a hierarchy of rulers with the Ruoth (chief) at the head. The Luo did not, however,

¹Interview: S. Mbote; E.K.Ndune.

²D. Parkin, Urban Associations as Institutions of Adaptation, pp. 90-4; A. Southall, "Determinants of the Social Structure of African Urban population", in D. Forde (ed) Social Implications of Urbanization and Industrialization in Africa south of the Sahara, UNESCO, Paris 1956, pp. 557-8.

have a socio-political structure corresponding to the tribe as a whole.¹ The position among the Abaluhya was broadly similar.²

The Kikuyu, on the other hand, possessed two categories of socio-political relationships and structures. The one was based on descent ranging vertically from the clan down to the Mburi (supt.). In this hierarchy of segments, the institution of chiefs was unknown. The other category functioned horizontally through the age and generation sets which cut across the different segments of the Kikuyu society. While the exact relationship between the two categories has not yet been conclusively established, it seems that the horizontal age-sets and generation-sets brought about the most effective tribal cohesion.³

The imposition of colonial administration affected the Nyanza tribes and the Kikuyu differently. In Luo and Abaluhya areas, the colonial administrative units largely coincided with tribal divisions, and the introduction of chiefs was by no means a novelty.⁴ The net result was that the traditional social structure was in fact enhanced by the advent of colonial rule. The migrant urban Jalo or Muluha had an interest in his home area both as a viable social frame of reference and as an administrative unit in which he had a stake. These put together generated a real incentive to the Nyanza tribesmen to organize themselves in the towns on the reserve model.

In Kikuyuland, on the other hand, the colonial administration put an end to the role of the generation-sets, and the newly imposed

¹B.A. Ggot, "British Administration in Central Nyanza District of Kenya, 1900-60", Journal of African History, IV, 2, 1963, p.252.

²J. Ogo, op.cit.

³J. Middleton and G. Kerahaw, The Kikuyu and Kamba of Kenya, pp. 23-38; G. Muriuki, A History of the Kikuyu to 1904, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London 1969, pp. 236-73.

⁴B.A. Ggot, "British Administration...", pp. 252-3; J. Lonsdale, "European Attitudes and African Pressures: Missions and Government in Kenya between the Wars", East, vol. 10 (1968-9), p.148.

chiefs were completely foreign. As a result, the effective social institutions were weakened or destroyed, and the administrative units remained alien and illegitimate.¹ Indeed, at the height of the Emergency the suggestion was put to a Parliamentary Commission that one way of combatting Mau Mau would be to carry out the ceremony of transfer of power from one generation-set to another.²

In addition, there were important socio-economic developments in the respective reserves which intensified tendencies resulting from the interaction of indigenous socio-political institutions and colonial administration, and which affected tribesmen's social organization in the town.³ In Kikuyuland the pressure on land during the colonial period resulted in a large number of people having few or no economic interests in the rural reserve. In Nakuru which absorbed many ex-ers the proportion of these must have been very high. Because the socio-economic unit in the reserve offered, in many cases, neither subsistence nor security, one can hardly expect to find a burning desire among the urban Kikuyu to build a network of tribal associations modelled on the reserve.

For most of the Abalukya and Luo tribesmen in the town, on the other hand, the rural reserve never ceased to be an integral part of their economic existence. The land at home offered them at least some income and security. This reinforced their tendency to form tribal associations and to model them on the socio-economic and political divisions in their reserve.

¹J. Londale, European Attitudes, p. 148.

²C. J. M. Iport, "Kenya's Answer to the Mau Mau Challenge", African Affairs, LIII, no. 212 (July 1954), pp. 254-5.

³For a more detailed analysis of the effects of the socio-economic development in the tribal reserves on the urban tribesmen, see below.

In addition, the particular relationship of the Kikuyu with the colonial government emphasized issues like land, education and tribal customs, which applied to the tribe as a whole and encouraged a sense of tribal unity inhibiting more localised affiliations. It also developed a taste for political rather than social organizations. In Nakuru there existed as from the early 1930s the Kikuyu Central Association, a tribal political organization.¹ The Nyanza tribesmen in the towns in particular showed until very late a preference for social organizations.

Other Tribal Associations

Besides the three major tribes, other Kenya groups developed tribal associations as well. The fourth largest tribal group in Nakuru was the Nilo-Hamitic cluster from the Rift Valley Province. They were divided into a number of different tribes which had neither centralized authority nor a sense of tribal identity prior to the advent of the British. In 1962 this super-tribe, which by then was called Kalenjin, was represented in Nakuru by members of seven sub-tribal groups.² The same motives and external stimuli which foster the growth of Abaluhya identity and solidarity were operative for the Nilo-Hamitic group as well. In 1948 one of the tribal committees established, through the initiative of the Advisory Council, to deal with prostitution, was that of the Nilo-Hamitic group.³ This may have been the beginning of the tribal association embracing this group of sub-tribes. By 1950 its name was the Nandi and Kipsigis Association after the two

¹ See below.

² Kenya Population Census 1962, Tables, Vol. II, p.147; they were: Nandi, Kipsigis, Elgeyo, Marakwet, Pokot, Sabot and Tugen.

³ N.H.S.S.D.F., MAAO to Superintendent of Police, R.V.P., 18.11.1948.

biggest sub-tribal groups in Nakuru and in 1951 it was turned into a Union.¹ In 1952 there was for Nakuru the first mention of the name Kalenjin which was to become the collective name for this super-tribe.² The introduction of a collective name is again reminiscent of the same development among the Abaluhya. Late in 1959 or early in 1960 the Kalenjin Union (E.A.) Nakuru Branch replaced the Nandi and Kipsigis Union, underlining the growing sense of tribal identity among the group.³ It is interesting to note, however, that in the 1962 Population Census only ten of a total of 1,155 tribesmen declared themselves as Kalenjin, the rest preferring their traditional tribal names.⁴ In 1962 the Kalenjin Union claimed only twenty five members.⁵

The Kamba followed the Kalenjin as the fifth largest tribe in Nakuru. In 1950 there was a Wakamba Club for dancing, and in 1951 there was first mention of the Kamba Friendly Society which by 1952 changed its name to the Rift Valley Kamba United Association.⁶ This Association apparently did not last long. In 1957 the Kamba again formed the Nakuru Kamba Friendly Society.⁷ Once again it seems that the revived Society owed its existence largely to the Administration's

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., Nakuru African Welfare Annual Report 1950; N.A.W.M.R., June 1951.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., Nandi and Kipsigis Union to Asst. MAAO, 13.2.1952.

³ KNA/D.C/Mai/dep.2/167, Kalenjin Union, Nairobi to MAAO, Nakuru, 30.10.1959; R.S.A., File 2670, Kalenjin Union to Registrar, 1.3.1960.

⁴ Kenya Population Census 1962, Tables, Vol. II, p.147.

⁵ R.S.A., File 2670.

⁶ N.M.S.S.D.F., N.A.W.M.R., July 1950, February 1951; Rift Valley Kamba United Association to Asst. MAAO, 24.7.1952.

⁷ R.S.A., File 1836, General Meeting, 5.10.1957. (Minutes)

policy of communicating with Africans through tribal associations. Two of the reasons given by the founder to show the need for an association were that official correspondence to a "Makamba Leader" had no proper address which resulted in unsatisfactory dealing with the Administration and that "all tribal residents of Nakuru were asked to nominate one member to assist the Chief of the Town". Such a person had, in fact, been already nominated, but the newly formed Society was asked to approve him. One object of the Society was "to give hand to the Makamba Elder elected to the Chief's Council".¹ In 1960 the Society changed its name to Nakuru Makamba Society. The Society steadily increased its membership from eighteen in 1958 to eighty in 1960.² In 1962 it became a branch of the colony-wide New Makamba Union which had been in existence since 1961. It was in the crucial years before Independence that tribal unity and tribal "nationalism" were at their peak. This found expression in an address to the Nakuru branch by a national leader: "He pointed out that if all the Makamba within Nakuru would unite they would create a great nation... but if there was disunity it would mean great loss to the Makamba as a whole".³

The Abogusii of Nakuru originated from the Bantu cluster in the Kisii Highlands in South Nyanza. In 1950 there was the Kisii Youth Club and by August 1951/^{the} Kisii Union.⁴ The two organizations were closely linked, though there was apparently a certain amount of tension between them. An important task for both was to support the

(Minutes)

¹ R.S.A., File 1856, General Meeting, 3.10.1957; Constitution, 1957.

² R.S.A., File 1856, 1958-60.

³ R.S.A., File 1856, 1962.

⁴ N.M.E.S.D.F., N.A.W.N.R., June 1950; August, September 1951.

Kisii football team competing in the local league.¹ Between 1955 and 1957 the Union ceased to exist. A few officers resigned and no meetings were held for two years. In 1957 the Union was revived and in 1960 it became a branch of the Abagusii Union (E.A.).² The membership of the Union from 1957 to 1963, except for 1957 when it reached sixty-two, was between twenty and twenty-five.³

The Teso tribe formed a Nilotic-Hamitic cluster in the Abaluhya reserve on the Kenya-Uganda border. By 1952 the Teso tribesmen in Nakuru had entered a football team to the local league,⁴ and there must have been some sort of a tribal organization to support it. In 1957 the Nakuru Teso asked the D.C.'s permission to "renew" their Teso Union. In its aims the Union was very similar to the Nyanza associations.⁵

Other tribally or territorially based voluntary associations also developed, catering for non-Kenya Africans. In 1944 there was a Baganda Ngabo Association of the Baganda from Uganda. The Association had twenty members paying monthly fees, and dealt with questions relating to the welfare of Nakuru's Baganda. It also settled minor disputes between its members. We know of its existence only through its attempt to effect the repatriation of thirteen Ganda women, married and unmarried, who were alleged to have been prostitutes. The Association

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., Kisii Union to MAAO, 8.8.1952.

² R.S.A., File 693, Kisii Union to Registrar, 21.3.1957; E.A.S., 30.12.1960, p.6.

³ R.S.A., File 693, 1957-63. In 1961 there lived 301 Abagusii in Nakuru.

⁴ N.M.S.S.D.F., Downing League Table, 1952.

⁵ KN/D.C/Mku/Rep.2/167, V. Orya to D.C., May 1957. In 1962 there were 200 Teso in Nakuru.

requested the D.C. to repatriate those and all unemployed Ganda women. Ganda traditional society did not have the same attitudes towards the morals of their womenfolk, and unmarried girls in particular, as the Luo and the Abalukya. Individual land ownership and different bridewealth customs, made the descent groups much less interested in the marriage of their girls.¹ Baganda, however, had a strong sense of tribal or national identity, resulting largely from the position of the Kabaka and the centralized government which he headed. Living as a small minority in a foreign town must have made them more aware of their tribal identity and more sensitive to their tribal pride. Indeed, the first and probably the most important reason for asking for the repatriation of the Ganda prostitutes was that "they are undertaking the shameful task in the face of public, bringing disgrace to our country".² The Association's attempt seems to have failed, mainly due to the uncooperative attitude of the Uganda authorities. There was no further mention of the Association. In 1950-2 when more information about tribal associations becomes available it does not appear in the records. This, however, is no proof of its disappearance since a small association could evade the attention of the authorities. In 1961 there is one mention of a Uganda African Union meeting in Nakuru, for which no further details are available.³

Parkin found no tribal associations of centralized tribes in Kampala. For the Baganda he found no evidence that they had ever established such associations in either Kisumu or Nairobi, where they lived as small minorities far from their home. His explanation for

¹ D. Parkin, *Neighbours*, p. 92.

² KMA/D.C./WOM/dep.2/74, Baganda Ngabo Association Nakuru to D.C., 12.9.1944; D.C. to The Resident of Baganda, Kampala, 7.10.1944.

³ KMA, Nakuru Municipal Social Services Department Monthly Report, September 1961.

the difference of their response from that of segmentary tribes is that "Migrants from centralized tribes are already familiar with both political and economic specializations and relatively marked socio-economic status systems. They continue to accept and carry over into the urban situation their positions in an established rural hierarchy. They have little need to reorganize an urban framework and do not, therefore, establish tribal associations. Problems of mutual aid continue to be referred to informal networks of kin and others." Anthropologists studying West African towns come to similar conclusions.¹ While it is not suggested that the evidence for the existence of a Baganda association can on its own alter the conclusions of exhaustive studies, Nakuru is at least an interesting exception. In Nakuru, the fact that the Baganda Ngabo Association dealt with similar problems to those of the Nyanza tribal associations is significant. It may point out that the need for mutual help, intimacy and a sense of identity in a ^{strange} environment can become universal.

The need for a formal system of welfare and social interaction drove Africans in Nakuru to organize themselves in territorial associations having no tribal common denominator, as in the case of Tanganyika Africans. Being a small minority in a foreign country, they found their territorial origin a useful basis for establishing an association on the same lines of a tribal association. As in the case of the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin, the formation of the Tanganyika Union was precipitated by the Advisory Council's initiative in 1948, regarding the question of prostitution. Soon after this, in February

¹ D. Parkin, Voluntary Associations, pp. 92-4.

1949, the Union objected to issuing residence permits to fifteen prostitutes from Tanganyika: "It is not our aim to help the women who deserted from Tanganyika and came to Nakuru to do their shameful business."¹ It may have been an expression of national pride and solidarity developing in a minority community in self-inflicted exile. In 1957 the Tanganyika African Brotherhood, presumably the Union's successor, was formed and existed at least until independence. Its aims were mainly related to the welfare of its members. Its first aim was "to create and strengthen unity and help each other to unavoidable difficulties between all African members from Tanganyika."²

In 1951 there is evidence for an East African Ethiopian Association. The Administration was unhappy with the Association because its chairman dealt with petty disputes without authority. He also persuaded Ethiopian tribesmen like the Boran, some of whom were, in fact, Kenyan residents, to demand non-Native status and to refuse to register as natives.³ This was reminiscent of the Somali campaign for Asian status. By 1946 Nakuru's Ethiopian community appealed to the Chief Secretary of the colony regarding their status: "We request the Government that we be treated as on at least the Asiatic scale, being neither Europeans nor Arabs or Natives." Their request was based on a claim to superior socio-economic position in relation to Kenya Africans.⁴ In the early 1950s the Sudanese residents of Nakuru had

¹N.H.S.S.D.F., Tanganyika Union to MAAG, 7.2.1949.

²R.S.A., File 1586, 1957-63.

³KNA/HDAR, 1951, p.27.. N.H.S.S.D.F., N.A.S.M.R., December 1951.

⁴KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/200, Members of the Abyssinian community, Nakuru, to Chief Secretary, 27.3.1946.

an association which was primarily active as a dancing club.¹

From Uganda there was also the Adhola Association catering for the Nilotic Adhola people.²

In 1958 the Coloured Welfare Society was formed in Nakuru.

The Coloured comprised those born to racially mixed parents. This inclusive gathering had its own exclusiveness. Its aim was:

"To unite all the members of the Coloured community in Kenya, one of the parents is an originated or descended African of East Africa and the second being originated from European or Asia. Europe - includes America [sic].³ Its other aims followed closely on the tribal associations' example: assistance in funeral, education and promotion of social activities.

The tribal associations with their modest beginnings in the second decade of the century, had an impressive career. They began as a response of migrants from Nyanza to their new urban experience and developed into a system potentially embracing almost the entire African population of Nakuru. One of the most important aspects of the development of tribal associations was their dynamism. Despite their weaknesses and ups and downs they constantly gained momentum improving their performance and adjusting themselves to the rapidly changing circumstances. Neither the intensive social change to which

¹ N.M.E.G.D.F., N.A.W.M.R., December 1951, August 1951.

² R.S.A., File 1589..

³ R.S.A., File 21828, 1958.

urban Africans were subject, nor the political developments which engulfed them, blocked their progress. Tribal associations became a permanent feature of African life in the town, because they responded to genuine needs. They were, however, only one facet of a spectrum of African urban responses. There were aspects of urban life with which tribal associations were most qualified and equipped to deal. There were other important aspects generated by the impact of urban conditions and the economic and political realities which called for action/organization based on different and broader urban categories. An attempt will be made in the following chapters to deal with these aspects and the organizational response which they stimulated.

Chapter TwoNAKURU AFRICANS' URBAN ROLEAfrican Migration to and Employment in Nakuru

Up-country tribesmen came to Nakuru and other towns to participate in the modern economy. The urban situation was of great importance to them, since it determined both their living conditions during their stay in town and their share in the town's prosperity. It is not therefore surprising that the behaviour and patterns of organization of Africans in Nakuru came to be largely dominated by the urban environment.

Up-country tribesmen responded hesitantly to the economic opportunities offered by the towns. The transition from small-scale, face-to-face societies regulating all aspects of their lives to the impersonal, insecure urban life was not easy. In terms of social preference many, if not most, of the up-country Africans who came to Nakuru remained tribesmen for a long time. As such they came to town to begin with, primarily as migrant wage earners.

While the sources do not allow a comprehensive tracing of the patterns of African migration to Nakuru and African employment in the town, recording the major trends is clearly necessary. African migration from reserves to towns was regulated by two main factors. Firstly there was the natural wish to share the widely reputed benefits of the towns' economy. Motives here ranged from the need to pay taxes and to purchase basic tools and goods on the one hand, to the determination of individuals to secure regular cash incomes as supplements to, or substitute for, rural subsistence, on the other. The balance between population and the carrying capacity of the land was an important determinant of African migration from the reserves. There was, however, also a positive urge among educated and uneducated tribesmen to migrate to towns to improve their standards of living.

Secondly, since so many Africans came to town as wage earners, the demand for their labour was also a significant regulator of migration. The policy of Government and the local authority was to permit residence only to Africans having legitimate sources of income. The Control of Persons By-laws to regulate the African population were first passed by the Nakuru Municipal Board (NMB) in 1931.¹ Paragraph 3 of the By-law stipulated that: "No native shall remain within the Municipality of Nakuru for a longer period than thirty six hours (excluding from this period Sundays and Public holidays) without employment within the Municipality (the onus of proof is on such native) unless he shall have obtained from the Town Clerk a resident's or Visitor's permit as hereinafter provided for nor shall such native remain within the Municipality without employment after the expiry of the permit." In 1947 the Municipal Works Superintendent who was in charge of "African Affairs" in Nakuru emphasized that in fact employed Africans did not have to possess residents' permits.² Repeated attempts were made during the 1930s to clear the town of 'loafers'.³ With the increase in the number of self-employed and unemployed Africans during the 1940s this became difficult. By 1950 the Control of Persons By-laws had become inoperable and the Municipal Board urged the Commissioner for Local Government to again ensure that these By-laws were enforced. The NMB was alarmed by the increase in the number of 'undesirable' Africans and in the meantime the Police were arresting such Africans mainly for staying on premises without permission.⁴

¹ Kenya Commissioner for Local Government, Land and Settlement Annual Report, 1931, p.19.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., Works Superintendent to Police, 31.10.1947.

³ EAS, 4.1.1933, p.15; 13.3.1938, p.30.

⁴ EAS, 2.9.1950, p.1.

During 1952-60, the Emergency years, the task of controlling Makuru Africans was easier with the special powers and the men at the disposal of the security forces. In the early 1960s, with the emergency restrictions on the Kikuyu removed, Makuru and other towns in the Rift Valley Province (RVP), were flooded by Kikuyu from the reserve. The system of control and regulation of the African population completely collapsed, and the number of Africans without visible means of support increased considerably.¹

In 1948 Africans employed in Makuru formed just under 80% of the total African population of the town.² In 1962 just over 30% of Makuru's Africans were employed.³ In fact, in 1962 there were only one-hundred and thirty-six more Africans in employment than in 1948. The demand for African labour in Makuru was far from stable. During the 1930s when the town's economy was stagnant, a slight decrease in the African population reflected the reduced demand for labour.⁴ During the 1940s, and after the war in particular, with the rapid expansion of Makuru's economy, there was a sharp increase in the demand for labour. During the 1950s the number of employed Africans rose to a peak of 16,700 in 1956, subsequently to fall steadily, reaching a nadir of 9,900 in 1961.⁵ This decrease reflected the slowing down of economic activity resulting from political uncertainty and a growing sense of insecurity amongst expatriates.

¹ KMA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/154, Makuru District Monthly Report (MDMR), July 1961, p.6.

² Report on African Labour Census, 1948, tables 3, 12. M.Tamarkin, "Tribal Associations, Tribal Solidarity and Tribal Chauvinism in a Kenya Town", Journal of African History, XIV, 2(1973), p.258. The African population was 12,845 in 1948.

³ Reported Employment and Earnings in Kenya, 29.6.1962, Appendix A, table IV. M.Tamarkin, op.cit., p.258. The African population was 30,189 in 1962.

⁴ M.Tamarkin, op.cit., p.258.

⁵ Statistical Abstract, 1955-62; 1955, table 158; 1956, table 172;

Similarly, the supply of labour could not always be taken for granted despite the obvious attractions of wage-earning in town. In 1946, for example, the NMB had to rely on prisoners and detainees to carry out urgent work, because labour was difficult to obtain. In that year, despite its efforts, the NMB was able to recruit only 60-65% of the required night-soil staff. The position in 1947 was similar.¹ This evidence, of course, does not represent the overall labour supply position in those years since the jobs involved were particularly unappealing. In early 1951 there was an ample supply of house-boys, office-boys, clerks and artisans.² Most of these, however, were relatively attractive jobs. In September 1952 there was an acute shortage of manual workers.³ In late 1953 there was a shortage of all types of domestic servant, and sweepers were altogether unobtainable. According to the report "there is no unemployment in Nakuru whatsoever for anybody who wishes to work".⁴ The declaration of the State of Emergency in October 1952, and the subsequent eviction of many Kikuyu from the RVP, further aggravated the labour shortage.

The supply from Nyanza Province, a labour-pool for Kenya as a whole, was at times limited. In 1954 a building construction firm was unable to recruit a hundred workers from that province.⁵ In early

1957, table 170; 1958, table 170; 1959, table 144; 1960, table 142; 1961, table 145.

¹ NMB, Municipal Annual Report (MAR), 1946, pp. 5-9; 1947, p.6.

² KMA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/385, Senior Labour Officer (S.L.O.), R.V.P. Report, January 1951, p.1.

³ KMA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/387, Nakuru Labour Report, September 1952, p.1.

⁴ KMA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/387, Nakuru Quarterly Labour Report, fourth quarter 1953, pp. 1-2.

⁵ KMA/D.C/Mku/5/2, Technical Ltd. to D.C., 7.6.1954.

1955 the Nakuru Municipal Council was unable to establish a stable labour force for its water scheme.¹ In the middle of that year of full employment there was a shortage of labour throughout Nakuru District.² In 1956 the supply of labour from Nyanza Province decreased, apparently because tribesmen in the reserves, suspicious of Government land policy, feared to leave their homes.³

But by early 1958, with demand falling rapidly, the supply of labour was excessive in the RVP's rural and urban areas. According to the Labour Report "even the most unpopular employers and most unpopular places of employment report that now they have sufficient labour perhaps for the first time in their history." Faced with a situation of shrinking demand for their labour, and aware that their chances of securing re-employment were slim, many workers, who might otherwise have returned to the reserve, chose to stick to their jobs. This in turn further reduced the demand for labour. In the early 1960s, following the revocation of the State of Emergency in January 1960, the balance between labour supply and demand was further disrupted as a result of the Kikuyu influx to the RVP. For the first time in the history of Nakuru, unemployment and the social problems generated by it caused alarm.⁵

¹ EAS, 28.1.1955, p.12.

² KNA/P.C/MCU/dep.2/840, S.L.O., R.V.P. Report, June 1955, p.1.

³ KNA/D.C/MCU/dep.2/387, Nakuru Labour Report, May 1956.

⁴ KNA/P.C/MCU/dep.2/840, S.L.O., R.V.P. Report, March 1958, p.1.

⁵ EAS, 27.5.1960, p.17; 27.10.1961, p.17; 1.12.1961; 17.1.1962.
KNA, Nakuru District, Handing Over Report, Howard to Brown 1962, p.1.
KNA/D.C/MCU/dep.2/154, NDMR, July 1963, p.6.

An important factor determining the type of African migration to Nakuru was the structure of job opportunities in the town. Firstly, Nakuru was characterized by a high proportion of African employment in the public sector compared with the private sector. In 1948 it had the highest percentage of African males employed in the public sector among the five main Kenya urban centres. The public sector employed 5,305 African males compared with a private sector employing only 3,996.¹ Although it is possible that this position changed during the economic expansion of the first half of the 1950s it does not seem to have been significantly altered by 1962.²

Both public and private sectors offered predominantly unskilled jobs. In the public sector the biggest employer, the East African Railway and Harbours (EA&H), mainly employed manual workers, as did the Public Works Department, the African Provincial Hospital, and the Municipal and County Councils. In the private sector for which there is adequate data the picture is very clear. In 1947 the imbalance between unskilled workers on the one hand and semi-skilled and skilled workers on the other was considerable.³ The position in the following year remained much the same.⁴ The proportions could not have changed markedly during the 1950s and the early 1960s since the basic structure of African job opportunities remained unaltered.

Due to insufficient information it is impossible to make a

¹ Report on African Labour Census, 26.11.1948, tables 1, 11.

² Reported Employment and Earnings in Kenya, 29.6.1962, Appendix A, tables IV and V.

³ Report on African Labour Census, 28.11.1947, table 2: Total employed by private sector - 3,371, unskilled workers - 1,203, domestic servants - 863, shop, office and store boys - 426, semi-skilled labourers - 226, masons and stone dressers - 333, drivers - 62, mechanics - 42, carpenters - 26, factory skilled worker - 58, other trained skilled workers - 43, clerical staff - 91.

⁴ Report on African Labour Census, 26.11.1948, table 10. There is no data on job distribution in Nakuru for subsequent years.

comprehensive study of the methods of labour recruitment for Nakuru. On the whole it seems that employers had to fend for themselves. The earliest record - of 1912-3 - tells of the methods of labour recruitment used by Nakuru's employers at that time; a European employer sent some of his headmen to the Kikuyu reserve to recruit labour and the employer's brother himself travelled to Kisumu to recruit Kavirondo tribesmen.¹ An Asian employer, at the same time, normally recruited labour through his headmen but also made use of the services of a professional recruiter.² At this early stage when Africans showed little enthusiasm for work in the towns, labour recruitment largely depended upon the employers' initiative in the different reserves which served as labour pools. In later periods many Africans were drawn by the town's cash economy and were recruited in the town. But even then recruitment in the reserve was necessary. The whole system of visitors' permits was largely devised to enable the newcomers to seek employment. In 1939 the municipal Works Superintendent, who was also in charge of "native affairs", reported that he personally saw every African who applied for a visitor's permit. If they were not genuinely seeking work their permit was destroyed and the Police were asked to turn them out of the town.³ In 1946, for example, the NMB on two occasions sent recruiters to Embu to obtain night-soil workers.⁴ In 1947 a recruiter was sent to Kakamega to obtain labour for the same unappealing

¹ P.E.C., CO 544. 5. Native Labour Commission, 1912-3. p.19.

² Ibid., p.127. Professional recruiters were European private entrepreneurs who were agents for labour recruitment in the African reserves.

³ NMA, Native Affairs Committee meeting, 22.11.1939. (Minutes)

⁴ NMA, MAR, 1946. p.9.

job.¹

The severe shortage of labour following the declaration of the State of Emergency, increased the employers' dependence on labour recruitment in the reserves. In 1953 much labour recruitment was undertaken in Nyanza Province and in the Kamba reserve in the main for both Nakuru District and town.² In the latter part of the 1950s and even more in the early 1960s, with growing unemployment there was no need to actively attract labour from the reserve. The problem was then rather how to cope with the increasing labour surplus. The African Labour Exchange which operated in Nakuru from 1950 handled only semi-skilled artisans and men in specialised employment,³ leaving the recruitment of unskilled labour to the employers.

There was an interesting correlation between tribal origin on the one hand and attitudes and opportunities for wage earning on the other. The first available data in 1947 reveals a marked difference in the pattern of employment between the Nyanza tribesmen and the Kikuyu. In a labour force of 7,878, 5,165 came from Nyanza Province⁴ and only 1,685 were Kikuyu, Kamba and Meru.⁵ In 1948, when the population census showed that the Kikuyu were by far the largest single tribes in Nakuru, the balance shifted further in favour of the Nyanza tribesmen.⁶ The data for 1954-60 reveals some changes in the pattern of tribal employment. From a peak of 10,566 in 1956 the number of Nyanza tribesmen in employment fell to 6,126 in 1960, and their percentage of the total

¹ KNA, MAR, 1947, p.8.

² Kenya African Affairs Department Annual Report, R.V.F., 1953, p.76. KNA/D.C/Mku/3/2, Technical Ltd. to E.C., 7.6.1954; KNA/P.C/Mku/dep.2/84C-5, L.O., R.V.F. Report, June 1955.

³ Notes on Commerce and Industry in Kenya, 1950, p.13.

⁴ These included Luo, Abaluhya and Kisii.

⁵ See Appendix III including Men, Women and Juveniles.

⁶ See Appendix III including Men, Women and Juveniles.

labour force fell from 68.7% in 1957, to 58% in 1960. The Kikuyu, on the other hand, improved their position; figures of Kikuyu in employment of 1,599 in 1954 rose to 2,281 in 1956, only to drop to 1,542 in 1958 and rise again to 2,728 in 1960. The percentage of Kikuyu of the total work force rose from 12.7% in 1954 to 26% in 1960.¹ Kikuyu were however still relatively under-represented in Nakuru's labour force.

While it is difficult to account fully for this pattern, some explanations may be proffered. During the first four decades of the century the up-country tribesmen who sought work in Nakuru were predominantly from Nyanza. In 1936 an official report stated that the majority of Africans in the town were Kavirondo, that is mainly Luo and Abaluhya.² They came to Nakuru largely as short-term, migrant workers maintaining the reserve as their home. They were interested in a rapid income and were not particular about the type of work, accepting the heavy, manual jobs offered by private and public sectors alike. Since such recruitment of labour, whether in the reserve or in town, was done on the basis of personal or tribal connections, this tendency tended to be perpetuated.

By the time the Kikuyu came to Nakuru in great numbers during the 1940s, the earlier pattern was well established. Additionally, the Kikuyu seem not to have been attracted by low-paid heavy jobs. Since many of them came to town, as early as the 1940s, as settlers, they preferred, whenever possible, to engage in petty trade. Petty trade, while not guaranteeing secure incomes, gave them more independence and the hope of a better future. Employers simplistically analysing the labour market, developed stereotypes according to which the Nyanza tribesmen

¹See Appendix III. For 1954 to 1960 the figures relate only to men.

²KNA, NDAR 1936, p.4.

were heavily built and strong, the Kikuyu were slender and weak and therefore unsuitable for the heavy duty jobs.¹

Employers like the EAR&H or the Kenya Farmers Association (KFA) had predominantly Luo and Abaluhya labour forces.² In 1953 all the forty-four labourers and their headmen who went on strike in Unga Ltd. were Luo.³ Alkan observed situations in Uganda in which members of particular tribes prevented other tribesmen from obtaining jobs in places of employment which they dominated. In Uganda's baking industry, for example, the Luo created what amounted to a 'closed shop' by excluding anybody who was not of their tribe.⁴ While there is no direct evidence that this happened in Nakuru, the case of Unga Ltd. appears to have amounted to the same thing.

Grillo observed that the EAR&H's labour recruitment was influenced not only by tribal but also by kinship affiliation.⁵ In Nakuru we have seen the role of tribal association ~~at the sub-tribe and clan levels~~ in offering jobs to their members.⁶ This could result in a concentration of people from the same sub-tribe and even clan in certain places of employment or departments. There is some evidence that in the EAR&H in Nakuru, for instance, people from Gem Location dominated the goods-shed, whereas Alego sub-tribesmen were in the majority in the loco-shed.⁷ In

¹ W. Alkan, Migrants and Proletarians, CUP, London 1960, pp. 86-7. Alkan observed similar attitudes among Uganda people years before independence.

² R.D. Grillo, "The Tribal Factor in a Trade Union", in P.H. Gulliver (ed.), Tradition and Transition in East Africa, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1969, p.302. From 1945 to 1962 the Luo and Abaluhya accounted for just under 500/o of the EAR&H in Kenya as a whole. In Nakuru the proportion was even higher, work force of the

³ KN/P.O./Mm/5/2, Labour Officer, Nakuru, to Labour Commissioner, Nairobi, 8.9.1953.

⁴ W. Alkan, op.cit., p.88.

⁵ R.D. Grillo, op.cit., p.303.

⁶ See above, p.

⁷ Interview, E. Keso.

1935 sweepers were recruited from Embu District.¹ Night-soil and refuse removal workers were also predominantly from Embu District and to a lesser extent from the adjacent Nyeri District.²

African workers attracted to towns by the prospect of benefitting from the cash economy soon discovered that both their wages and conditions of living were far from good.³ The main consideration in determining African wages in the town was the bare minimum sufficient to attract Africans to urban employment. In 1946 the Kenya Government passed the Minimum Wage Ordinance. Amsden sees the origins of this Ordinance in a Colonial Office Circular Dispatch of 1941 which urged colonial governments to improve the standards of living amongst Africans "alike for humanitarian, political and economic reasons".⁴ The guiding principles, for the first time, were the needs of the African worker. The Minimum Wage Ordinance was first implemented in Nairobi and then in Mombasa and Kisumu. On 6 June 1948 it was introduced in Nakuru, and fixed monthly wages at shs. 34/- for ticket contract, shs. 29/- for other contracts and allowed a shs. 8/5 housing allowance for both categories.⁵ The minimum wage aimed at satisfying the needs of a bachelor occupying a single bed-space. In 1950, two years after the introduction of the minimum wage for Nakuru, when both wages and costs of living had not changed significantly, a study carried out in Nairobi suggested that the minimum wage was inadequate for even the barest needs of such a bachelor.⁶ While the cost of living was admittedly higher in

¹ NMA, Works and Health Committee (W&HC) meeting, 7.8.1935. (Minutes)

² NMA, MAR, 1946, p.9. N.M.S.S.D.F., Employment Register of Kikuyu, Embu and Meru, undated (between 1953-5).

³ The Report of the Commission of Inquiry appointed after the 1939 Mombasa strike stressed the inadequate wages and living conditions in that town. See C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, The Myth of Mau Mau, F.A. Fraser Publishers, New York 1966, pp. 183-5. Although this evidence applied to Mombasa specifically, it broadly reflected the conditions in urban centres in Kenya as a whole.

⁴ A.H. Amsden, International Firms and Labour in Kenya, 1945-70,

Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London 1971, pp. 112-13.

⁵ KNA/P.C/Nku/dept.2/840, Nakuru Labour Intelligence Report, September

Nairobi, the position in Nakuru was not much better.

The Mau Mau revolt precipitated a review of African wages. In 1955 Government introduced a dual scale of African minimum wages. The minimum wage of an adult African man aged twenty-one or more was designed to meet the needs of a married couple with three children, whereas the 'youth' wage for younger men replaced the bachelor wage.¹ From 1953 to 1956 the minimum wage of adult African men rose from Shs. 50/- to Shs. 77/30. It continued to rise steadily reaching Shs. 109/- in 1963.² Again, a study carried out in Nairobi in 1957 serves as an indicator of the position in Nakuru. The study showed that some 90% of the African wage earners in Nairobi could not balance income and consumption.³ The gap between African, and Asian and European wages remained very wide. In 1960, the estimated annual wage bill for private industry and commerce in Nakuru, highlighted the marked racial differentiation. Five thousand Africans earned £396,000, eight hundred Asians earned £609,000 and four hundred and sixty-two Europeans earned £419,000 per annum.⁴

Development of African Labour Organization

Nakuru's African workers, dissatisfied as they were with their wages and conditions of living, had no legitimate channels through which

1948. Kenya Labour Department Annual Report (KLDAR), 1950, p.6.

⁶ A.H. Ansdon, op.cit., p.13.

¹ A.H. Ansdon, op.cit., p.18.

² KLDAR 1954, p.51; 1963, p.5. Statistical Abstract, 1956-7, table 179, p.122; 1962, table 148, p.125.

³ M.A. Forrester, Kenya Today, The Hague 1962, p.125.

⁴ Reported Employment and Wages in Kenya in 1948-60, Appendix A, Table V.

to communicate their grievances and demands collectively, until trades unions and staff associations were formed in the latter part of the 1940s and the early 1950s. African workers had always had the alternative of desertion to express dissatisfaction with their working conditions. This, however, was futile since it hardly satisfied their basic need for cash. It reflected a desperate situation in which African workers had no say in the determination of their wage levels and working conditions. They were expected to rely on the goodwill of the employers and the services of the Labour Department which were somewhat expanded after the Second World War.

As early as 1921 the grievances of African workers in Nairobi were instrumental in the formation of Harry Thuku's East African Association. Indeed, in May 1921 there was talk in Nairobi of a general strike in reaction to the Government's intention to reduce African wages. But when a general strike was declared in March 1922 it was a protest against the arrest of Thuku rather than about workers' grievances.¹ By 1936 African workers discovered that they had bargaining power. They resorted to the only effective course of action open to them, that of collectively withholding their labour. In that year African workers, near Nairobi and in Asembo Bay on Lake Victoria, went on strike in pursuit of their demand for higher wages. The official view of these strikes was that "probably the main cause of the trouble was the growing realization among the Natives of Kavirondo that the increasing prosperity in their own Reserve and the increased demand for their services as labourers is giving them a bargaining power that they have hitherto lacked."² These strikes were followed in 1937 by other strikes in different parts of

East African Publishing House, Nairobi, 19

¹M. Singh, History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952, pp. 9-24.
 F. Furedi, The Development of Organized Politics Among the Kikuyu (M.A. thesis), SOAS, 1970.

²M. Singh, op.cit., p. 57.

Kenya.¹ This early phase of African industrial action culminated in 1939 with the impressive general strike in Mombasa.² During the war there were more African strikes in different parts of the colony.³ These early strikes were distinctive in that they were largely without formal organisation and the backing of African trade union organisation.

Makuru in the 1930s with its depressed economy and small African population offered little prospect for a successful strike action. It took time before African workers' dissatisfaction made an impact on local employers. In 1946 the NMB had to increase the wages of its night-soil staff because of "a small amount of dissatisfaction" among them. Some of the labourers who had been working for the Board for six to ten years had received no increase in their wages.⁴ But only as late as 1947 is there evidence of collective strike action by Makuru African workers. Early in May that year some hundred municipal labourers, mainly night-soil and refuse removal workers, staged a strike demanding a minimum wage of Shs. 60/- per month. Despite a shortage of such labour, the NMB did not give in, and discharged those who refused to return to work. The strikers were predominantly Embu and Kikuyu, which must have been the reason the NMB looked for replacements in Kakamega District.⁵ On 14 July 1948 about a hundred workers of the KFA went on strike because of dissatisfaction with their wages. Following an "excellent explanation" by the Labour Officer, called in by the

¹ N. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 83-94.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-9, 113-4, 116, 119, 121-3.

⁴ NMA, MAB, 1946, p. 9.

⁵ NMA, 2.5.1947, p. 1; NMA, MAB 1947, p. 8.

employer, the strikers agreed to go back to work.¹ In August 1948 eighteen labourers on strike in the East African Power and Lighting Company resumed duty as a result of the Labour Department's intervention.²

In the absence of negotiating machinery or other regular channels of communication between employers and their employees, direct action was the only way in which the latter could draw attention to their grievances. The introduction of strike action into the sphere of industrial relations in Nakuru was significant. It reflected a growing sense of solidarity among Africans, based on urban conditions and expectations. It also reflected the growing confidence of African workers, discovering their bargaining power in a period of increasing demand for their labour. Without formal labour organization these strikes must have evolved their own natural leadership. In the absence of trade unions, tribal solidarity reinforced industrial action, as is clear in the case of the Kikuyu-Kamba night-soil and refuse removal workers in 1947, and the Luo strikers in Unga Limited as late as 1953.

African workers in Nakuru, however, soon set out to form trade unions aimed at safeguarding their interest on a permanent and stable basis. It reflected an increase in labour stability in the town since only workers committed to long-term residence in the town could conceivably undertake such a challenging task.

The origins of African trade unionism in Nakuru date back to 1947.³ Nakuru was influenced by developments in Kenya's bigger urban centres, namely Nairobi and Mombasa, where African trade unions had been in existence since about 1945.⁴ The first stimulus came from a

¹ KNA/P.C./Nku/dep.2/840, Nakuru Labour Intelligence Report, July 1948, p.1.

² KNA/P.C./Nku/dep.2/840, Nakuru Labour Intelligence Report, August 1948, p.2.

³ The Trade Union Ordinance applying to all races came into force in Kenya in September 1937. See, M. Singh, op.cit., pp. 63-5.

⁴ For a full account of the development of African trade unions in the

a visit, in 1947, of Chage Kibachia, the leading organizer of the 1947 Mombasa general strike and the president of the Mombasa based African Workers' Federation. Riding the wave of the success of the Mombasa general strike, Kibachia toured the country preaching trade unionism to African workers and urging them to organize.¹ In his first visit to Nakuru, in April 1947, he brought with him John Mungai, the president of the Nairobi African Taxi Drivers Union.² In Nakuru they met civil servants, municipal workers and drivers, called on them to form trade unions and explained how to go about it. On 21 August 1947 Kibachia came back to follow up his original initiative, but before his planned meetings could take place he was arrested in Nakuru on the following day.³

Transport workers were the first to take up the challenge by forming a local branch of the Kenya Transport and Allied Workers Union (KTAWU) in 1947. That they were first was largely due to the initiative and encouragement of people like John Mungai and Fred Kubai, the main national leaders of the Union. According to one source the branch had about thirty members in 1947 and some hundred in 1952.⁴ In January 1949 the African Carpenters Rift Valley Union was launched in Nakuru and was registered in November that year.⁵ In July 1952 the Domestic and Hotel Workers Union (D&HWU) established a branch in Nakuru.⁶ In July 1952 the general secretary of the Tailors, Tent, Sailmakers and Garment

immediate post-war years, see M. Singh, op.cit., pp. 125-60.

¹ C.G. Kosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., pp. 208-10.

² In mid-1947 this union changed its name to the Kenya Road Transport and Mechanics Union and later to the Kenya Transport and Allied Workers Union.

³ Interview: Chage Kibachia. M. Singh, op.cit., pp. 156-7. His arrest had no specific connection with Nakuru. He was arrested for "conducting himself so as to be dangerous to peace and good order".

⁴ Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

⁵ N.M.S.S.D.F., S.L.O. R.V.P. to Trade Union Labour Officer, Nairobi, 5.1.1949. It changed its name to the Kenya Carpenters and Masons Union (KCMU) in 1950. N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWMU, July 1952. KMA/D.C/10ku/5/2. S.L.O., R.V.P.

Workers Union came to Nakuru to set up a branch which was functioning by February 1953.¹

These organizations in Nakuru formed part of the pre-emergency phase of the development of Kenyan trade unionism. In the main sphere of trade union activity, namely improving workers' conditions and protecting their interests vis à vis employers, Nakuru's unions could not claim much success. Nakuru, at the centre of the White Highlands and under the influence of a dense settler community, was hardly congenial place for African trade union activity. Settlers strongly opposed the idea of unions representing African workers and bargaining collectively on their behalf.² In Nakuru there were big employers like the KPA, Unga Ltd. or the Nakuru County Council which were directly controlled by settlers. In fact, the economy of the town as a whole depended upon its settler-dominated agricultural hinterland.

Although unions were legally registered and supervised by the Labour Department, most employers refused to recognize them or to negotiate with them directly. If a trade union official wanted to take up an individual or collective grievance, he had to do so through the Labour officer. Union officials were not permitted to contact workers on the shop-floor or to operate there in any way. Recruitment and fee collection, for example, had to be carried out after working hours.

There were, additionally, inherent difficulties which prevented Nakuru's trade unions from becoming effective. Migrant workers, who at that time still accounted for a large proportion of Nakuru's African

Intelligence Summary, August 1952. The D.&E.W.U. included hotel-workers catering-workers and domestic servants.

¹ KNA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/387, Nakuru Labour Officer, Report (MLR), July 1952. N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWMR, February 1953.

² A.H. Amedon, op.cit., p.30. M.Singh, op.cit., pp.190-6.

labour force, were seldom potentially active trade unionists. They had no long-term interests in the town or in their employment. Furthermore, African tradesunions in Kenya, at that stage, were completely new ventures whose potential benefits were still to be proved.

The task of organizing tradesunions was particularly difficult since until 1945 Africans in Nakuru were accustomed to voluntary organizations based exclusively on tribal origins and kinship ties. The local branch of the Kenya African Union exemplified the teething problems and difficulties facing voluntary inter-tribal organizations in the immediate post-war period.¹ At the grass-roots level in particular, there was a large measure of mistrust and animosity between members of different tribes, stemming from differences in language and custom and accentuated by the mixed town environment. There was, for example, in 1947, a vicious running battle in the African Location between Luo and Kikuyu.² Under these circumstances the task of promoting inter-tribal workers' solidarity and co-operation was all the more difficult, and this was exacerbated by the fact that at that stage the T&AWU, the K&AMU and the D&HWU in Nakuru were largely controlled by Kikuyu. At a meeting of the D&HWU on 3 August 1952 African workers of all tribes were urged to join the Union. It was stressed that the Union was not a Kikuyu organization and that the feud between the Kikuyu and the Luo was over.³ At another workers' meeting in the same month drivers of all tribes were asked to become members of the T&AWU.⁴

¹ See below, pp.

² M. Tamarkin, op. cit., pp. 265-6.

³ KAU/B.C/Mau/5/2, Nakuru Labour Intelligence Report, August 1952.

⁴ Ibid.

The task of converting tribesmen into trade unionists was not made easier by the constitutions of Nakuru's pre-emergency trade unions. The criterion of membership being occupational, these unions operated among groups of workers scattered in many small places of employment. The element of familiarity, which might have helped to overcome tribal barriers, was thus often absent. For workers employed by a common employer, the concept of shared interests as employees was much more tangible. Workers employed by big public employers like the URBH or the NCB were not organized in trade unions in the pre-emergency period. The running of trade unions among scattered groups of workers presented many organizational problems to the unions' leadership. In the small places of employment, African workers felt exposed and could therefore be intimidated or actively discouraged from joining a trade union. Such a situation could hardly produce fearless and dedicated trade unionists. The most exposed were the trade union officials. In the case of the URBWU, the names of most committee members were apparently kept secret.¹

Recruitment of suitable leadership was another problem faced by the early trade unions. There was a severe shortage of educated and experienced leaders who could efficiently run the unions and face the employers and Labour Department. Some did have leadership experience. One of the founders of the TEAWU branch was also the secretary of the banned Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) in Nakuru.² The chairman of the KCBMU was a militant KCA leader and one of his committee members was the leader of the KCA young militants.³ Their qualifications,

¹ Interview: W. Kirubi.

² Interview: D. W. Mutungi. See below, pp.

³ Interview: W. Rugi. N.M.S.E.D.F., S.L.C., R.V.P. to D.C., 1952, 1949.

however, for leadership in complex trade union organizations were far from adequate.

Nakuru's pre-Emergency trade unions found themselves caught in a vicious circle which they were unable to break. Workers had to be convinced that unions could improve wages and conditions and deal effectively with individual grievances before a large membership could be recruited. In the absence of effective industrial machinery, strike action was the only way of pursuing workers' demands and convincing them that trade unions were useful organizations. Because of their weakness, however, they were often unable to take such action; in that period there was not one strike in which a local trade union was involved. Contrary to what Singh says,¹ Nakuru's trade unions did not take part in the national general strike of May 1950.² Expressions of dissatisfaction with conditions of employment and strikes continued to be largely unorganized and within the framework of single places of employment, where shared problems and familiarity made common action easier to achieve. This factor was of prime importance in the strikes of the Nakuru Press workers in November 1950,³ the Luo workers in Unga Ltd. in 1953,⁴ and the labourers of the construction company constructing the Malwa Water Scheme as late as 1954.⁵

¹ M. Singh, op.cit., pp. 272, 274, 277.

² KNA/D.C/MCU/dep.2/386, Nakuru Labour Inspector Intelligence Report, May 1950, p.2. S.L.O., R.V.P., Intelligence Report, May 1950. Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

³ KNA/D.C/MCU/dep.2/386, Nakuru Labour Inspector Intelligence Report, November 1950.

⁴ See above, p.

⁵ KNA/D.C/MCU/dep.2/387, M.L.O.R., December 1954.

Unable to face the employers and improve the lot of their members, Nakuru's trade unions had to satisfy themselves with the role of preaching trade unionism to African workers and articulating their grievances and demands. At a meeting of the D&HwU in August 1952 "speakers discussed the usual points about low wages, bad housing conditions and the inability of Africans to clothe and feed their families adequately on present wage scales." They also advocated that the expression "boy" be replaced by "waiter" and that jacket and long trousers replace the kanzu as the waiters' uniform.¹ The need for higher wages was also stressed by all speakers at meetings of the KCMU and the T&AWU held in July 1952.² It was a tenet of the new faith that by organising and preaching the basis was laid for the future extension of the scope of trade union activities.³

Some unions, anxious to help their members, developed welfare functions similar to those performed by tribal associations. One of the expressed aims of the KCMU was "to try and organize a fund for proper burial of members of the Union". The question of this fund was repeatedly on the agenda of the Union's meetings.⁴ The T&AWU helped members who lost their jobs, who fell ill or had other misfortunes. They also organised dances for their members.⁵ The D&HwU was similarly engaged.⁶

¹ KNA/D.C./Wku/Adp/5/2, Nakuru Labour Officer, Intelligence Summary, August 1952.

² KNA/D.C./Wku/dep.2/387, K.L.O.R., July 1952.

³ Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

⁴ N.H.S.S.D.F., African Carpenters and Masons Rift Valley Union to D.C., 21.11.1949; KCMU to A.S.P., Nakuru, 13.5.1950, 2.6.1950, 3.7.1950, 2.10.1950.

⁵ Interview: D.W. Mutungi, N.H.S.S.D.F., NAKHR, February, May 1950; November 1951; June 1952.

⁶ Interview: W. Kirubi.

Asden points out that in their attempts to provide social benefits to their members, trades unions in Kenya were, in fact, competing with the tribal associations which had a more attractive basis and were easier to manage. "Indeed," she says, "the provision of friendly benefits by tribal associations effectively robbed the unions of a potential attraction for members."¹ This could well apply in the case of the Nyanza tribesmen, the pioneers of tribal associations, who formed the bulk of the Nakuru labour force. It may partly explain why they did not play an important role in the early phase of trade union development. But it was not so in the case of the Kikuyu, whose tribal associations were less developed and dealt to a much lesser extent with social welfare. This may suggest why Kikuyu, more than other tribesmen in Nakuru, were attracted to the early trades unions.

Kikuyu prominence in pre-emergency trade unionism must also be seen in a wider context. After the war large sections of the Kikuyu tribe went through a phase of growing political militancy.² While unions in Nakuru because of their weakness, could not be used for obvious political purposes, trade unionism could be conceived as one facet of a wider political struggle. The involvement of some KAU leaders in the leadership of some of Nakuru's trades unions was, in this respect, significant. In addition, many Kikuyu, even ordinary working men, were becoming in that period increasingly committed to urban life. Involvement in trades unions may thus be regarded as a concomitant of African urbanization. Nyanza tribesmen at that period were still largely migrants, with their interests centred on the reserve. They were much less "politically" inclined, concentrating their activities in their multifarious tribal associations.

¹ A.M. Asden, *op.cit.*, p.41.

² See below, pp.

Although Nakuru's trades unions were at this early period rather ineffective, they did function and did make some headway. The KCMU held numerous meetings during 1950-2. At one particular meeting they attracted a crowd of four hundred.¹ The T&MU had two hundred and fifty people at a meeting in July 1952, and the M&WU attracted two hundred and three hundred people respectively to two consecutive meetings in July and August 1952.² These attendance figures were more than most tribal associations could claim at the same period.

The Government was far from happy with the way trades unions in Kenya were developing. It was disturbed by involvement of union leaders in politics. Indeed, the boycott of Nairobi's "Charter Day" celebrations in March 1950 and the general strike of May 1950 following the arrest of M. Singh and F. Kibai, highlighted the intention of union leaders not to separate trade unionism from nationalist politics.³ By arresting Chega Kibachia in 1947 and Kibai and Singh in 1950 Government demonstrated its determination to dictate the nature and pace of trade union development. In 1949 the Labour Department, for its part, found some trades unions inadequate: "Certain registered trades unions are finding difficulty in functioning as a trade union should."⁴ Its expressed policy was, consequently, to encourage the formation of staff associations as a preliminary to the advent of adequate trades unions.⁵

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., NAKURU, March 1950 - October 1952.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., NAKURU, July, August 1952.

³ M. Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 238-320. C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, pp.240-1. These two events had no impact on Nakuru's trades unions.

⁴ KLDAR, 1949, p.25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

Staff associations soon became an integral part of a system of regulating industrial relations, which came to be regarded, by employers at least, as a substitute for, rather than the forerunner of, collective bargaining by fully fledged trades unions. This system, the joint consultative machinery, was introduced in Nakuru in 1950 as a means of promoting understanding and co-operation between management and workers.¹ The idea behind it was that joint consultation could solve differences between employers and workers amicably and without resort to conflict. Strike action was obviously foreign to this system.

Whereas the trades unions of the pre-emergency period were based on occupation in many places of employment, staff associations were, by definition, small-scale. House Unions confined to employees of common employers. The first of such to appear in Nakuru in 1949 was the Public Works Department Staff Association.² By 1950 there was a non-European Staff Union in the KFA which included both African and Asian employees. It was apparently controlled by the Asians who concentrated upon their own interests.³ In December 1950 a meeting of KFA employees was held, in which the functions of the joint staff consultative machinery was explained.⁴ By March 1951 the Railway African Staff Union had been formed.⁵ By July 1951, the Government Servants

¹KNA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/386, S.L.O., R.V.P., Intelligence Report, February 1950, p.2. A.H. Mason, op.cit., pp. 35-41.

²KLDAR, 1949, p.24.

³KNA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/386, S.L.O., R.V.P. Report, July 1950. Interview: W. Nendwa.

⁴KNA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/387, M.L.R., December 1950.

⁵K.H.S.E.D.F., M.M.R., July 1951.

Association had also been established.¹ When in mid-1952 a Joint Staff Council was formed in Nakuru Industries, the Kenya Industrial Relations Officer explained to the employees' representatives the working of the consultative machinery.²

The Nakuru Municipal African Staff Association, probably the most active association, was formed in March 1950.³ Its first officers were drawn mainly from the ranks of the senior African staff, and items discussed at the first meeting mainly concerned the conditions of this group of employees.⁴ Later that year the Association's committee consisted of representatives of six different categories of municipal employees.⁵ In 1951 eleven groups of municipal workers seem to have been represented on the committee.⁶ The Joint Staff Committee of the NMB was inaugurated in June 1952. It consisted of three European municipal councillors, the Town Clerk and three representatives of the African staff association. In the expressed functions of the Joint Staff Committee, the emphasis was laid on good relations, co-operations, efficiency and settlement of grievances. There was no mention of conflict of interests or a possibility of strike action.⁷

Organizationally, operating within the framework of a single place of employment, staff associations had certain advantages over trade unions based on occupation. The common employer presented a more tangible focus for labour organization. There was a greater degree of

¹N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWPR, July 1951.

²KMA/D.C/Mmu/dep.2/387, MLOR, June 1952.

³N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of Nakuru Municipal Staff Association meeting, 19.3.1950.

⁴Ibid.

⁵N.M.S.S.D.F., a letter to the African Board's Committee, 5.5.1950.

⁶N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWPR, September 1951.

⁷N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of inaugural meeting of the Joint Staff Committee, 3.6.1952.

familiarity and intimacy in these associations which helped African workers to overcome tribal barriers. For the same reason, staff associations were easier to run since communication between leadership and grass-roots was that much simpler. Having the sanction and encouragement of both the Government and the employer was, organizationally, another asset. They could operate within the employment system, their members being free of fears and intimidation. Taking the example of the Municipal African Staff Association, the quality of leadership, in terms of education and position at work, was fairly high. Since the employer's attitude towards the staff association was favourable, some of the most able and educated employees, who might otherwise have been timid, joined the association's leadership.

But for all these organizational advantages staff associations were powerless in their relations with the employers. They were able to formulate their demands, to present them to the employer and argue them, but they could exert little pressure on the employer to comply with their requests. In the most important question of improving wages and working conditions, they were completely dependent on the goodwill of employers. As seen earlier, Nakuru's trades unions at that period were not doing much better. But the African staff association, while participating in the joint consultative machinery, consciously accepted the supremacy of the employer.

In the context of African urbanization, staff associations, like trades unions, served as platforms for inter-tribal co-operation. Significantly the chairman of the Railway African Staff Union in 1951-2 was a Kikuyu, although the majority of the employees were Luo and Abaluhya. In December 1951, in the election for the Union's representative to the Nakuru African Advisory Council, the Luo candidate was seconded by a Kikuyu although the rival candidate was the Kikuyu chairman.¹

¹ N.M.S.S.D.P., Railway African Staff Union to Nakuru African Advisory Council, 2.1.1952.

The leadership of the Nakuru Municipal African Staff Association was truly multi-tribal. In elections of officials support for candidates often came from across the tribal lines.¹

The declaration of the State of Emergency in October 1952 put an end to the first phase of trade union development in Nakuru. Some Kikuyu trade union leaders were arrested and others were afraid of involvement in any kind of organization. Although there was no Government action against trade unions as such, they virtually died out.² The vital role played by the Kikuyu in Nakuru's trade unions in the pre-Emergency period, was reflected in a Labour Officer's pessimistic comment in 1953: "... until the restriction on the Wakikuyu is lifted I do not think the position will become easier for Union members, however enthusiastic they are."³

The prospects for trade unionism, however, were not quite so gloomy. While trade unions were severely disrupted, staff associations, which continued to develop, functioned, in some cases, as stepping stones for future trade unions. The first union to emerge in this way during the Emergency was the Nakuru branch of the Kenya Local Government Workers Union (KLGWU). The leaders of the Nakuru Municipal African Staff Association, aware of their ineffectiveness in their relations with the employer, soon set out to transform the Association into a fully fledged trade union. An external stimulus was still needed to bring this transformation about. It was provided by the dynamism of Tom Mboya, the national general secretary of the KLGWU.⁴

¹ N.M.S.A.S.A.F., Minutes of Nakuru Municipal African Staff Association meeting, 21.9.1952.

² Interview: D.W. Mutungi, W. Kirubi.

³ K.M.A./D.C./Mau/dep.2/387, Nakuru Labour Quarterly Report, January-March 1953.

⁴ Interview: D. Mwasoye.

On 25 September 1953 a meeting of Nakuru African Local Government Staff Association, attended by about five hundred employees and addressed by Tom Mboya, resolved to disband the staff association and to merge with the KLGWU's local branch currently in the process of formation.¹ The Union expected that the Nakuru Municipal Council would recognise it as the legitimate representative of the African municipal workers. It hoped to replace the representatives of the staff association in the MMA's Joint Staff Committee. The Municipal Council, however, against the better judgement of the Commissioner for Local Government, decided that the defunct staff association should continue to provide the employees' representatives.² As late as 1955 the Municipal Council actively encouraged workers to remain in the staff association in preference to the Union.³ The Union badly needed recognition in order to break the vicious circle which constrained all the pre-emergency unions. Only by facing the employer in the Joint Staff Committee could they hope to demonstrate their usefulness to the work force.

The Municipal Council was, however, flogging a dead horse. They had managed to get a few senior African employees on their side in trying to revive the staff association. But the organizers could make little headway and in May 1955 they reported, with regret, their final failure: "It is our considered opinion that we would not serve any useful purpose by pretending to represent the workers while we actually do not. It appears to the three of us as though the workers in general have drifted back to the KLGWU."⁴ Indeed in April 1955 the Nakuru branch

¹ MMA/African Affairs Committee (AAC), W.M. Mathenge to A.S.P., Nakuru, 12.9.1953; Town Clerk (T.C.) to members of the AAC, 8.4.1954; T.Mboya to the Member for Local Government, 30.1.1954.

² MMA/AAC, Commissioner for Local Government to T.C., undated [Beginning of 1954?]. MMA/Joint Staff Council 1952-60, T.C., to S.L.O., R.V.P., 13.7.1954.

³ MMA/D.C/Mnu/dep.2/387, NLCB, February 1955.

⁴ MMA/Finance(Staff) Sub-Committee 1955-7, D.Muchai, chairman African

of the KIGWU claimed a membership of about five hundred out of a total of nearly nine hundred municipal employees. A Union meeting on the 28th of that month was attended by seven hundred people.¹ Although the Municipal Council continued to try to resist a change of policy,² they eventually had to yield to reality and accept the fact that the calm days of the tame staff association were over.

In June 1955, in connection with its revised terms of service, the Municipal Council agreed to ad hoc negotiations with the KIGWU branch.³ The Union took the opportunity to exhibit a much more determined stand in negotiation than the Council had been accustomed to. Backed by a meeting attended by between five and six hundred workers, the Union rejected the wage-scales offered by the Council and threatened the Municipal Council with industrial action unless it resumed negotiations.⁴ The Council was eventually forced, in August 1955, to recognize the Union "only as a negotiating body for African employees of the Council." This recognition was far from whole-hearted. The Council invited the non-Union members of its staff "to form an Association to ensure that their interests were fully represented".⁵ This was undoubtedly a divisive manoeuvre rather than genuine concern for the well-being of non-Union members. The Council knew that the Union was likely to achieve more for the municipal staff as a whole than a small and powerless staff association. Tom Mboya threatened the Municipal

Staff Association to T.C., 30.5.1955.

¹ KMA/D.C/Mmu/dep.2/387, N.L.O.R., April 1955.

² NMA, Minutes of Finance (Staff) Sub-Committee meeting, 10.6.1955.

³ KMA, NDAR, 1955, pp. 28-9. NMA, Minutes of Finance (Staff) Sub-Committee meeting, 7.6.1955, 22.6.1955, 30.6.1955.

⁴ NMA/AAC, KIGWU, Nakuru, to T.C., 29.6.1955. NMA/D.C/Mmu/dep.2/387, N.L.O.R., June 1955.

⁵ NMA/Joint Staff Council 1952-60, Ag. T.C. to T.Mboya, 1.9.1955.

Council with industrial action if they encouraged employees to revive the staff association.¹ In the face of the support given to the Union's stand by the Commissioner for Local Government and the Labour Department,² the Municipal Council had little choice; from September 1956 African employees were represented on the African Joint Staff Council by the Union's representatives.³ From then on the Union was able to bargain collectively and to take up the grievances of individual members.

The most difficult problem the Union had to deal with was the large scale dismissals of municipal employees who were declared redundant as a result of the Council's financial retrenchment from 1957 onwards and in 1957-8 in particular. At times the Union leaders tended to regard dismissals as a direct challenge to their authority. In 1957-8 although industrial action seemed imminent the basically moderate Union officials came to accept the inevitability of redundancies. In 1958, after lengthy negotiations with the municipal authorities the union achieved a marginal reduction in the extent of dismissals and the alleviation of the personal hardships involved.⁴

The prestige of the Union was not affected by its acceptance of the redundancies, and by 1961 it was able to claim, according to one source, a membership of almost the totality of the municipal African labour force.⁵ The fact that the KLGWU in Nakuru inherited the staff association's organization may, at least partly, explain its strength

¹ NMA/Finance (Staff) Sub-Committee 1952-7, T.Mboya to T.C., 12.9.1955.

² NMA, Minutes of Finance (Staff) Sub-Committee meeting, 3.12.1955 (Commissioner for Local Government to T.C., 16.12.1955 - attached to the meeting's agenda).

³ NMA/Joint Staff Council 1952-60, KLGWU to T.C., 1.9.1956.

⁴ NMA/Joint Staff Council 1952-60, KLGWU to T.Mboya, 26.7.1958, KLGWU's representatives to the African Joint Staff Council to T.C., 25.7.1958; KLGWU to T.C., 2.2.1960. NMA, Minutes of Joint Staff Council meeting, 30.9.1957. NMA/D.C./Mna/dep.2/154, NIME, July 1958. KLGWU, Staff Dismissals; comments by the KLGWU, 30.7.1958; Notes of a meeting between Union and Municipal Council's officials, 7.3.1963. NMA/P.C./Mna/dep.2/840, S.L.O., R.V.P. Report, September 1957, pp. 3-5; July 1958.

⁵ Interview: W.Kirubi.

and effectiveness. The Union's position was further strengthened by the introduction, in 1961, of a check-off system which considerably improved its finances.¹ Backed by wide support and encouraged by the more conducive atmosphere occasioned by the approach of independence, the Union was involved, throughout the early 1960s, in a series of trade disputes and hard bargaining with the Municipal Council over wages, other benefits and housing conditions. This time the gap between the assertive Union and the declining European-dominated Council was almost unbridgeable.² In the early 1960s the Union was also pressing for increased Africanization of municipal posts.³

The leadership of the KLGWU Nakuru branch was on the whole multi-tribal. In its early years, at the height of the Emergency, the Kikuyu were not forthcoming. In 1955 both the chairman and secretary were from Nyanza and the treasurer was a Mumbwa.⁴ Later that year a Kikuyu became the chairman. Union leaders apparently had some difficulties in convincing him to take the post.⁵ From then up to independence Kikuyu monopolised the post. Towards the end of the 1950s and in the early 1960s Kikuyu were in the majority of the branch leadership.⁶ This was not surprising since the Kikuyu accounted for a large proportion of the municipal labour force. The quality of the leadership was high.

¹ NMA, Minutes of African Joint Staff Council meeting, 14.9.1961.

² NMA/Finance (Staff) Sub-Committee 1961-5, Minutes of a meeting between KLGWU and Municipal Council, 17.1.1962; NMA/Staff Circulars 1962-5, Trade Dispute, 21.2.1962; Trade Dispute, 26.2.1964. EAS, 29.11.1963, p.7; 24.12.1963, p.1.

³ KLGWUF, copy of an unaddressed letter from KLGWU, 15.10.1963.

⁴ NMA, Minutes of Joint Staff Council meeting, 24.6.1963. Interview: W.Kirubi.

⁵ NMA/A.C, KLGWU to M.A.C, 1955.

⁶ Interview: D.Musonye.

⁷ Interview: W.Kirubi.

It included some of the most educated and capable Africans in the town.

Another well-organized and effective trade union in Nakuru was the Railway African Union (RAU). In 1953 its predecessor, the Railway African Staff Union, transformed itself into a trade union.¹ In 1956 it was described in an official report as a "moderate and healthy organisation whose relations with the Railway Administration are excellent."² In August 1959 the branch chairman showed the extent of Union control over the labour force when he helped put an end to a wild-cat strike by some forty workers.³ In November 1959 the RAU itself organized a strike which lasted for about two weeks.⁴ In January 1960 the Union's national general secretary, addressing railway workers in Nakuru, warned that another strike might be called.⁵ In October-November 1962, there were two strikes in the Engineering Section over a grievance against an Asian foreman. The RAU local branch threatened to spread the strike to the entire railway labour force in Nakuru.⁶

It may not have been coincidental that the two strongest trade unions in Nakuru, namely the NLCWU and the RAU, were direct successors of staff associations. These two unions also shared the advantage of operating within the framework of single places of employment. Other trades unions whose potential membership was scattered in different work-places had a more difficult task. In February 1955 the Labour

¹ KLDAR, 1953, p.13.

² KNA, NDAR, 1956, p.7.

³ KNA/D.C/Mku/5/2, Special Branch, Nakuru, to Special Branch, R.V.P., 19.8.1959.

⁴ KNA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/154, NDHR, November 1959.

⁵ KNA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/154, NDHR, January 1960, p.3.

⁶ EAS, 19.11.1962, p.1.

Officer reported that except for the KIGWU, trade unionism in Nakuru was "at a very low ebb".¹ It was in that year that other trades unions were either revived or formed, largely through the initiative and persistence of the national leadership of the various unions. In the prevailing atmosphere of the Emergency, African workers hesitated to join trades unions. They had to be reassured that trades unions were legal and that they had nothing to fear by joining them.² Even when this was overcome, the difficulties involved in organising scattered workers were accentuated by the low quality of the leadership of most unions in Nakuru.³ The stimulus from the national leadership was vital, but the local response often fell short of their expectations. In Nakuru, by 1960, there were branches of thirteen trades unions in addition to the KIGWU and the RAU.⁴ Most of them were formed between 1955 and 1960. They were on the whole weak and some can only be described as ephemeral.⁵ In 1961, however, progress was witnessed among Nakuru's trade union branches.⁶

Inadequate evidence regarding Nakuru's trades unions leadership allows only a suggestion of a trend in their tribal composition. The Emergency considerably reduced the number of Kikuyu in positions of leadership. The vacuum created by their absence was filled by members

¹ KNA/D.C/Mcu/dep.2/387, S.L.O., R.V.P. Report, February 1955.

² KNA/D.C/Mcu/dep.2/387, Report on a meeting of the Kenya Distributive and Commercial Workers' Union (KDCWU), Nakuru branch, 13.11.1955.

³ KNA, NDAB, 1957, p.28.

⁴ They were as follows: Kenya Distributive and Commercial Workers Union; Kenya Domestic and Hotel Workers Union; Tailors, Tent, Sailmakers and Carpent Workers Union; TBABU; E.A. Federation of Building and Construction Workers Union; Shoemakers Workmen's Union; Typographical Union of Kenya; Kenya Petroleum and Oil Workers Union; Tobacco, Brewing and Bottling Workers Union; Kenya National Union of Teachers; Kenya Civil Servants Union; Kenya Timber and Furniture Workers Union; Kenya Engineering Workers Union.

⁵ KNA/P.C/Mcu/dep.2/340, S.L.O., R.V.P. Report, April, November 1955; May, November 1956; July, August 1957; April 1958. KNA/D.C/Mcu/dep.2/387.

of other tribes, mainly Luo and Abalukya. The same process was also witnessed at the national level.¹ It was, however, more than a mere filling of a vacuum. During the 1950s the Nyanza tribesmen, who formed the bulk of Nakuru's labour force, were becoming more interested in the strictly urban aspects of their lives. Among them the changing balance between town and reserve was reflected in a growing stabilization at work. They showed a particular interest in trades unions which were perhaps the only sphere of urban life in which they achieved a prominent position. This was not surprising considering that they dominated many places of employment in Nakuru and taking into account the sense of tribal solidarity among the Luo and Abalukya in the town. The Kikuyu were able to recover their position in a union like the KLGWU because they were well represented in the municipal labour force, but on the whole they had to grow used to diminished prominence. When the restrictions of the Emergency were removed, the Kikuyu themselves showed a much keener interest in politics.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, as in the case of the KLGWU and the KAU, trades unions gained confidence in their relations with the employers and adopted a more forceful line. They resorted to strike action on legitimate trade union issues which were not, however, directly connected with wages and material conditions. In July 1961 the KAU advised members to strike if their demand to replace the kanju with white

June, July, November 1955; February, July 1956. KNA, NDAR, 1958, p.20; 1959, p.22. KNA/D.C/Mnu/sep.2/154, NDAR, June 1958, p.5; August 1958, p.6; January 1960; April 1960, p.1.

⁶KNA, NDAR 1961, p.18.

¹C.E.Lubembe, The Inside of Labour Movement in Kenya, Equatorial Publishers, Nairobi 1968, pp. 195-202.

jacket and trousers was not met.¹ They had not even dreamt of a strike when they had raised the same demand in 1952. The Kikuyu declared strikes because of insulting language used by a European supervisor,² and because of an assault on an African employee by an Asian foreman.³ In September 1962 the Nakuru branch of the Kenya Federation of Labour threatened to call a general strike throughout the NVP if farmers in Molo area carried out their threat to discharge all their Kikuyu employees.⁴ In July 1963 the local branch of the K.K. Federation of Building and Construction Workers Union went as far as trying to dictate to the Nakuru Municipal Council which contractor to engage. The Union delivered the following message to the Town Clerk: "If you have accepted this contractor for any future building, please withdraw his acceptance and we will submit to you the name of a preferable contractor. We would like to point out that if our request is ignored we will implement our master plan."⁵

With independence in sight, the uncertainties and dangers of militant industrial action were greatly reduced. Moreover, trades unions leaders and workers envisaged themselves playing a role in the national struggle, the employers forming part of the retreating colonial front. In 1961-3, when African national political leaders were making efforts

¹ KMA/D.O./Mau/dep.2/154, MIAER, July 1961.

² EAS, 8.12.1961, p.17.

³ EAS, 27.2.1963, p.1; 1.3.1963, p.1; 2.3.1963, p.1.

⁴ EAS, 8.12.1962, p.1.

⁵ EAS, 4.7.1962, p.5.

to present a reasonable and responsible image and to guarantee a smooth transition to independence and economic prosperity, they could not sympathetically view the increasing number of strikes called by trades unions. In June 1962, condemning widespread strikes, Kenyatta spelled it out clearly: "The Trade Unions, too, can help us create confidence. If they continue with this series of strikes, I do not think they will contribute to confidence in this country, because I feel the more they strike the more people will hesitate in investing their monies here."¹ In July 1962 Tom Mboya, himself a prominent trade unionist, said: "We do not want to remove the right to strike, but any Government worth the name cannot see a country held to ransom by anybody and not to do anything about it."² The future political leaders of independent Kenya were assessing trades unions as potentially independent power bases, capable of challenging their future authority.

In the context of the process of African urbanization, the development of labour organization serves as one index of the pace of African stabilization in town and of their commitment to urban life. But perhaps a more important index was the development of African economic enterprise which brought about the emergence of large numbers of self-employed Africans.

The Development of African Economic Enterprise

As early as the 1920s there were odd up-country Africans who came to Nakuru from their reserves, or the surrounding District to sell agricultural produce.³ The scale of this trade was, however, very limited.

¹ J. Kenyatta, Facing Without Bitterness, East African Publishing House, Nairobi 1968, p.176.

² EAS, 19.7.1962, p.1.

³ The following account is based largely on oral evidence. Interviews: W. Wasogata, J. Kamonjo, P. Ndirangu, P. Ndirangu, W. Mulogoli, L. Matoya, S. L. Ojuka, S. M. Ng'ethi, E. P. Getata, S. Nbote, C. Wanguku, D. Mahabu, J. Otukho, E. Meso.

Only towards the end of the 1920s were Africans residing in the town beginning to take up trade as a full time occupation. During the 1930s Africans began to open eating-houses, some of which became relatively prosperous. While the vegetable market during those years was dominated by squatters selling their produce on Sundays, there were African residents of Nakuru who took up this trade as a permanent venture. Around 1940, self-employed tailors began to appear on the scene and they were followed by self-employed African carpenters.

The Second World War considerably stimulated African economic enterprise. The presence around Nakuru of a considerable number of military personnel and their families increased the demand for food-stuffs which African traders were eager to supply. The War also stimulated the development of two areas of business. The readily available supply of second-hand military vehicles encouraged Africans to enter the transport business. By 1945 there was an African working for a local school who owned two lorries and had established a haulage business.¹ After the war a large-scale and lucrative trade in second-hand clothes developed which was initially fed by military surpluses. By the end of the 1940s there was a prosperous African building construction company which managed to secure large Government and Mission contracts. In addition there were other small African building constructors.

The expansion of African business in the post-war period followed the great increase in the African urban population which stimulated the local demand. At the same time it reflected the growing determination of Africans to share in the economic boom of the colony in general and the town in particular. In the early 1950s African businessmen from different parts of the country invested about Shs. 30,000 in a modern African hotel in Nakuru. Many branches of trade developed in the late

¹ ibid., 16.2.1945, p.11.

1940s and thereafter: general provisions stores, off-licences, dairies, butcher-shops, charcoal stores, cycle dealers and so on. Artisans also expanded their trade. The demand for business licences greatly exceeded the supply, and this created, during the 1950s and the early 1960s, a large number of illegal verandah traders. Few even of the legitimate businessmen were more than petty traders; relatively few rose to positions of prosperity even by African standards.

The prospects of success for African traders were far from bright. Lack of capital and know-how, a variety of administrative restrictions and cut-throat competition from Asian traders, made business hazardous. What emerges clearly is that it was mainly the Kikuyu who managed to exploit the existing opportunities. African businesses in Nakuru were overwhelmingly concentrated in their hands.

Significantly, the first shop opened in the late 1920s by up-country Africans was owned by a Kikuyu. During the 1930s most eating-house owners were Kikuyu, as were most of the vegetable traders. The African who owned a haulage business in 1945 was Kikuyu and the prosperous building construction company established in the second half of the 1940s was owned by four Kikuyu brothers. As early as 1942, a D.C. wrote with insight and humour: "It has been said that in a hundred years time the Kikuyu will own Kenya. Exaggerated as it may appear at first sight, there is more than a grain of truth in the assertion. Incessant applications pour into my office for plots in every township in the District preferably ^{on} Alburgen. Every sort of trade is carried/ or suggested - milkshops, hotels, soup-kitchens, cycle and boots repairers, bars, traders in clothing, trade goods, charcoal, Native pottery, books, butchers, transporters, middlemen for native produce, exporters for vegetables, carpenters, stock-traders and so on. Indeed, the only trades not tapped already by this enterprising tribe, which may be

enumerated with certainty, are piano-tuning and under-taking.¹

When more accurate data becomes available from 1947, the picture is clear. In the lists of applicants for business licences in 1947, fifty-seven out of sixty-seven were Kikuyu, only five of the rest being Luo and Abaluhya from two other big tribes in Nakuru.² In 1951 eighty-four of the ninety-five applicants for an eating house were Kikuyu, and thirty-four of the thirty-nine applicants for a butchery were from the same tribe.³ In 1955, at the height of the Emergency, when the Kikuyu were under pressure, they were still well ahead of the other tribes in applying for business licences. Of a list of eighty-six applicants for business licences in that year, forty-nine were Kikuyu and only twenty-seven were Luo and Abaluhya.⁴ In 1960-1, with the Emergency restrictions lifted, Kikuyu predominance among the applicants for business was again established beyond doubt. Some one hundred and forty-eight of one hundred and seventy applicants for market stalls were Kikuyu, only about twenty being Luo and Abaluhya.⁵

Another important index of the Kikuyu's dominant position in trade was the actual ownership of businesses in the town. In 1948 thirty-eight of the forty members of the Charcoal Sellers Association were Kikuyu, the remaining two being Sushili.⁶ In 1950, of one hundred and five Market traders, eighty-seven were Kikuyu, the rest being Nyanza

¹ KNA, NIMR 1942, p.7.

² KNA/Native Location 1946-8, Business Applications 1947.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of Nakuru African Advisory Council, Trades Committee meeting, 2.3.1951.

⁴ N.M.S.S.D.F., applicants for business, 1955.

⁵ KNA/Applications for Market Stalls 1959-61.

⁶ N.M.S.S.D.F., Charcoal Sellers Association's members, 24.6.1948.

tribesmen.¹ In 1951 all the fifty-eight clothes dealers were Kikuyu.² In 1956 a survey of the African traders in Bondeni and Burma Markets showed that forty-eight were Kikuyu compared with twelve Luo and ten Arabs.³

In 1959-60 forty-five of the applicants for certificates enabling Africans to apply for loans were Kikuyu and twenty (thirteen of whom represented one company) were Nyanza tribesmen.⁴ Of the twenty-one traders applying in 1961 for Government loans, fourteen were Kikuyu and some five were Luo and Abalukya.⁵ Of the four who received Government loans in the same year at least three were Kikuyu.⁶ The use of credit facilities is a further indicator of the comparative interest in developing and expanding business. In a list, issued in 1959, of twenty-two prominent African businessmen in Nakuru, fifteen were Kikuyu.⁷

It is important to attempt to account for this strikingly different response to business opportunities of the Kikuyu on the one hand and the Luo and Abalukya on the other. Muriuki dwelt on the value attached to trade in the traditional pre-colonial Kikuyu society.⁸ Marris and Somerset, in their study of a Nyeri Kikuyu community, emphasized the basic continuity, amidst changing circumstances, between the pre-colonial

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., Market traders, 1950. The Nyanza traders were mainly Abalukya.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., Clothes dealers, 1951.

³ KMA, Summary of a survey of trade (limited circulation), December 1956.

⁴ KMA/D.C/KMa/dep.2/472, applicants for certificates of exemption, 1959-60. The Nyanza applicants were mainly Luo.

⁵ KMA/D.C/KMa/dep.2/473, Nakuru District applications for loans, 1961.

⁶ KMA/D.C/KMa/dep.2/471, receivers of loans, 1.4.1961.

⁷ KMA/D.C/KMa/dep.2/475, prominent African businessmen in Nakuru, 1959. Six were Nyanza businessmen, mainly Luo, and one was Arab.

⁸ G. Muriuki, A History of the Kikuyu to 1904 (Ph.D. thesis, London 1969), p.175.

Kikuyu who traded with the neighbouring Masai and the Kikuyu entrepreneurs of the colonial era. They further emphasized the importance of the achievement orientation and the individualism in the Kikuyu society.¹ On the same lines, it seems possible to argue that among the Luo and Abaluhya the inherent emphasis on the community rather than the individual, and on equality rather than achievement, inhibited initiative in business. These arguments are more helpful however when viewed in the wider context of socio-economic developments in the respective tribal reserves and when taken in conjunction with the process and degree of urbanization of members of the various tribal groups. One should not forget, for example, that the Kamba, who were involved in a much larger scale trade than the Kikuyu in the pre-colonial period,² were famous during the colonial era as askaris rather than traders.

The impact of the introduction of the colonial rule on the socio-economic fabric of Kikuyu was probably the most disruptive in all Kenya. Situated in the centre of the colony and in the hinterland of Nairobi, the political and economic heart of the country, the Kikuyu were drawn, more than any other tribe, into the orbit of the colonial economy. In Kiambu, particularly, this resulted in a growing commercialization of land and agriculture and the reinforcement of the individualistic tendencies in Kikuyu society. The presence of Nairobi on their borders, with its obvious attractions, contributed no doubt, to the development of the Kikuyu taste for trade. In addition, land alienation in Central Province in the early colonial era and the sealing-off of the Kikuyu reserve by the white Highlands, preventing further expansion, greatly intensified the pressure of a rapidly growing population on available land. Population pressure, coupled with individual land tenure practised

¹ F. Marris and A. Somerset, African Businessmen, Routledge & Kegan Paul London 1971, pp. 23-56.

² J. Lamphear, "The Kamba and the Northern Mrica Coast" in R. Gray and D. Birmingham, Pre-colonial African Trade, OUP, London 1970, pp. 75-101.

in parts of Kikuyuland, created large numbers of landless Kikuyu who found refuge, in the early period, mainly on European farms in the White Highlands, where they lived as squatters, and in Nairobi. In 1934 a hundred and ten thousand Kikuyu were thought to be living outside the reserve. In 1948 the figure rose to 294,146 or nearly 30% of the total Kikuyu population.¹

Until the Second World War most Kikuyu who migrated in the RVP seem to have preferred to live as squatters on European farms, because there they could preserve some aspects of their traditional way of life. The town was regarded as an inconceivable place to lead family life and rear children.² It was only as late as 1939 and mainly from the early 1940s that Kikuyu began flocking into Nakuru District's townships and into Nakuru Town.³ Many of the Kikuyu who came to Nakuru during the 1940s were ex-squatters who had been evicted from White Highlands farms or disliked living on them. Some put the proportion of the ex-squatters among Nakuru's Kikuyu in the late 1940s, at about 40-50%.⁴

While it would be wrong to describe the Kikuyu newcomers as de-tribalised, many of them certainly had neither a foothold nor economic interests in the reserve. Job opportunities during the 1940s, despite Nakuru's economic expansion, were limited, and as noted earlier, some of the bigger employers had developed a preference for employing Kyanza tribesmen. As noted earlier the Kikuyu, who were from the second half the 1940s, Nakuru's largest single tribe, formed only a small proportion

¹ M.P.K. Sorrenson. Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country, OUP, London 1967, p.80.

² Interview: W. Wamagata, R.M. Wambua, J. Kamaujo.

³ IMA, Nakuru-Maivasha-Ravine District Annual Report, 1939, p.17; NDAR, 1942, p.7; 1943, p.8.

⁴ Interview: W. Wamagata, S. Mboti, J. Wanyike.

of the employed Africans in the town.¹ Having few roots elsewhere and realising that their only hope of prosperity and security lay in exploiting whatever opportunities were offered by the town, they applied themselves and their resources to business with determination. Trade was perhaps the only economic sphere which had not been properly tapped by Africans in Nakuru. In this respect the Kikuyu were the first up-country tribesmen to settle permanently in Nakuru in large numbers. One must be careful, however, not to regard the 'urban ethic' or the 'commercial ethic' as inherent parts of Kikuyu culture. Kikuyu attitudes to urban life changed only during the 1940s and then largely as a result of external pressures rather than choice. The dynamic nature of values and attitudes in a situation of intensive social change cannot be over-emphasised. With urbanization, Kikuyu traditional values may have been reinforced. However, many of the Kikuyu traders in Nakuru were not simply the inheritors of a pre-colonial entrepreneurial spirit, but rather the exploiters of a situation of little choice in the struggle for a livelihood.

The impact of colonial rule on the socio-economic system of the Luo and Abaluhya was much less profound. In most cases, land in Nyanza was more abundant than in Kikuyuland. There were, however, areas in both Central and North Nyanza in which population pressure was very strong. It was the inadequate carrying capacity of land in these areas which precipitated the migration of labour into the towns and farms outside the reserve.² It was from these areas of Buxyore,

¹ See above, p.

² S.H. Ominde, Land and Population in the Western Districts of Nyanza Province, Kenya (Ph.D. thesis, London 1963), pp. 123-38, 296-320.
 S.H. Ominde, "Movement to Towns from Nyanza Province, Kenya", in Urbanization in African Social Change (Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, Proceedings of the Inaugural Seminar, 5th-7th January 1963), pp. 23-53. W.T. Morgan and N. Manfred Shaffer, Population of Kenya, Density and Distribution (based on 1962 population census), OUP, London 1966 pp. 19-20.

Maragoli and Tiriki locations on the Abalukya side that Nakuru received much of its Abalukya population. On the Luo side the overpopulated locations of the Ugenya and Gou sub-tribes had big contingents in the town.¹ Despite land shortage in parts of Nyanza Province, the traditional communal land tenure prevailing among the Luo and Abalukya² ensured that most tribesmen had some interest in land in their rural homes. It could have been a considerable ghamba yielding good profits through the labour of wives or relatives and at the other extreme it could have been a small piece of land where one could maintain his family at lower cost than in the town.

Since Africans were low-paid and since life in town was insecure, it was worthwhile to maintain whatever solid base they had in the reserve. Many, if not most, Nyanza tribesmen kept their wives and children in the reserve. The reserve was a place they could go back to when encountering difficulties in the town. In 1957 when a few hundred Nyanza tribesmen were laid off, most of them chose to return to the reserve.³ Most Nyanza tribesmen, even large numbers of those who had lived in the town for a long time, belonged to two economic spheres. Money-earning in the town was supplementary rather than an alternative to rural income. They remitted money earned in the town to their dependants and invested it in land or buildings in the reserve.

In terms of social values, this socio-economic interdependence found expression in a deep sense of spiritual attachment to the place of birth. Hence the importance attached to having a house in the reserve or to being buried by it. Under these circumstances very many

¹ J. H. Ominde, Land and Population, p. 299.

² Ibid., pp. 162-9.

³ KNA NDAR, 1957, p. 28.

Luo and Maluhya could not commit themselves fully to urban life. They remained, in different degrees, migrants long after the Kikuyu had settled in the town. Nyanza tribesmen preferred low but secure incomes from employment to long-term and hazardous investments in potentially unfavourable conditions. When they did join the competition in business in greater numbers during and after the Emergency, the Kikuyu traders already held the advantage in terms of skills, experience and resources.

In Nakuru in particular Kikuyu traders had the special advantage of operating in the midst of the Kikuyu squatter population. This favourable economic hinterland was used for the purchase of such commodities as agricultural products or charcoal, for sale in the town, or for selling manufactured goods such as clothes. At the same time the Luo traders had to buy their fish from Lake Victoria and the Bunyore traders were transporting their bananas and sugar cane from their distant rural location. Additionally, the Kikuyu established themselves during the second half of the 1940s as the largest single tribe in Nakuru and this was certainly an asset to Kikuyu traders. The Nakuru MAO from 1948 to 1955, who later served in the same capacity in Kisumu (the main Luo urban centre) insisted, however, that the Luo traders there did not do better than their Nakuru counterparts despite their numerical preponderance and their favourable rural hinterland.¹

The major obstacle facing African entrepreneurs was lack of capital. Without financial resources many businesses collapsed when facing their first crises. The demise of business enterprises was a common feature of African economic development. It was mainly the Kikuyu who seem effectively to have tried to overcome this obstacle by forming partnerships and companies. A Maluhya who, during the

early 1930s, failed to establish his eating-house ascribed the success of his Kikuyu competitors to the fact that they had partners who could together withstand crises similar to those he himself had succumbed to.¹ In Nakuru in 1947 there was Wanyumba Kericha, Thenji Wanyumbani and Company which had forty-nine Kikuyushareholders who had each subscribed Shs. 150/-.² In 1948 a Kikuyu ex-soldier applied to the D.C. Nakuru for permission to set up a company of about eight hundred shareholders.³ David brothers, the prosperous building construction company, was a joint family enterprise.⁴ In 1948 three prominent Kikuyu applied for permission to form a company to take over a business at that time owned by one of them.⁵ The modern Ngasini Hotel built in Nakuru in 1952 was also a combined Kikuyu enterprise in which people from the town, the District and the reserve were involved. By 1950 they had been able to accumulate no less than Shs. 20,000.⁶ The most ambitious Kikuyu enterprise in the early 1950s was the Ya-Numbi Kigina Limited (RVP). This company, combining Kikuyus from nineteen townships in the RVP and beyond, set itself, in 1951, a target of Shs. 75,000 for the construction, in Nakuru, of a building containing four shops and eight store-rooms. The secretary and treasurer of the company were prominent Nakuru Kikuyu.⁷ This enterprise highlighted the advantages Nakuru's Kikuyu could derive from their hinterland. Nakuru was at the centre of a network of townships and trading

¹ Interview: E. Matoya.

² KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/475, Company to D.C., 19.9.1947.

³ KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/475, P.M. Kanan to D.C., 17.4.1948.

⁴ Interview: C. Wanguku.

⁵ KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/475, J. Kamonjo, J.F.G. Kanyua and M. Mwal to D.C., 27.1.1948.

⁶ KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/301, E.M. Ng'ethe to D.C., 9.2.1950.

⁷ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of Ya-Numbi Kigina Limited meeting, 14.1.1951.

centres largely controlled by Kikuyu, which constituted an informal Kikuyu Rift Valley "common market".

Luo from Nakuru, on the other hand, invested money in shares in the Kisumu-based Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation.¹ While Kikuyu were able to mobilise financial resources from the Rift Valley for investment in the town, Nakuru's Luo invested capital in a tribal trading organization which contributed little to Nakuru's African economy. Luo and Abaluhya partnerships and companies were rare.

It is interesting to note that the Kikuyu whose traditional social structure had been severely disrupted by the colonial impact and whose traditional communal values had consequently weakened, were able to evolve, in a situation of intensive social change, new forms of cohesion and co-operation adapted to cope with the opportunities presented by the modern urban economy. The Luo and the Abaluhya, on the other hand, with their stronger sense of communal cohesion, were less able to adapt it to the needs of modern economic enterprise.

Besides the general differences in attitudes to business, there were noticeable patterns distinguishing tribes, or even sub-tribal groups within given tribes, from one another. Among the Kikuyu, for example, the people from Fort Hall and Nyeri Districts were numerically more prominent in Nakuru's trade than the Kikuyu from Kiambu District. At the vegetable market the Kiambu people were a very small minority.² At the same time some of the most prosperous and progressive Kikuyu businessmen in Nakuru came from Kiambu. They were prominent as shop-owners and hotel-keepers, for example. The prosperous building construction company was owned by a Kiambu family. The

¹Interview: J. Odada. C. Odunga, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-87, 93, 98-9, 128, 138-9, 213.

²Interview: P. Mdirangu, W. Wamugata.

Ngasini hotel was also a Kiambu enterprise. J.F.C. Kangua who owned a prosperous shop and an off-licence was also from Kiambu. On the other hand, many of the Nyeri and Fort-Hall people were petty traders. The Kikuyu as a whole dominated trade lines like vegetable, charcoal, second-hand clothes and hotel-keeping.

The Abaluhya who controlled the banana and sugar-cane trade in the market were mostly from Bunyore Location. The Banyore were, on the whole, more inclined towards trade than Abaluhya from other sub-tribes. The two Abaluhya partnerships which were formed in Nakuru in about 1949 were exclusively Bunyore. One of them comprised four partners from the same clan. The most prosperous Abaluhya business in the late 1950s was owned by a Mungyore.¹ The Luo in the Municipal Market were concentrated on the chicken and eggs trade² and they also dominated the fish trade. Luo were also prominent as artisans. In 1956, of the twelve Luo operating in Bondeni and Burma Markets, ten were artisans, six of whom were carpenters.³ On the whole there were more prosperous Luo than Abaluhya businessmen. In the list of prominent African businessmen in Nakuru, in 1959, of the seven Nyansa traders, six were Luo and only one Abaluhya.⁴

Partnerships in business, when they occurred, were exclusively intra-tribal, because trust, which was of utmost importance, largely depended on familiarity. It also seems that there was a tendency among customers to buy from traders belonging to their own tribe. However, despite this evident tribal bias, African traders as such,

¹ Interview: J. Otukho.

² MHA/Applicants for Market Stalls 1959-61, chicken and egg sellers to T.C., 26.9.1961.

³ MHA, Summary of a survey of traders (limited circulation), December 1956.

⁴ MHA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/475, prominent African businessmen in Nakuru, 1959.

faced problems which ignored tribal boundaries. In their relations with the local authority, the Administration or their Asian competitors, there was common ground for action and co-operation on the basis of shared interests rather than tribal affiliation. The different traders' associations which developed in Nakuru from as early as 1947, operated exclusively on the basis of type of business. As the Kikuyu dominated the town's trade it was not surprising that they played a prominent role in such associations.

The Location Charcoal Sellers Association, first mentioned in 1947, seems to have been the first traders' association in Nakuru. In 1948 thirty-eight of its forty members were Kikuyu; all its officials were appropriately of the same tribe.¹ The Association seems to have been dissolved during the Emergency. In 1959-60, when the charcoal sellers reorganized themselves, the Kikuyu no longer monopolised the association,² and in 1961 the chairman was from Tanganyika.³ Although there does not seem to have been an association of poultry and egg traders, they acted collectively, from as early as 1947, on matters affecting their trade.⁴

The Market traders formed an Association in 1948. In 1950 it was known as the Nakuru Vegetable Traders Association, although it dealt with other kinds of market trade as well. In 1948-50 it was engaged in a struggle against the municipal by-laws which prevented traders from storing their goods in the Market overnight.⁵ The Emergency

¹ N.M.S.S.D.P., Location Charcoal Sellers Association to T.C., 23.5.1947. In 1948 it changed its name to the Nakuru African Charcoal Sellers Association, see Nakuru African Charcoal Sellers Association to NAAO, 24.6.1948.

² NMA/D.C./MCA/dep.2/167. E.P.Getata to D.C., 21.12.1959; E.P.Getata to D.C., 7.1.1960.

³ NMA/AAC, Nakuru African Charcoal Sellers Association to NAAO, 22.12.1961.

⁴ NMA/African Location 1946-8, Egg and Poultry Sellers to T.C., 23.1.1947. N.M.S.S.D.P., Poultry and Eggs Traders to G.W.C., 17.2.1958.

⁵ N.M.S.S.D.P., Nakuru Vegetable Traders Association to T.C., 23.5.1950. Interview: P.Hdirangu.

seems to have put an end to this association which was dominated by Kikuyu, and subsequently the market traders seem to have dealt collectively, though informally, with their problems. Even in 1960-1 approaches were made to the local authority on behalf of "Market Traders" or "Stall Holders" in the Municipal Market.¹ In 1962 the Market Traders Association was formally established and registered. The Leadership of the Association was shared between Kikuyu and Luo.²

The Market Traders Association's leadership was largely composed of uneducated or semi-educated traders. They seem all to have started as petty traders, some having risen to relative prosperity. The Nakuru African Traders Union, formed in early 1953, had a different character. It was initiated by the more educated progressive and prosperous African traders. Among its first officials there were four Kikuyu, one Luo and one Muslim.³ Although the Union had a small membership, it claimed to represent the local African business community as a whole. One of its first actions was to protest against the Municipal Council's decision to close all African shops and eating-houses in the town at 7 p.m. for security reasons.⁴ In March 1956 the Union dissolved to make place for the newly formed Nakuru and District African Chamber of Commerce which operated until independence and beyond.⁵ Among the Chamber's original six officers there were four Kikuyu and two Luo.⁶ Its leadership remained inter-tribal with the Kikuyu increasingly playing the central role. Again

¹ NMA/Municipal Market 1959-63. The Stall Holders to Mayor, 16.4.1960; Market Traders to T.C., 29.11.1961.

² D.C./NMA/Adm/15/12/147, Market Traders Association, Office-bearers, February 1962.

³ Nakuru and District African Chamber of Commerce File (NDACC), elected office-bearers, 23.3.1953.

⁴ NMA/AAC, Nakuru African Traders Union to T.C., 15.5.1953.

⁵ NDACC, Secretary to T.C., 23.3.1956. NMA/AAC, NDACC constitution 1956.

⁶ R.S.A., File 1088, 1956.

the absence of any representatives of the Abaluhya traders was noticeable.

In 1962 the Hotel Keepers Association was formed. Of its six officers five were Kikuyu and one was Kalenjin.¹ The Kenya Business Development Society, which was established in Nakuru in January 1962, was also dominated by the Kikuyu. Five of its officers were Kikuyu, including the chairman, secretary and treasurer; one was Luo, one was a Muluhya and one was a Muslim.²

If Nakuru Africans were to cross tribal boundaries and evolve urban-based ties, it was likely that trades-unions and business associations would be two main fields in which they would do so. These were two fields which directly affected their material well-being and prosperity. Operating within a colonial situation which relegated Africans to the lowest of three levels, their only hope for improving their lot lay in their ability to act collectively in safeguarding and promoting their interests.

To such associations one could add the House Owners Association which operated in the early 1950s. It elected the house-owners representatives to the Nakuru African Advisory Council, but also dealt with problems affecting them as landlords. Although most of the house-owners were Swahili, up-country Africans were represented as well. In 1952 a Luo represented the house-owners on the Advisory Council.³ In 1958, after a period of inactivity, African landlords organised themselves again, this time for the specific purpose of opposing the Municipal Council's plans to demolish Bondeni Location.⁴

¹D.C./Mbu/Adm/15/12/162, Hotel Keepers Association, office-bearers, September 1962.

²D.C./Mbu/Adm/15/12/170, Kenya Business Development Society, office-bearers, January 1962.

³N.M.E.S.D.F., NAKURU, February, April 1950; April 1951; Nakuru African Advisory Council meeting, 25.1.1952. (Minutes)

⁴See below, p.

Africans also organized themselves as tenants. In the early 1950s the residents of Pangani Location formed an association, largely in response to the local authority's decision to allocate them a representative on the Advisory Council. Since there were no tribal clusters in Nakuru's African location the association was inevitably inter-tribal.¹ It seems to have died out as soon as they lost their representation on the Advisory Council at the end of 1952. The residents of Kivumbini Housing Estate protested collectively against the high rents and poor housing conditions.² In 1958, in response to the Municipal Council's decision to raise rents in its housing estates, the Nakuru Tenants Association was formed. It led a campaign against raising rents, but also dealt with other problems affecting Africans as municipal tenants.³

The Development of Other Non-Tribal Voluntary Associations

The prominence of the Kikuyu in most spheres of Nakuru's life was envied, if not resented, by members of other tribes in the town. The Nyanza African Union⁴ was an inter-tribal regional organization which aimed at redressing the balance between the Kikuyu and the Africans originating from Nyanza Province. In fact, besides the Luo, Abaluhya and Kisii from that province, it included the Kipsigis from the Kalenjin group living in the Rift Valley Province. The expressed aims of the Union were "to deal with any matters affecting the progress of Nyanza Africans, to acquaint and advise Nyanza African

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of Pangani Residents meeting, 8.1.1952.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., Kivumbini dwellers to T.C., undated.

³ KNA/D.C/Mku/dep.2/167, J. Muzinyi to D.C., 4.9.1958; Tenants Association to T.C., 19.3.1963. Interview: M. Mithiga, R. Kaboka.

⁴ The Nyanza African Union operated in Nakuru during 1949-53.

councillors in the Nakuru African Advisory Council on any matter affecting the progress or welfare of the Nyanza Africans in and round Nakuru." The Union tried to persuade Nyanza Africans to regard Nakuru as their home and to take more initiative in the various aspects of its life. In particular they encouraged Nyanza Africans to enter trade.¹ When Nyanza traders felt that the traders' representation on the Nakuru African Advisory Council was monopolised by Kikuyu, they sought to revise the existing arrangement and divide the representation between the "Kikuyu Union" and the Nyanza African Union.² Faced with strong Kikuyu competition, the other major tribal groups combined forces in the belief that unity was strength. The Nyanza African Union did not seek to replace the tribal associations of the tribes concerned. It was in a way a federation of tribal associations. In addition to the officers the Union's committee consisted of representatives of the tribal associations of the respective tribes. The Union seems to have mainly attracted the more educated and the established traders of these tribes. Early in 1953 the Union showed interest in reserve politics, opposing strongly a decision to replace Odede and Wori as Nyanza representatives in the Lejoo because of their positions in the Kenya African Union's leadership.³

Soon, however, there was a strong undercurrent among sectors of the African community to give expression to the growing sense of civic solidarity transcending tribal and regional barriers, and this brought about the formation of the Nakuru African Association in September 1951. It heralded a more progressive and articulate sense of urban

¹R.S.A., Nyanza African Union Nakuru File, Constitution, undated. N.M.S.S.D.F., NAKUR February 1950; February 1953. Interview: W. Nandwa, E. Meso.

²N.M.S.S.D.F., Nyanza traders to Advisory Council, 21.12.1951.

³N.M.S.S.D.F., Bondeni, February 1953.

solidarity. Basically an elite organization, it appealed primarily to educated Africans and established traders who increasingly regarded themselves as townsmen owing allegiance to their place of residence where they saw their vital interests. The Association tried to evolve an ideology of "Nakuruism". Some of the aims and objects of the Association which reflected it are worth quoting: "1. To foster understanding and friendly relationship between members of the African community resident in Nakuru without distinction of tribe, religion and social status. 2. To instil into the minds of the African community a sense of citizenship with a view of encouraging them to take pride and interest in the affairs of the place where they live."¹ The Association aimed at establishing itself as the main channel of communication between the African community and the authorities operating in the town. They approached the D.C. requesting him to regard them, rather than the leaders of the tribal associations as such, as representing Nakuru Africans. After consulting the tribal elders the D.C. declined.²

Careful attention was given to creating tribal balance in the Association's leadership. Of its seven officers, there were two Kikuyu, two Luo, two Abaluhya and a last who had been born in the town to parents from the Kenyan Coast. The chairman was Kikuyu, the secretary Abaluhya and the treasurer Luo.³ The Association aimed not at eliminating the tribal factor, but rather at transcending it. Its officers, educated Africans and successful businessmen represented the two main groups which were attracted by the ideology of "Nakuruism". In the

¹ N.K.S.S.D.F., Nakuru African Association, constitution, 23.9.1951.

² Interview: L. Meso.

³ N.K.S.S.D.F., Nakuru African Association, office-holders, 23.9.1951.

year and a half of its existence the Association seems to have been quite popular, attracting between two and three hundred people to its public meetings.¹ Like other associations, the beginning of the Emergency saw its demise.

The Nakuru African Women Association was formed as early as March 1951. Its officers were two Swahili and two Kikuyu women. That Swahili women were involved in a town-orientated association was hardly surprising, since they were, almost by definition, town dwellers. It is interesting, however, that the Kikuyu were the only up-country African women who were actively involved. It may have reflected the fact that Kikuyu women were among the first to urbanize. The aim of the Nakuru African Women Association was "to uplift the wellbeing of Women's Welfare in Nakuru". It seems that the Association was somehow linked with the Nakuru African Association. It elected the women's representatives to the Nakuru African Advisory Council. It too failed to survive the Emergency.²

Africans, discovering their urban identity, found that there were many fields of town life, besides those directly connected with bread and butter issues, in which they could co-operate across tribal lines. The variety of associations which sprang up in the late 1940s and thereafter reflected a developing urban culture. Some of them owed their existence to the activity generated by the Municipal African Affairs Department, under the guidance of two successive energetic MAACs from 1948 onwards. It was the policy of this Department to cater mainly

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWA, September, October 1951; August 1952.

² R.D.A., Nakuru African Women Association File, Constitution, undated; I.W.Kanyua to Registrar 13.1.1956; Association to Registrar, 26.5.1956. N.M.S.S.D.F., A Secretary, Advisory Council, to Chairman, Advisory Council, 17.3.1952; Asst. MAAC to Nakuru African Association, 18.11.1952; NAWA, June, July, October, November, December 1951; July 1952.

an
for the urbanized Africans and to encourage the development of African
urban way of life.¹

The first African non-tribal social association was the British
Legion (African section) formed as early as 1947. Its members were
Africans who had served in the British forces during the Second World
War. They had their own social welfare officer who tried, for example,
to assist members to get trading licences. He also organized social
activities, such as dances, foxmeets. It was inter-tribal in com-
position, the officers being Kikuyu and Nyanza tribesmen.²

The Nakuru African Parents Association was formed in January 1949
with the expressed aim of promoting the welfare of African children.
By definition it could only count on the response of Africans living
in the town with their families, which was one index of urbanization.
The founders of the Association were again members of the emerging urban
elite. The first chairman was a Luo, his secretary a Kikuyu and the
treasurer a Muluhya.³ When the Association was re-established in 1957
emphasis was laid upon education. Among the six officers at that time
there were three Kikuyu, two Luo and one Muluhya.⁴

In 1949 and the early 1950s the Nakuru African Dancing Club com-
bined representatives of the different dancing teams, largely tribal,
competing in Western dancing.⁵ In the early 1950s the Nakuru Football
Association which supervised the two local football leagues, was composed
of representatives of the competing teams, tribal and non-tribal.⁶ In

¹ Interview: J. Mandefield.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of British Legion (African section) Nakuru sub-
committee meeting, 14.7.1950; British Legion Welfare Officer to NAAD,
8.8.1950.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of Nakuru African Parents Association inaugural
meeting, 19.1.1949.

⁴ E.S.A., Nakuru African Parents Association File, constitution and
registration, 1.11.1957.

⁵ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of Nakuru African Dancing Experts meeting, 12.12.194

the early 1950s there was also the Makuru Sports Association.¹ In the late 1950s and the early 1960s the two last were combined in the Makuru and District Football and Sports Association.² In the same period there was also the Makuru Referees Association.³ The Makuru African Debating Society formed in 1947 catered for English-speaking Africans. It does not seem to have been very popular.⁴ The Dramatic and Cultural Society of the late 1950s and the early 1960s was more successful, appealing to the growing circle of educated Africans regardless of their tribal origin.⁵

The Kenya African Moral Welfare Association formed in 1960 attempted to evolve a new urban "morality". It apparently reflected a dissatisfaction, in some circles, with the way tribal associations dealt with "immorality". The Association set out to fight all forms of "moral degradation" among Africans with particular reference to family life. The officers and the committee members were predominantly Kikuyu but there were also a few Nyanza tribesmen. By 1961 the Association was refused registration because officers apparently went around threatening people with legal proceedings if they failed to abide by its decisions.⁶

NAWMA, March 1950, October 1951.

⁶ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of Makuru African Football Association meeting, 2.3.1952. NAWMA April, June, July 1950; February, July 1951.

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWMA, July 1950, February 1951.

² NDA, African Affairs Department, Monthly Report (AAIMR), July, September 1958; July 1962.

³ NDA, AAIMR, July 1958; May 1959; February 1960; April 1962; April 1963.

⁴ N.M.S.S.D.F., Makuru African Debating Society, Agenda, 7.2.1952. Minutes of Makuru African Debating Society meeting, 6.3.1952. NAWMA, March 1950. MAR 1947. African Affairs.

⁵ NDA, AAIMR, January, May, September 1959; November 1961, February 1963. Interview: E. Migwe.

⁶ R.S.A., File 3144.

The missions and churches operating in Nakuru African sector were potential foci of inter-tribal co-operation. The first mission to be established in Nakuru by 1912-3 was the Roman Catholic Mill Hill mission.¹ By 1927 the Church Missionary Society (CMS) operated in the town,² and the Salvation Army and the Seventh Day Adventist missions were set up in 1934 and 1935 respectively.³ The Presbyterian Church of Scotland (PCS) operated in Nakuru by the second half of the 1940s.⁴ By 1952 the Church of God had been established⁵ and by 1958 the Pentecostal Assembly and the Church of Christ in Africa were also active in the town.⁶

Beyond conversion of Africans to Christianity, the missions and churches catered mainly for African Christians who had migrated to the town. As such, their tribal composition largely depended on the distribution of missionary spheres of influence in Kenya. Thus the PCS was exclusively Kikuyu and worship was conducted in the vernacular. The followers of the Seventh Day Adventists were predominantly Kisi tribemen.⁷ The Church of God was dominated by Abaluhya.⁸ The Salvation Army was tribally mixed, Abaluhya being

¹ KNA, NDAR 1912-3, p.2.

² KNA, NDAR 1927, p.8.

³ Blue Book, 1934, p.231; 1935, p.233.

⁴ Interview: R.M. Wambaa.

⁵ Interview: J. Buala.

⁶ KNA, AAMR, November 1958.

⁷ Interview: R.M. Wambaa.

⁸ Interview: J. Buala.

in the majority. The Army's services were conducted in Swahili.¹ The Luo were in the majority in the CMS but there were also Kikuyu adherents. Their language of worship was Swahili. The most tribally mixed denomination was the Roman Catholic.²

African independent Christian sects tended to be even more tribally exclusive. The Arathi, also known as wata Wa Mungu sect, introduced to Nakuru in the early 1940s, was exclusively Kikuyu.³ So was the Miracle Revival Fellowship in Africa which operated in Nakuru from 1958.⁴ The African Israel Movement was brought to Nakuru by Nyanza tribesmen during the 1940s. It was composed of Luo and Abaluhya. After independence however it split into Luo and Abaluhya sections.⁵

Some of the European missions were active in the sphere of African education. They, in fact, introduced African education to Nakuru. The Mill Hill Mission as early as 1910-1 applied for a plot for building a school.⁶ By 1927 there was both a CMS and a Roman Catholic school in Nakuru.⁷ The Roman Catholic school seems not to have made much progress and in 1941 the Mill Hill Mission suggested that all school-age children should be sent to the reserve so that they would attend school in their own tribal locations.⁸ The CMS

¹ Interview: B. Matoya.

² Interview: R. M. Wambua.

³ Interview: J. Kangata.

⁴ R.S.A., File 2247.

⁵ Interview: W. Oduo, F. B. Welburn and B. A. Ogot, A Place to Feel at Home, London 1966, pp. 72-113.

⁶ East African Protectorate Annual Report, 1910-1, p. 81.

⁷ KNA, NDAR 1927, p. 8.

⁸ KNA, NDAR 1941, pp. 16-17.

school, on the other hand, made remarkable progress, steadily increasing the number of the pupils from eighty-nine in 1938 to two hundred and eighty in 1947. Its tuition was in accordance with the Education Department's syllabus.¹ By 1937 the Salvation Army ran its own school, which taught both children and adults. In 1938 it had thirty-nine children and three adults in its day school and forty-seven adults and six children at its evening classes. In 1944 the schools' evening classes were closed.² Until 1947, the missionary schools had a monopoly of African education in Nakuru. They offered children, and to a lesser extent adults, the opportunity to acquire perhaps the most important prerequisite for social mobility within the urban status system. In 1948 the secular African Union School took the place of the denominational schools which then ceased to exist. The denominations concerned thus lost an important source of attraction.

It is interesting to note that there is no evidence that Nakuru was affected by the controversy between the Kikuyu traditionalists and the Protestant Missions during the late 1920s and early 1930s over the question of female circumcision, which brought about the Kikuyu independent schools movement and Church separation.³ At no stage was there a Kikuyu independent school in Nakuru although many existed in the surrounding District.

¹INA, NDAR 1938, p.37; 1939, p.39; 1940, p.15; 1941, p.16; 1942, p.14; 1944, p.14; 1946, p.9; 1947, p.9.

²INA, NDAR 1937, p.25; 1938, p.37; 1939, p.29; 1940, p.15; 1941, p.17; 1943, p.14; 1944, p.14.

³C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, pp. 106-31.

Africans integrating into the town's economic system found many areas in which to organize themselves for improving the quality of their lives. Yet to the extent that they were becoming more committed to urban life, they discovered that their well-being as town residents was largely decided by the colonial power structure to which they were subjected. Locally, the Nakuru Municipal Board had wide authority and responsibilities regarding Nakuru's African residents. The Africans' desire to improve their lot as townsmen motivated their attempts to operate within the framework of the local authority.

Chapter ThreePOLITICS OF PARTICIPATION, THE INTEGRATION
OF NAKURU AFRICANS INTO THE MUNICIPAL SYSTEMThe Origins of African Participation in Municipal Politics

Nakuru Africans were only introduced to municipal politics as late as 1945. Attempts to involve Nairobi's Africans in the municipal system were made as early as 1924. In that year a Nairobi European municipal councillor suggested that Africans be given representation on the Municipal Council. He regarded this as a political safety-valve arguing that it might counteract "the tendency to subterranean discontent".¹ His view, however, was not accepted and Kenyan Africans had to wait two decades before being granted representation on municipal bodies.

But the problem of growing discontent in Nairobi after the First World War, which found expression in the formation of tribal and non-tribal political organizations, had to be tackled.² As early as 1921, in connection with the formation of the Kikuyu Association, an official report pointed out that "the old machinery of representation through Native Chiefs and Councils is not suitable to progressive urban conditions."³ In 1924 the Kikuyu Central Association demanded that African representatives be elected to the Nairobi Municipal Council.⁴ The first initiative to involve urban Africans in local government was taken

¹ M. Parker, Political and Social Aspects of the Development of Municipal Government in Kenya (Colonial Office 1949), pp. 183-4.

² F. Furedi, The Development of Organized Politics among the Kikuyu (M.A. Thesis, SOAS, 1970). M. Parker, op.cit., p.173.

³ M. Parker, op.cit., p.173.

⁴ M. Parker, op.cit., p.174

in Nairobi by the Administration and not by the Municipal Council. In August 1926 the Acting Senior Commissioner, himself a municipal councillor, submitted a memorandum to the Council in which he stated: "I have started something in the nature of a Local Native Council¹ composed of twenty leading representatives of the village [sic] who meet from time to time and discuss with the D.C. and myself matters connected with the Native Villages of Pangani and Purwani. I feel that if native opinion can be influenced in the right direction much can be done to improve the conditions of village life, and there is no doubt that the better-class natives already greatly appreciate the effort which has now been made to bring them into close contact with Government."² By 1929 there was an Advisory Assembly, composed of twenty-one tribal representatives, supervised by the Nairobi Municipal African Affairs Officer. In 1931 an African advisory body, now known as the Native Council, was composed of twelve Africans representing tribes and religions. This body appears to have fallen into disuse after 1931 and in 1939 was revived as the Advisory Council.³

In Mombasa unofficial tribal representatives were chosen to advise the D.C. from 1931. The Mombasa Advisory Council was, however, constituted only in 1945.⁴ Soon after the War Nairobi's example was emulated by smaller towns and African advisory bodies were set up in Kisumu, Eldoret and Nakuru.⁵

While these developments can be regarded partly as Government's response to post-war political agitation,⁶ they were certainly strongly

¹Local Native Councils were African advisory bodies operating in the reserves.

²M. Parker, Social and Political, (C.O.), p.173.

³Ibid., p.175.

⁴Ibid., p.179.

⁵Ibid., pp. 180-1.

⁶See below.

influenced by the changing climate in the Colonial Office from 1940. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 marked a new departure in colonial policy. Emphasis was now laid not only on the social and economic progress of the colonised but also on training them to take a greater part in government. African participation in local government was of particular importance in the eyes of Creech-Jones, the colonial secretary, in his dispatch of 1947 on African local government. It was predicated on the belief that experience in local government provided training in democracy.¹

In the case of Kenya, the role of Philip Mitchell who was appointed Governor in December 1944 was of particular importance. Mitchell rejected the validity of African nationalism with its growing emphasis on racial exclusiveness and its dream of ultimate African domination. He regarded African political leaders as agitators and a threat to the good government of the colony. The political alternative, which Mitchell advocated, was the evolution of a multi-racial community composed of the three races. Africans, however, were destined to be, for a long time to come, junior partners in the multi-racial design. Mitchell's policy rested upon the belief that Africans in East and Central Africa were backward and uncivilised and therefore unable to take full part in government. Mitchell believed that the role of the colonial administration in Kenya was to usher its African wards towards civilisation. This was to be a long economic and educational process. The Africans' share in political power was to be in accordance with the extent of such progress. They would be intergrated into the colony's political structure at two levels. Locally the existing Local Native Councils would serve as training grounds for the Legislative Council and the

London

¹J.M.Lee, Colonial Development and Good Government (OUP, 1967), in particular pp. 4-6, 12-32, 172-88.

Executive Council of the colony. In this context one can understand Mitchell's advice to Kenyatta to involve himself first with his Local Native Council.¹

The introduction of urban African advisory councils and African representation on municipal bodies thus aimed at filling the absence of African political participation at the lower level. There were settlers, however, who, accepted the necessity of allowing African representation on the Legislative Council and municipal bodies, but held the view that for a very long time to come Africans would not qualify for full participation.² In Nairobi, Mary Parker, who conducted the research in 1947-8, noticed a reluctance on the part of both Asians and Europeans to apply Government policy: "I cannot escape the conclusion that, speaking generally, Europeans and Indians have not sought to foster African participation in local affairs... The prime responsibility for this must be with Europeans for they have political power and claim that it must remain with them because of their responsibility for African welfare."³

The Origins and Development of African Participation in Nakuru Municipal Politics, 1945-1952

The involvement of Nakuru Africans in local government in the post-War years must be seen alongside population expansion and the growing interest of the local authorities in their administration and welfare. During much of the 1930s Nakuru's African population was small, hardly exceeding three thousand. It was largely composed of

¹C.G Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., pp. 198-207, 216.

²M. Parker, Social and Political (C.O.), pp. 184-5.

³Ibid., p.193.

illiterate tribesmen who came to town as migrant workers. The authorities operating in the town showed little interest in the well-being of the African residents in the town. The D.C. was mainly concerned with the District and had little contact with urban Africans whom he noticed only when there was trouble.¹ The NMB which was set up as late as 1923, and was controlled by Europeans, showed only limited concern for the town's Africans. It was significant that the affairs of the Africans, the biggest racial community in the town, were handled, until 1947, on a part time basis, by the municipal works superintendent.

But the situation was to change during the War. Between 1936 and 1946 Nakuru's African population increased from 3,150 to 9,000.² This was no mere change of scale. The number of Africans committed to urban life having roots in the town as employees or traders increased steadily. There was also an increase in the number of educated Africans capable of providing leadership. During the first half of the 1940s the attitude of the authorities towards the African population was also changing. By setting up the Nakuru Native Mixed Court-Tribunal in 1944, the Administration demonstrated a positive interest in providing Africans with basic services. In connection with this court, as seen earlier, the D.C. consulted tribal elders.³ The NMB felt the need for a full-time Municipal African Affairs Officer (MAAO) as early as 1944. It was not until 1947, however, that a part-time welfare officer, later to become a full-time MAAO, was appointed. This marked a new concept of African administration in Nakuru. The expanding activity

¹ See above, pp.

² H. Tamarkin, op. cit., p. 258.

³ See above, p.

of the African Affairs Department under the guidance of the MAAC, and the ambitious African housing schemes from the late 1940s were two significant examples of this.¹

The provision of facilities and services for the expanding African population became an undertaking of unprecedented proportion for both the NMB and the D.C. Good government demanded that African views be sought regarding their problems and their relations with the European authorities. A permanent channel of communication between Africans and the authorities became essential. The initiative was first taken in 1945 by the D.C., H. Carpenter. It started as an informal meeting over a cup of tea to which prominent Africans were invited by the D.C.² By February 1946 it was known as the Native Advisory Council. It consisted of six members of whom there were two Kikuyu, two Luo, one Muluhya and one Swahili of Kikuyu origin. While the Council normally met under the chairmanship of the D.C. it was at least once convened without him.³

According to the D.C.'s report for 1946 the Council discussed matters of "general interest".⁴ The D.C. apparently construed the Council as a channel of communication through which he could keep in touch with the feelings of Africans in the town. Council members, however, not satisfied with general discussions, brought up particular problems affecting their daily lives. The only items on the agenda of the February 1946 meeting were the water shortage and the need for street lighting in the African Location. In the early stages of their involvement

¹For a fuller account of the development of African administration in Nakuru, see Introduction above, pp.

²Interview: R.P. Getata.

³NMA/African Location 1946-8, minutes of Native Advisory Council meeting, 18.2.1946.

⁴KNA/N DAR, 1946, p.7.

with the European controlled system. African representatives were apparently interested mainly in the improvement of material conditions affecting Location residents. Their modest demands also showed that they were still cautiously entering unknown territory.

The D.C. soon realized that most of the problems brought up at meetings were ultimately the concern of the NMB as the provider of urban services. He decided that it was advisable to convert the Advisory Council into a body with a predominantly municipal character. This was achieved in 1946 when the Council came under the guidance of the NMB's Native Affairs Committee of which the D.C. was chairman.¹

In 1946 the Advisory Council's contact with the NMB was largely through the D.C. who communicated their requests to the NMB and then reported back on the NMB's deliberations on matters concerning Africans.² Soon, however, Council members were demanding that Africans be nominated to the NMB to directly represent African interests.³ The D.C. acted as their spokesman. On 28th August 1946 the D.C., seconded by a European Board member, put forward the following resolution to the NMB:

"a: That the time has come for representation on the Board by Africans, especially in view of the expansion and rebuilding of the African Location in the near future. b: That there be two such African members at present, both nominated. c: That the Commissioner for Local Government be requested to take the necessary steps to implement the wishes of the Board as soon as possible." The NMB also requested the Commissioner for Local Government (CLG) to allow African government servants to sit

¹ Ibid.

² NMB/African Location 1946-8, Minutes of Native Advisory Council meeting, 18.12.1946. Interview: W. Wamagata.

³ Interview: W. Wamagata.

on the Board.¹ The resolution was carried but interestingly the CLG turned it down arguing that the "standards" of such Africans available in Nakuru did not warrant their nomination as full members. His decision gave rise to a heated debate on one of the NMB's committees. The committee strongly disagreed with the CLG, claiming that the "standards" of Africans available in Nakuru certainly qualified them for full membership.²

The attitude of the CLG seems to have encouraged the opponents of the D.C.'s resolution. On 30th October 1946 the NMB passed a resolution by a majority of six to four which modified the original. It resolved that the two African nominees would have first to serve on the NMB's Native Affairs Committee for a period of at least twelve months, and only then could the Committee recommend them for consideration by the full Board.³ The resolution was apparently carried with the support of some Asian members who had not been present at the original meeting.⁴ The opposition of the Asians revealed their apprehensions regarding their own precarious position on the Board. Even if African members were not automatically to follow the European lead, the mere introduction of a new racial element would dilute the Asian position. In a period when Africans were beginning to enter economic spheres hitherto dominated by Asians, this was more than probable.

Africans had, in fact, been co-opted to the Native Affairs Committee

¹ KNA, Minutes of NMB meeting, 28.8.1946.

² KNA, NMB, Minutes of Native Affairs and Native Housing Development Committee meeting, 9.9.1946.

³ KNA, Minutes of NMB meeting, 30.10.1946.

⁴ KNA, NDAB, 1946, p.5.

by late 1946.¹ The D.C. was far from happy that his original resolution had been overruled. On 26th March 1947 he put forward another motion, carried by a majority of seven to one, which reaffirmed the original resolution providing for full African membership on the Board.² The issue, however, remained unresolved. The C.L.G., attending a NMB meeting in July 1947, now urged its members to accord Africans full membership without a probationary period, as he now conceded that there were a considerable number of Africans in Nakuru capable of taking part in public life. He claimed that Nakuru was the only municipality to insist on a probationary period. J. Marraway, who was to become in 1948 the NMB chairman, insisted on probation arguing that African would-be members were mostly junior-clerk types who could not handle municipal funds and consider municipal problems like Europeans or Asians.³ However, the majority view on the NMB and the Government's firm policy finally settled the issue; on 26th November 1947 two African members, nominated by the D.C., participated in a NMB meeting for the first time.⁴ They were J.F.G. Kanyua, a Kikuyu Makerere graduate and the most educated African in the town, and J. Muruli, a Malukya clerk. Towards the end of 1947 one of them was appointed to the Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC) and the other to the Works and Health Committee (WHC) of the Board.

Meanwhile, African members of the Advisory Council were becoming dissatisfied with it. They wanted more official recognition and wished

¹ Annual Report of the C.L.G., 1946, p.28.

² KNA, Minutes of NMB meeting, 26.3.1947.

³ EAS, 11.7.1947, p.15; 1.8.1947, Supplement - A letter to editor by H.M.N. Nyagar.

⁴ KNA, Minutes of NMB meeting, 26.11.1947.

the Council to be truly representative of the local African population. The District Officer himself reported to the Native Affairs Committee on 19th February 1947 that the Nakuru African Advisory Council (NAAC) was not entirely satisfactory and that a new one was being formed.¹ In fact, the first meeting of the newly established NAAC was held on the day the District Officer made his report. The meeting consisted of Africans alone, who resolved that the NAAC be composed of three representatives of the major tribes and one for each of the smaller tribes. These were elected at that meeting.² The NAAC in this form proved to be unsatisfactory as well. Complaints against it came mainly from its Luo members who demanded the appointment of a European chairman to arbitrate between the tribal groups.³ Possibly the Nyanza members of the NAAC, and the Luo in particular, resented the prominence of the Kikuyu in the Council and thought that their interests would be better safeguarded by a European chairman.

Consequently in March or April 1947 the NAAC was again reformed. This time it included the D.O. as chairman, ten Africans from the town and four from the surrounding rural area. This was an interesting attempt to integrate those rural Africans in the settled areas who were closely linked with Nakuru, into a strictly urban institution. According to Parker, the NAAC in this form never really functioned. The selection of Nakuru's representatives was unpopular and the rural representatives never turned up to meetings. The Council met three or four times but had neither a vice-chairman nor a secretary and no agenda or records were kept. One African upon resignation suggested

¹ NMA, NMB, Minutes of NAC meeting, 19.2.1947.

² M. Parker, Political and Social (CO), p.180.

³ Interview: E. Meso.

reforming the NAAC yet again.¹

The Council was indeed once again reformed in May 1947 and got off to a better start. The NAAC's members now represented "trades, employment and religion".² There was also one representative of the African Location. Council members were nominated by the D.C. from a list of names submitted by the various trades and associations of employees, each of which had held its own election meeting.³ It is interesting to note that there was no tribal representation as such on the new NAAC. It was obviously hoped that representation by occupation would give the Council a better chance. Council meetings were held once a month in public and with a nucleus of educated Africans it was able to conduct them according to "the canons of ordinary debate".⁴ Parker, who attended a meeting of the NAAC at that period, was impressed by what she saw. She described it as a "flourishing institution" which had audiences of one to five hundred Africans.⁵

Looking back at the end of 1947 at the experience of the NAAC, the D.C. was well satisfied. He described the Council as "one of the methods adopted by the Administration to give Africans an opportunity of lawfully expressing their thoughts and views in public". He viewed it as a political safety valve: "... many matters dealing with grievances, social welfare etc. were discussed which, had no such facilities been provided, might have grown into seeds of discontent." He even

¹ N. Parker, Political and Social (CO), p. 180.

² Religion probably refers to the Swahili Muslim community.

³ N. Parker, Political and Social (CO), pp. 180-1.

⁴ KNA, NLAB, 1947, p. 4.

⁵ N. Parker, Political and Social (CO), pp. 180-1.

ventured to speak for the Africans: "Indeed, for the African of this township 1947 has been a good year of unparalleled political growth, an advance which he has not been slow to appreciate."¹

At the end of 1948 the D.C. described the NAAC as a useful body composed of members possessing a fairly high standard of education.² During that year, the formation of the Trades Committee and the Welfare Committee were indicative of the expansion of the Council's activities in these two main spheres of interest.³ A list of some of the items on the agendas of the NAAC at that period demonstrates its expanding interest and activity: "Health Inspector to talk about a) verandah traders b) action taken or contemplated against hotels re-overcrowding; report of the Trades Committee; report of the Welfare Committee; Location roads and lanes; women members of the Advisory Council; markets; dogs; petty traders; cinema and dances; visiting committee for the Native Civil Hospital; rising cost of meat; street lighting; appointment of a Headman in charge of the Native Location" and so on.⁴

While there was no tribal representation as such, there was a marked imbalance in the Council's composition.⁵ Of the twenty-two councillors there were thirteen Kikuyu, five Abaluhya and four Luo, leaving the smaller tribes unrepresented. In 1948 the Kikuyu accounted for about 45% of Nakuru's African population. That their proportion on the NAAC was even higher than that, was probably due to their leading

¹KNA, NDAR, 1947, pp. 3-4.

²KNA, NDAR, 1948, p.18.

³Ibid: N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC, 7.5.1948.

⁴N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meetings, 5.3.1948, 7.5.1948, 30.7.1948.

⁵N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 5.3.1948.

positions in the various fields of urban life. The majority of councillors were either educated Africans for the most part in clerical jobs, or traders, the more successful of such men increasingly constituting the local elite.

On 30th July 1948, Kanyua, the NAAC's secretary, proposed a new constitution to the Council.¹ The main motive behind this move was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with its status as a nominated body. While candidates for the NAAC had been selected by the various groups represented on the Council, nomination by the D.C. was essential in turning them into councillors. As such the Council could not claim to be representative and its members were also exposed to charges of being stooges. Perhaps the most important change envisaged by Kanyua was then the direct election of councillors by the groups of people they were supposed to represent. In this way, Kanyua claimed, councillors would be responsible to their electors who could replace them if they did not represent their views or failed to perform their duties satisfactorily. He demanded that the Administration should not interfere in the electoral process. The eagerness to achieve representative status and to remove the stigma of nomination can probably be better understood against the background of the Kenya African Union's repeated demands for a greater African share in the government of the country. Kanyua himself was at that time the chairman of the KAU's Nakuru branch. At a later stage, in early 1949, a Council's meeting considered "how best to ensure that the forthcoming Council is truly elected".²

"Under Kanyua's proposed constitution" the NAAC's composition would have differed from that of their Council. There were to be four

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 30.7.1948.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 25.2.1949.

councillors each representing the Kikuyu, Luo, Abaluhya and Mundi-Masai tribal groups and one to represent the Swahili community. Three representatives were allocated to the expanding sector of African traders and one to house and plot owners. Six councillors were to represent the major groups of African employees: civil servants, municipal staff, domestic servants, Native Civil Hospital staff, N.M.S.D.F. staff and the KFA staff. There were also to be two representatives of the two African Locations, Bondeni and Pangani. The Municipal African Welfare Officer and the headmaster of the African Union School were to be councillors ex officio, and one councillor was to be nominated by the D.C. The D.C. was to retain his chairmanship and the MAAC was to become the vice-chairman.

This was an interesting attempt to represent Nakuru Africans in their several roles. A significant change was the re-introduction of tribal representation. It was a recognition of the tribe as a viable urban category. The majority of seats on the Council, however, were allocated on the basis of strictly a-tribal urban categories. As the MAAC was increasingly becoming an integral part of the municipal system, the tendency was to view Africans primarily as townsmen.

The proposed constitution was approved by the MAAC meeting only when the D.C. cast his vote in favour, after the African votes split equally.¹ Possibly, councillors who were to lose their seats opposed the constitution although it had a progressive element in it. The first meeting of the newly constituted MAAC was held on 29th April 1949. There were two additions to the Council which differed from the proposed constitution. The two African members of the NMB joined the MAAC, as did the Location Superintendent.² This constitution was

¹N.M.S.D.F., minutes of MAAC meeting, 30.7.1948.

²N.M.S.D.F., Minutes of MAAC meeting, 29.4.1949.

in operation, with few changes, until the end of 1952. Two women's representatives joined the Council in 1950 and 1952 respectively.¹

By the beginning of 1952 the three representatives of the African business sector had been allocated to the hotel keepers, shop owners and market traders respectively.²

Between 1949 and 1952 there were also some changes in the NAAC's officers. At the end of 1949, following Nairobi's example, the D.C. became the Council's president, leaving the chairmanship to the NAAC. In the absence of the MAAO an ad hoc African chairman was to be elected.³ This change gave the D.C. the option of not participating regularly in Council meetings. Without the complete records of the Council in the early 1950s it is impossible to know whether he used this option. He certainly did so later in the 1950s.⁴ Since the NAAC was primarily pre-occupied with matters concerning the local authority thus increasingly becoming a predominantly municipal institution, the D.C.'s control from the chair was not essential. Late in 1949 an African was officially appointed to the new post of joint-chairman.⁵ In August 1950 the NAAC, acting on the advice of the MAAO, recommended that the D.C. should remain president, the MAAO become vice-president and an African be elected as chairman.⁶ This recommendation was not approved for by September 1950 the MAAO was still chairman and an African was appointed to the newly established post of vice-president.⁷ Early in 1952 the MAAO

¹ N.M.E.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 29.9.1950; NAAC to chairman, 17.3.1952.

² N.M.E.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 25.1.1952.

³ KNA, NDAR, 1949, p.1.

⁴ Interview: A.Pest.

⁵ N.M.E.S.D.F., Bondeni No. 18, January 1950.

⁶ N.M.E.S.D.F., NAAC, Minutes of FROPE meeting, 18.8.1950.

⁷ N.M.E.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 29.9.1950.

again took the initiative, suggesting the appointment of an African chairman in his stead. The idea was to transform the NAAC into a purely African institution attended by the E.C. only if he so wished. The MAAC argued that the Council was composed of Africans capable of conducting its meetings and business in a proper manner without his assistance from the chair. The E.C. saw no harm in the suggestion and endorsed it. The arguments of the P.C. who turned it down are worth quoting: "If Mr. Mandefield's The MAAC suggestion is implemented and the post of chairman of the Nakuru African Advisory Council is filled by an African it would give rise to the inference that the progress made by this body has been greater than that of the more advanced African District Council. Although it is likely that normal business could be performed adequately under an African, occasions are bound to arise upon which matters of importance may come up for discussion and under these circumstances I consider that the Advisory Council should not proceed without the advice and guidance of an experienced European chairman. I am therefore unable to agree that the Council should become a purely African body at present time."¹ He apparently deemed it necessary that in its function as a link between Government and subjects the Council should remain under European guidance.

Regarding the election of councillors, the NAAC resolved on 28th November 1949 that "each ward to be represented on the Council shall have the right to choose its own representative provided that the candidate for election has the necessary qualifications."² In 1950 a special electoral meeting of Nakuru traders elected their representatives

¹N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 7.2.1952.

²N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 28.11.1949. The qualifications are not known. One of them, at least, referred to length of residence in town. Interview: J.Njenga.

to the NAAC.¹ In January 1952 the residents of Pangani Location held their own electoral meeting.² In 1951 the Abaluhya Welfare Association met to elect its tribal representative to the Council,³ as did the other three tribal associations concerned. In 1950 the Nakuru Municipal African Staff Association elected the municipal staff representative.⁴ Similarly the Railway African Staff Union elected their representative in 1951.⁵ The RFA staff had a special electoral meeting possibly under the aegis of their staff association.⁶ Other groups of employees which did not have staff associations also held special electoral meetings. The women's representatives were elected in 1952 at meetings of the Nakuru African Women Association.⁷

Participation in the recorded electoral meetings ranged from twenty at the Abaluhya Welfare Association's meeting⁸ to one hundred and seventy-five at the traders' meeting. Low participation was not surprising in a population largely composed of migrant workers. These migrant workers, uncommitted to urban life, could hardly have been expected to take a keen interest in an urban institution which anyhow had few powers. It is significant, in this respect, that the traders' electoral meeting was the best attended. The traders had more vested

¹N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC, F&GC meeting, 21.4.1950.

²N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of Pangani residents meeting, 8.1.1952.

³N.A.F., A.W.A. to NAAC, 18.12.1951.

⁴N.M.S.S.F., Minutes of Nakuru Municipal African Staff Association meeting, 19.3.1950.

⁵N.M.S.S.D.F., Railway African Staff Union to NAAC, 2.1.1952.

⁶N.M.S.S.D.F., NAAC, Secretary to Chairman, 5.3.1952.

⁷N.M.S.S.D.F., NAAC, Secretary to Chairman, 17.3.1952.

⁸The election meeting of the A.W.A. could have been a committee meeting of the Association which claimed to represent the entire Abaluhya population in the town.

interests in the town and besides the N.A.C. could recommend traders for licences and other benefits.

The introduction of the new constitution in 1949 brought some changes in the Council's tribal composition. On the Council in 1949 there were nine Kikuyu, six Luo, four Abaluhya, one Kipsigis-Masai and two Swahili, one of whom was of Kikuyu origin. In 1951 there were eleven Kikuyu, five Luo, three Abaluhya, one Nandi-Kipsigis and one Swahili. In January 1952 there were nine Kikuyu, seven Luo, two Abaluhya, one M'kamba and one Nandi-Kipsigis. There had been a drop in the Kikuyu representation on the one hand and on the other an increase in that of the Nyanza tribes. Among the Nyanza, the Abaluhya lagged behind the Luo although they were more populous in the town.

The constitution, giving groups of employees seven of the fourteen non-tribal seats, favoured the Nyanza tribesmen, the majority of Nakuru's labour force. In 1949 there were four Luo, two Kikuyu and one Abaluhya councillors representing employees. In 1951 there were two Luo, two Kikuyu, two Abaluhya and one M'kamba and in 1952 four Luo, two Kikuyu and one Abaluhya.

The choice of candidates in this sector, however, was not always tribal. In 1950-1 the predominantly Nyanza railway workers elected the Kikuyu chairman of their staff association as their councillor. The N.A.C. staff demonstrated a fair distribution by electing a Luo, a Abaluhya and a Kikuyu in 1949, 1951 and 1952 respectively. In 1951 and 1952 the civil servants elected a M'kamba whose tribe formed a small minority in Nakuru. The K.F.A. was represented by Luo and Abaluhya alternately. The hospital staff, on the other hand, had a Luo representative throughout the period.

The Kikuyu controlled the traders' representation. In fact, a non-Kikuyu represented them only once, in 1949. This gave rise to

complaints from Nyanza traders about tribal bias in the traders' electoral meetings. Nyanza traders demanded a fairer tribal distribution of the three traders' seats.¹ The plain fact was that the Kikuyu, who accounted for the vast majority of African traders, exhibited a sense of tribal solidarity. The Kikuyu also controlled the women's seats.

In 1949-52, members of the NAAO seem on the whole to have had higher educational qualifications than any of their predecessors. This is perhaps explained by the fact that African employees tended to elect educated clerks as their representatives as did the tribal associations and the residents of the Locations. Education was increasingly becoming the most significant characteristic of the local urban elite. The traders, however, continued to elect councillors with little or no formal education. There were of course few African full-time traders who had formal education in this period.

Formal education was soon to become a prerequisite for membership of the NAAO. In April 1952 the Council resolved to change the language of its proceedings from Swahili to English. The motion put forward by the NAAO read as follows: "I consider it necessary that all council meetings in future should be conducted in English in order to afford Africans the opportunity of practising debate in this language, which is the one normally used in bodies comprising members from different races."² Thus the NAAO was conceived as a training ground for participation in the colony's multi-racial institutions. That the motion was carried by a majority of twelve votes to eight in a Council with a substantial educated majority was hardly surprising. This decision

¹ See above, p.

² NAAO, 4.4.1952, p.10.

had two important results. First, uneducated Africans were then to be excluded de facto from future Councils. Second, there was a sharp decrease in the interest shown by the African public in the NAAC's meetings. Whereas in 1950 up to 350 and in 1951 up to 250 Africans attended the Council meetings, in July 1952 only eighteen bothered to come, most of whom were themselves councillors.¹

During the period 1949-52 the NAAC consolidated its position as representative of Nakuru Africans vis-a-vis the Administration and the NMB. It was to the latter that the Council increasingly addressed itself. African welfare, African trade, African housing and so on were the domain of the NMB, which was responsible for the well-being of the town's African residents. The NAAC's role was largely that of communication, transmitting to the NMB the grievances and wishes of the African public. The councillors themselves, elected by wards, acted as channels of communication between the grass-roots and the NAAC.

The NAAC, modelling itself on the NMB, operated at two levels. Matters were first discussed by the Council's committees. In 1949 the Finance and General Purposes Committee joined the Trades Committee and the Social Welfare Committee to free the NAAC from its increasing volume of business. In 1951 the Trades Committee gave way to the newly established Works and Healths Committee. The Council itself took up the committees' decisions turning them, if approved, into recommendations submitted to the NMB through its Native Affairs Committee (NAC), which soon became largely redundant as a result of the expansion of the NAAC's scope.² The NAC became a mere channel of communication between the NAAC and the NMB, to a large extent losing its initiative.

¹N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWER April 1950; March, April, May, June, July 1951; July 1952.

²KNA, NDAR 1950, p.20.

The weakness of the NAAC within the municipal system was that it was only an advisory body. Although in 1950 an official report claimed that the NMB accorded the "greatest sympathy" to the NAAC's recommendations,¹ it did not always act upon them promptly and in some cases turned them down on budgeting grounds. This inevitably caused frustration for Council members.² In November 1950 the NAAC requested permission from the NMB to undertake certain minor executive responsibilities connected with the African Affairs Department's social activities.³ There is no evidence that even these minute responsibilities were delegated. On the other hand, in 1950 the Council attempted to exert stricter control over the NMB's executive powers in matters concerning Africans. It sought to review the monthly statements of Revenue and Expenditure of the Native Trust Fund which largely financed the activities of the African Affairs Department.⁴ Again it is not known whether this was granted.

Although the NAAC dealt largely with matters relating to the NMB, it was also used as a platform to air grievances connected with the various administrative agencies operating in the town. The AAF was asked to answer to allegations of maltreatment of Africans during a police raid.⁵ The Medical Officer was invited to answer questions and listen to complaints regarding the running of the Native Civil Hospital.⁶ In

¹ Ibid.

² Interview: J. Mandfield.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 24.11.1950.

⁴ N.M.S.S.D.F., NAAC, Minutes of F&G.C. meeting, 14.7.1950.

⁵ EAS, 3.6.1949, p.11.

⁶ N.M.S.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 27.5.1949.

the presence of the Labour Officer the Council passed a resolution expressing dissatisfaction with the inadequate increase in the Minimum Wage for Nakuru.¹ The subject of African education was often discussed in Council meetings.

In many ways the NAC had fulfilled the role originally envisaged for it by the European authorities, namely communicating the wishes and grievances of the Africans to the authorities. Over time, however, the Council developed a momentum of its own, taking initiatives aimed at changing, at the local level, the position of Africans within the municipal system. In 1949 and 1951 the NAC requested that Africans be appointed to the local Price Control Licensing Board, the Transport Licensing Board and the Liquor Licensing Board, bodies from which Africans were excluded.² In this the Council was representing the African traders who resented the fact that these important bodies which directly affected their material well-being were monopolised by Europeans and Asians. These requests were not granted.

They went further than that, when as early as 1949 a proposal was tabled in committee requesting an increase in the number of Africans on the NMB from two to six. If the NAC was destined to remain a purely advisory body, the only way to get rid of African municipal impotence was to increase their strength on the NMB. Had this been granted, the European majority, official and unofficial, would have been trimmed to one, Asians and Africans potentially forming a block of nine Board members. The NAC rejected the proposal and according to the minutes of the meeting his explanation was "accepted" by the committee which did not pursue the matter further.³ The African members of the NAC remained

¹ KMA/D.C/MCA/dep.2/386, S.L.O., R.V.P. Intelligence Report, August 1950, p.11.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., NAC, Minutes of W.M.C. meeting, 8.6.1951; minutes of F&G.P.C. meeting, 11.11.1949. SAS, 23.7.1951.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., NAC, minutes of F&G.P.C. meeting, 11.11.1949.

unable to insist upon their demands, and were completely dependent on the good-will of the authorities.

These authorities, however, were determined that they should set the pace of African political advance. Since the road to full African participation in the multi-racial system was very long, there was no need to rush. So long was it that, when in 1952 Nakuru's first Mayor conjured up a vision of Nakuru fifty years ahead, he took European supremacy in the town for granted.¹ Africans were expected to play the role assigned to them and not to jump the gun.

The NAAC also made efforts to establish contact with the African Members of Legco. The first step was to send them copies of the minutes of NAAC meetings.² Subsequently, in July 1951, the Council invited the Member for Rift Valley Province to address its meeting. This meeting passed a resolution calling for the nomination of one African to represent the settled areas in Legco, the then Member for the RVP to represent the land units only. The argument was that "thousands of Africans have no central authority to which they can bring their grievances excepting towns, where Advisory Councils exist." The urban Council thus took upon itself the representation of squatters living in the town's hinterland. The same meeting also demanded that education for squatters be considered.³

Thus while accepting the limitations of operating within the system, the NAAC tried to represent Nakuru Africans over a wide range of issues. The NAAC's unwillingness to confine itself to an advisory role can be partly explained by the fact that some of the leading councillors were also actively involved in the Kenya African Union (KAU)

¹ Interview: N.M. Hardy.

² N.M.S.S.D.F., NAAC, Minutes of F.L.C.P.C. meeting, 19.1.1951.

³ EAS, 20.7.1951, p.1; 23.7.1951, p.5.

Karyua, the most prominent member of the NAAC, was until 1950 the local chairman of KAU. E. Mwan, E.P. Uetata, Z. Adholla, H. Mandwa and H.K. Kama were also prominent KAU leaders in Nakuru.¹ As KAU leaders they were involved in a party which challenged the legitimacy of colonial rule. It was not always easy for them to adhere strictly to the different political frame of reference of the NAAC. Thus it was Adholla who proposed to increase the number of African members of the NMB from two to six in 1949. It was Adholla again who at the NAAC's meeting with the Member for the RVP, attacked the political principle which condemned the African majority to a minor voice in Lagos.

There were no changes in the level of African representation on the NMB between 1949 and 1952. There was a distinct sense of frustration in being an insignificant minority in a European-dominated Board. In 1951 when the African NMB members dared to support an Asian motion calling for a review of the Board's constitution (probably hoping that African representation would also be considered) they had to listen to a "lecture" which vividly illustrated the humiliating experiences which African Board members had to undergo. Hardy, the Board's deputy-chairman, reminded the Africans that they were "a backward people, who are being supported by the most politically mature and tolerant race of people which exists in the entire world to-day." He urged them not to try to run before they could walk, nor walk before they could crawl,² a favoured settler metaphor.

But Africans who sought to increase their representation on the NMB had the democratic argument on their side; they represented the overwhelming majority of Nakuru's population. In 1949 the MAAG

¹ See below, pp.

² ibid., 3.9.1951, p.5.

produced a counter-argument explaining to African councillors that representation on local bodies should not be racially proportionate, but rather based on their relative contribution to the municipal treasury. Two African NMB members, he claimed, represented a "very fair" proportion.¹ This was, incidentally, the same argument which was later unsuccessfully deployed by the Asians when they sought to review the Board's constitution.² In 1951, when the NAAC again requested that African representation on the NMB should be increased, the Board's deputy-chairman told councillors that he thought that the Board would not agree to it at that stage; in addition, it would not be "sound practice". Again the report stated that the NAAC "accepted" this point of view and that councillors said that they were "very happy" to continue with their two members.³

The councillors, however, expressed their wish that NAAC members be trained in municipal work. The most that the NMB was prepared to agree to was that two African advisory councillors be allowed to participate at the Board's committee meetings as observers. It was originally decided that they would take no part in discussion and would be asked to withdraw should committee members so wish.⁴ It was eventually conceded, however, that they would be permitted, at the invitation of the committee chairman, to ask questions and express their views. They were not, however, to have a vote. This arrangement was to operate for a period of six months and then be reviewed.

¹ N.M.S.D.F., NAAC, Minutes of F&G.P.C. meeting, 11.11.1949.

² NAAC, 18.2.1950, p.2; 3.9.1951, p.5.

³ NAAC, 2.7.1951, p.2.

⁴ Ibid.

The two African NMB members seem to have strictly confined themselves to matters affecting the African population. On no occasion were they recorded as having expressed their views on matters not directly related to the welfare of the African population. They regarded themselves primarily as representatives of the NAAC; their main duty was to ensure that Council recommendations were properly considered. In some cases they had to press the NMB for the implementation of approved recommendations.¹ They tried to defend African interests but were ultimately dependent on the European majority.

European support was forthcoming on many small issues connected with the improvement of services and amenities when such required no money raised from rates. On more important issues like delaying the demolition of Bondeni Location, the growing of grain crops on the municipal shambas or the review of the question of African representation on the Board, they received no support from European Board members.²

African Board members discovered that on certain issues and in pursuit of African interests alliances with the Asian members were necessary. The Asians, involved in their own struggle against the European majority, appreciated the advantage of having support from members of a different racial community. Thus Asian and African Board members combined, in 1950, in opposition to the introduction of new Overcrowding By-laws. Although the worst overcrowding was in the African area of the town, the NMB intended to deploy these by-laws against the Asian community. Kanyua, however, representing the views of the African Board members, opposed the by-laws in principle: " I think it is incorrect to pass a by-law which we ourselves will be the biggest

¹ KNA, Minutes of NMB, M.H.C. meeting, 9.3.1949.

² KNA, NMB, minutes of F.R.C.P.C. meeting, 19.1.1949; 23.3.1949.

offenders against." On that occasion only, the Asian-African alliance took advantage of low European attendance and was able to temporarily delay the application of the by-laws.¹ When an Asian member put forward, in the same year, an alternative proposal to alleviate overcrowding in the town, he was seconded by an African Board member.² In 1951 when an attempt was made by some European Board members to impose more stringent conditions on the issue of licences for African and Asian tea-shops, the members of the two communities involved found themselves natural allies.³ Again in 1949 the Africans received Asian support in their opposition to the prohibition of the cultivation of grain crops on municipal shambas.⁴ Towards the end of 1952 some prominent Nakuru Asians made a gesture of political support to the Africans organising a racially mixed mass meeting, chaired by an Asian, in which Kenyatta's counsel, Pritt, and his colleagues, spoke.⁵

The alliance between Africans and Asians on the Board was, however, far from firm. There were important issues where the interests of the two racial communities were sharply opposed. Whereas Africans were pressing for the expansion of trade, the Asians, in some cases, blocked schemes designed to advance African business, seeing them as a threat to their own position.⁶ A less serious bone of contention was the repeated African demand for the removal of the Asian crenatoria from the midst of the African Location.⁷ On the major issue of African

¹ EAF, 30.5.1950, p.5; 8.6.1951, p.13.

² EAF, 6.6.1950, p.3.

³ EAF, 9.3.1951, p.6.

⁴ KNA, NMB, Minutes of F.M.C. meeting, 14.1.1949.

⁵ Kenya Weekly News, 19.12.1952, p.8.

⁶ Interview: J. Mandefield.

⁷ KNA, NMB, Minutes of W.M.C. meeting, 9.3.1949.

representation on the Board, the Asians' attitude was not, in sum, vastly different from that of the Europeans.¹ When the question of African observers at Board committee meetings was brought up in 1951, the senior Asian member, Dr. Shah, paid lip-service to the Africans, saying that Board members had a responsibility to the Africans "to see that they were fitted for the task of local government as much as possible and as soon as possible".² In practice, however, he showed no sympathy for the basic African demand for increased representation on the Board. At the same meeting when Asian and African Board members voted together for a review of the Board's constitution, Dr. Shah evoked the principle of representation according to rates paid by each community.³ Since rates were paid on property, this could only have meant a reduction in African representation. In addition, of course, Asian Board members had joined hands with some European members in 1947 to delay full African representation on the NMB. While valuing potential African support, Asians realized that any substantial increase in African representation threatened their own position.

There were Europeans on the NMB who regarded African cooperation with the Asians as a betrayal. Explaining in retrospect his "lecture" to the African Board members who supported the Asian motion, the then deputy-chairman said: "I was very frustrated because it seemed that the Africans did not understand what was being done for them and that they were not trying to move in the direction of the way of life we thought was right for them."⁴

¹ M. Parker, Political and Social (CO), pp. 183-8, referring to Nairobi. Parker does not differentiate between European and Asian attitudes towards this problem.

² EAS, 2.7.1951, p.2.

³ EAS, 3.9.1951, p.5.

⁴ Interview: M.H.Hardy.

The Decline of the Nakuru African Advisory Council, 1952-1961

The political crisis in Kenya which culminated in the declaration of the State of Emergency in October 1952¹ was bound to have an effect on the nature and development of African participation in local government. In its campaign against political opposition and subversion, Government put forward co-operation and "loyalism" as the political and ideological alternatives.² It was natural for Government to try to use the NAAC for the propagation of "loyalism" and to present it as one alternative to political opposition. Following the assassination of T. Mbotela, the moderate ex-KAU vice-president and the vice-chairman of the Nairobi African Advisory Council in late 1952, the D.C. quoted a famous speech made by Mbotela, shortly before his death, at a NAAC meeting: "Therefore let us each shine in our own little corner towards creating a better atmosphere and towards a better Kenya." Adding his own interpretation the D.C. said: "These were simple, but brave words from a brave man, and a warning to all those misguided men who imagine they can win the minds and bodies of others by violence and threats, that always their path will be blocked by people who value freedom of thought and speech."³ In January 1953 the Mayor of Nakuru, who came, for the first time, to an NAAC meeting, congratulated councillors on their good work and promised the full co-operation of the then Nakuru Municipal Council (NMC).⁴ On the occasion of the coronation of the Queen a special NAAC meeting was convened to approve the Loyal Address which inter alia said: "The members of the Nakuru African Advisory Council...

¹ See below, pp.

² See below, pp.

³ N.M.A.S.D.F., Minutes of NAAC meeting, 28.11.1952.

⁴ NMA, Minutes of NAAC meeting, 30.1.1953.

present our most loyal and humble duty to Your Majesty ..."¹ In November 1953 the D.C. organised a reception for the NAAC members under the auspices of the Njoro Settlers Association.²

The spirit of "loyalism" was also reflected in the composition of the NAAC. It became increasingly clear that there was no place in the NAAC for people who were not absolutely loyal to the Government. In this respect 1953 was a year of transition. Four councillors were detained during that year for alleged membership of Mau Mau. Three of them were Kikuyu and one Luo, and two of them were also municipal councillors. In 1954, at least three of the four Kikuyu advisory councillors were leading "loyalists" in the town. In that year another Luo member of the NAAC was detained for alleged membership of Mau Mau. In 1956-7 all the Kikuyu members of the then General Ward Council were leading "loyalists" and/or Torchbearers. When in 1956, Kenyua, the prominent "loyalist", was suspected of having been a Mau Mau member in the distant past, he was prevented by the D.C. from standing for the General Ward Council election.³ "Loyalty" was also a prerequisite for the nomination of Kikuyu as municipal councillors.

It was not enough, however, merely to impart "loyalism" within the NAAC. It was more convincing to show Africans that political co-operation was a viable and worthwhile alternative, that whereas "futile" political opposition led to violence and self-destruction, political participation brought about peaceful progress. It was thus essential for Government to prove that the NAAC was making progress and

¹ NMA, Minutes of NAAC special meeting, 19.5.1953.

² NMA, Minutes of NAAC meeting, 27.11.1953.

³ NMA, Nakuru District Handing Over Report, 1956, McEntee to Dawson, p.7.

that African participation in the Nakuru Municipal Council (NMC) was increasing.

Since there was no intention of changing the advisory nature of the NAAC, the main cause of African frustration, a well-tried method of showing progress was by changing the Council's constitution. Accordingly, towards the end of June 1952, the NAAC approved a new constitution. The main reform was the introduction of representation by geographical wards instead of representation by interest groups. The town was to be divided into six wards represented on the NAAC by seven councillors (one large ward was to be represented by two councillors). According to the NAAC the aim of the new constitution was to encourage public-spirited Africans to represent broader-based interests. It was intended to be a training for Africans in serving on central and local government bodies, in which a constituency system was practised.

In addition to the ward representatives, however, there was to be an equal number of ex officio councillors.¹ The African-nominated municipal councillors were also to be members of the NAAC. The existing NAAC committees were abolished and two new ones, the Standing Committee and the Community Management Committee took their place.²

A press report summing up the proposed constitution stated that "the new constitution will therefore have an unofficial majority".³ The truth was that in terms of representation the new constitution marked a step backwards, whereas the committees had elected majorities, this was not to be the case with the plenary council. There were seven

¹ They were as follows: The MAAO, the Town Engineer or his nominee, the headmaster of the African Union School, the African Medical Officer, the African Senior Police Inspector, an African Labour Officer and an African Health Inspector.

² Ibid., 1.7.1952, p.5.

³ Ibid.

elected unofficial councillors, seven official councillors and the three African municipal councillors who were the D.C.'s nominees. In addition, the M.A.C. president was the D.C. and in his absence his duties were to be discharged by a deputy nominated by him. In the previous Council the vast majority of the councillors had been elected. The introduction of representation on a broad basis was hardly compensation for turning the M.A.C. into a body dominated by a nominated majority largely composed of government or municipal employees.

In September 1952 a new progressive element was added to the constitution, namely election by secret ballot. According to the M.A.C. the aim of this innovation was "to try and educate the people for the system". "Training for the system" had become a substitute for actual participation in it. Africans seem to have regarded the ballot-box as a more important introduction than ward representation. After the election had taken place Kanyua said: "The election, having been successful, set an example to Kenya and the whole world that an African does not fear the ballot box..."¹

Kanyua also regarded the reformed Council as "a big departure from tribal associations." In the first place tribal representatives as such had been eliminated. Secondly, while the secret ballot did not rule out voting on tribal lines, it enabled those who had rid themselves of 'tribalism' to exercise their choice free from tribal pressures.

Elections by secret ballot, however, were held only once, since the system was found to be too expensive.² Subsequent elections were conducted in the old way of lining up behind the different candidates.

¹ N.P.A., Minutes of M.A.C. meeting, 30.1.1953.

² Interview: J. Mandefield.

This system was unpopular, especially with educated Africans, as it exposed individuals to pressure. Under this system voting across tribal lines was very rare. "Training of Africans" was invoked liberally but practised only when it could be achieved 'on the cheap'.

The organizers could have claimed that the first elections held in December 1952 were successful. Some three thousand people had registered on the Voters' Roll and 70% of them turned up on polling day. There was only one uncontested ward.² There were indications of tribal solidarity at these elections. Two Luo residents of Manganji location pressed for the inclusion of another Luo as candidate for that ward, after the closing of nominations, claiming that there was no Nyanza candidate for the ward.³ In fact, the Luo Union discussed the question of candidates for these elections under the new constitution at one of its meetings.⁴ S.L.Ojuka, a Luo, attributed his ward victory to his being an inter-tribal candidate, having had a Kikuyu as one of his seconders.⁵ The truth was, however, that he chose to stand for a ward which had a large number of his fellow tribesmen,⁶ and the two seats for that ward were won by prominent Luos.

Of the seven elected councillors there were three Luo, three Kikuyu and one Naluhya.⁷ In only one case did two candidates of the same tribe contest a seat. They were both Kikuyu and stood for the

¹ Interview: R.A.Kubeka.

² NMA, MAR 1952, African Affairs, p.2.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., Ouma and Ajwang to NAC, 24.11.1952.

⁴ See above, p.

⁵ Interview: S.L.Ojuka.

⁶ N.M.S.S.D.F., Bondeni North, Voters' Roll. It included the Railway quarters where the Luo were numerically very strong.

⁷ NMA, MAR, 1952, African Affairs, p.2.

l'angani ward.¹ The success of the Luo candidates is worth noting particularly in comparison with the Abaluhya who were numerically at least as strong. Among the official councillors there were three Kikuyu, two Abaluhya and one Luo. There were also two Kikuyu and one Luo municipal councillors on the M.A.C.

An important consequence of these elections was the reinforcement of the M.A.C. as the domain of the educated. Among the fifteen candidates there were ten clerks, a municipal cashier, a community development assistant, a court president, a court elder and a businessman, with the exception of the last all had had formal education and were fluent in English. The official councillors and the municipal councillors were also educated. This was, according to the M.A.C., wholly intentional: "... emphasis would be laid during 1953 on the necessity for training socially conscious Africans of good education to represent liberally the views of their fellows..." In this respect he was happy with the election results: "This social experiment has proceeded smoothly ... and has resulted in the election of a body of Africans who, I feel confident, have rid themselves of the tendency to travel within the narrow tribal limits and are prepared to survey the whole scene..."²

Towards the end of 1952 the Africans got their third representative on the Nakuru Municipal Council (N.M.C.). It was another token concession aimed at proving that African participation in the municipal system was making headway. The observers from the M.A.C. continued to participate in the N.M.C. committee meetings. In addition, African advisory councillors were permitted to be members of the Bondeni Flats Allocation

¹N.M.C.S.R.F., M.A.C. Candidates for Election, 1952.

²ibid., 31.12.1952.

Committee, the Corcoration Committee and the Hospital Visiting Committee of the NMC.¹ In February 1953 Kanyua, the senior African municipal councillor, was appointed chairman of the then African Affairs Committee (AAC)² of the NMC. The Mayor did his best to build the occasion up: "This is something of an achievement. To my knowledge this is the first time an African member of a Municipal Council has been appointed to the chair of the African Affairs Committee."³ For Kanyua it was something of a reward for his being an ardent "loyalist". Since, however, the AAC had been losing ground since the formation of the NMAC, this new appointment scarcely increased African influence in municipal decision-making.

Nakuru Africans, on the whole, appear not to have responded favourably to the attempts to popularize formal political participation. Instead of opening a new and promising era for the NMAC, the year of 1953 witnessed the beginning of its decline. Whereas in 1952 the administrative report summed up the NMAC's work as an unqualified success,⁴ in 1954 it conceded that "the Council seemed to lose touch with the general public".⁵

Faced with a declining NMAC, the municipal authorities resorted again to reconstituting the Council. According to the Annual Report for 1954, the explicit aim of this was "to increase public interest in local government".⁶ In fact, when in December 1953 the first memorandum proposing the constitutional changes was published, more far-reaching aims were revealed.⁷ The proposed NMAC new constitution formed

¹ NMA/General Ward Council (GWC), NMAC to T.C., 9.2.1953.

² This was the successor of the Native Affairs Committee.

³ NA, 28.2.1953.

⁴ KNA, NDAR 1952, p.26.

⁵ KNA, NDAR 1954, p.24.

⁶ KNA, NDAR 1954, p.22.

⁷ NMA, AAC, Memorandum by the NMAO, 2.12.1953.

part of a plan aimed at tightening the municipal authorities' control over the expanding African Locations. It was in this respect a by-product of the Emergency and could be seen as the NMA's contribution to the anti-Mau Mau campaign. It followed the example of Nairobi City Council which had adopted a similar plan.

According to the memorandum Makuru's African area was to be divided into six villages as basic administrative units. Each village was to have a committee composed of six members, each elected by six sub-divisions. Each committee was to have an elected chairman and the MAAO or his deputy could attend committee meetings whenever they wished to. The functions of the proposed village committees marked a significant departure from the pure concept of consultation: "The prime function of the village committees shall be to assist the MAAO and his staff in the general administration of the village." The village committees were to operate under the guidance of the MAAO and assume responsibility for the general health, welfare and well-being of the village residents, and for care and maintenance of municipal property. Most important of all, however, the village committees were to assist in the maintenance of law and order. This was a totally new element in the concept of African participation in the municipal system.

Above the village level there were to be three wards, each of which would be assigned to one of the African municipal councillors. The ward committee was to be composed of two representatives from each of its two component villages, with the African municipal councillor as chairman. The functions of the ward committees were more in tune with the MAAC experience. They were to act as consultative bodies for the African municipal councillors and to provide two-way channels of communication between the NMA and the African residents of the wards.

At the top of the proposed hierarchy there was to be the General Ward Council, with the D.C. as president, the MAAC as vice-president, the senior African municipal councillor as chairman, and the deputy MAAC as secretary. Official control over the proceedings of the GWC was thus guaranteed. The GWC's membership was to be composed of all chairmen of the village committees, the African municipal councillors and two nominees of the D.C. and the MAAC respectively. Its functions were to consider complaints, representations and suggestions relating to the administration of the African area. It could make recommendations to the ARC of the NMC in connection with the above. Each member of the GWC was to assume responsibility for one aspect of the administration and welfare of Nakuru Africans and would report on it to the GWC at each meeting.

In February 1954 the three African municipal councillors were appointed to the three proposed wards. The elections to the village committees were to be completed by March 6, 1954. By the end of March the committees were to meet and choose their representatives for the ward committees. Ward committees were to meet during April and the inaugural meeting of the GWC was to be held on 30th April 1954. The final meeting of the existing NAAC was fixed for 26th February 1954.¹

This programme, however, was never carried out. In December 1954 a sub-committee of the AAC recommended some insignificant amendments to the proposed constitution,² the most important of which concerned the authority of the ward councils³ to allocate funds for road repairs.

¹NMA, AAC, MAAC to AAC, 2.2.1954.

²NMA, Minutes of AAC meeting, 13.12.1954.

³A new name for the ward committees.

tree planting, grass sowing and so on. It was argued that such executive powers would considerably increase the effectiveness of the administration of the African sector.

This amended constitution was also not applied. The final draft, which was eventually implemented, was drawn up in December 1955.¹ The major difference from previous drafts was the elimination of the proposed village committees. The battle against Mau Mau was being won and there was no longer the need for the strict system of control originally envisaged. There remained the three ward councils and the GWC. The North, Central and South ward councils were to be composed of five elected representatives from defined sub-divisions, an African municipal councillor and a nominee of the D.C. The composition of the GWC was identical with that of the original proposal. Three qualifications were required for candidature for the ward councils: 1. the ability to speak English, 2. support from seven residents of the ward, 3. residence in the ward for which the candidate was standing. The first qualification guaranteed the continued exclusiveness of the GWC.

The first elections to the ward councils held in January 1956 proved that the newly constituted advisory machinery was no more popular than its predecessor. In the South Ward four seats were contested and one candidate was returned unopposed; in the North Ward one seat was contested and four candidates were returned unopposed; in the Central Ward all four candidates were returned unopposed.² The by-elections held in 1957 for vacant seats were even less encouraging. Only in the North Ward were the two seats contested. In the South Ward the two candidates were returned unopposed and in the Central Ward no nominations

¹NMA, AAC, Ward Councils, 7.12.1955.

²NMA, GWC, MAAO to Provincial Information Officer, 10.1.1956.

were submitted.¹ The Annual Report for 1958 admitted that the ward councils had not functioned effectively.² The local authorities, in their attempt to revitalize the NMAC, chose to extend the advisory structure to a more localized level by forming a hierarchy of advisory bodies. They overlooked the fact that a body having no real independent powers or responsibilities, and a mere subsidiary of the European-dominated municipal system, was inherently incapable of mobilising wider support.

The decline of the GWC and the ward councils, particularly from 1958 onwards, must be viewed against the background of the re-emergence of nationalist politics in Kenya as a whole and in Nakuru in particular. By 1958 it was becoming increasingly clear that the political future for Africans did not lie with advisory bodies. As will be shown later, the Nakuru District Congress was a party which aroused the interest and the enthusiasm of Nakuru's Africans at all social levels. In addition to its national political activities the Congress took up the very local issues, supposed to be the domain of the GWC, and pursued them in a more vigorous manner than could the GWC. Individuals with complaints against the Administration or the NMC increasingly approached the Congress rather than the GWC.³ The inadequacies of the GWC as the protector of African interests were thus demonstrated and it became discredited.

¹NMA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 11.4.1957.

²NMA, NDAR, 1958, p.19.

³See below, pp.

The general political orientation of the GWC's members underwent definite changes between 1956 and 1960. In 1956 an element of pronounced Kikuyu "loyalists" was well represented in the GWC. In 1958, the Nakuru District Congress began to have an impact upon the GWC. In early 1960 six of the councillors were active Congress leaders, among them the party's chairman and treasurer. This did not always mean a change of personnel, since some councillors, previously uninvolved in nationalist politics, had joined the Congress. Although these councillors were not Congress representatives as such, the large measure of overlap between those involved in nationalist and municipal politics was significant. Although the Congress had some of its prominent leaders on the GWC, it chose to deal in many matters directly with the authorities concerned.

The GWC, like its predecessor the NAAC, was dominated by educated Africans. Some of these, who had started their careers as clerks, later established themselves as leading African businessmen in the town, making use of contacts they had made in their municipal work. Notable among them were J.F.G.Kanyua and S.L.Ojuka. The GWC, aware of having lost touch with the African public, made a series of attempts to revitalize itself and to become a representative body in a period of rapid change. In June 1957 the Council discussed allegations that holding their meetings in the remote Municipal Council Chamber made it difficult for interested Africans to attend them. The GWC failed to respond and declined to change their venue.¹ Again in June 1959 this issue was discussed when the South Ward recommended that GWC meetings should be held in Menengai Hall in the centre of the African sector. The GWC declined once more, probably believing that meeting in the

¹ NMA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 27.6.1957.

Municipal Council Chamber conferred added importance upon them.¹

Council members resorted to the old formula of reforming the GWC in order to revive public interest. The first move was made in September 1958 when Council recommended that the secret ballot should be introduced in ward council elections.² There is no evidence to suggest that this was ever implemented. In March 1959, the abolition of the ward councils and the replacement of them with GWC committees such as Trades, Education, Health, Finance and Welfare was proposed. It was argued that the ward councils were not representative of ward residents.³ This proposal also fell on stony ground. Another idea aired that year was the formation of a Parish Council for the African sector of the town in place of the GWC. It was intended that it would have some executive power.⁴ This too was never acted upon.

All these unfulfilled initiatives not only failed to revive public interest, but also seem to have killed whatever enthusiasm remained in the GWC itself. In May 1960 the D.C. complained that by not meeting regularly the GWC was failing to perform its basic function. He told the Council that several urgent matters upon which the Town Clerk required their views had been pending for some months. In spite of its ineffectiveness the GWC was still an important link in the chain of municipal decision-making in matters concerning Africans. This rebuke by the D.C. sparked off a new move to reform the Council. Council members proposed to dissolve the ward councils and the GWC. Village committees would replace ward councils and a new GWC would be composed

¹ KNA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 25.6.1959.

² KNA, Minutes of GWC sub-committee meeting, 18.9.1958; GWC meeting, 25.9.1958.

³ KNA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 26.3.1959.

⁴ KNA, Nakuru District Handing Over Report, 1959, Post to De Warren Waller, p.5. See below.

of the African municipal councillors, the chairmen of the village committees, the D.C., the MAAO and two nominees.¹ A special sub-committee recommended that there should be six village committees and that the membership of the GWC be increased to twenty.² There was certainly a shortage of new ideas.

In September 1960 doubts were expressed by GWC members as to whether people would register as voters in the village committee elections, and yet another sub-committee was appointed to review the whole matter.³ In January 1961 the Council decided to go ahead with the scheme and to form village committees as soon as possible.⁴ In November of that year the Assistant Social Services Officer⁵ told the GWC that despite publicity he had failed to secure enough candidates for the village committee elections. Again a committee was elected "to go into the matter",⁶ and meanwhile the ward councils had already been dissolved in early 1961.⁷ In February 1962 the committee appointed "to go into the matter" recommended that elections to the village committees should be deferred until Government announced their proposals for a new local government structure. This sensible recommendation received a cool welcome by the Council which decided that in view of the failure of the Social Services Department to establish village committees, and in view of the fact that vacant seats on the GWC had to be filled, a special GWC meeting be called to consider the situation.⁸ There is no more evidence about

¹ NMA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 12.5.1960.

² NMA, Minutes of GWC sub-committee meeting, 16.5.1960.

³ NMA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 29.9.1960.

⁴ NMA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 26.1.1961.

⁵ In 1961 the Municipal African Affairs Officer was retitled the Social Services Officer. The African Affairs Department became the Social Services Department.

⁶ NMA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 30.11.1961.

⁷ NMA, MAR, 1961, African Affairs.

⁸ NMA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 1.2.1962.

further attempts to reform the GWC until it was dissolved just prior to independence in 1963.. Its dismal performance at this late stage amounted to little more than an attempt to fend off the inevitable.

The persistence of the GWC in its attempts to revitalize itself was astonishing, since at the same time the councillors' interest in its meetings was declining. In December 1960 the D.C. expressed his dismay at the fact that the last three meetings had been put off for lack of a quorum.¹ In a letter to the AAC shortly after, the D.C. threatened to disband the GWC unless the situation improved.² The threat seems to have helped a little, but there were further cases of inquorate meetings.³ Some institutions seem to possess a self-generating dynamism which outlives their usefulness and indeed their raison d'être.

In their attempts to pump blood into the dry veins of the advisory structure, the eager African councillors seem to have fallen into the same trap as had the Administration before. They both carried out superficial constitutional changes rather than the necessary soul-searching evaluation of the role and functions of the whole system in this period of rapid transition. As the decade drew to its close there was a definite shift in political orientation and priorities for Kenyan Africans. In 1958-60 the Nakuru District Congress was the mouthpiece of the African desire to rule Kenya. After the first Lancaster House conference of early 1960 African parties and political leaders throughout the country centred their interest on the national executive power. Locally, in 1960-3, Nakuru Africans were intensely involved in the fierce struggle between KANU and KADU branches which reflected the

¹NMA, GWC, D.C. to all councillors, 22.12.1960

²NMA, Minutes of AAC meeting, 17.1.1961.

³N.M.S & S.D.F., MAAO to T.C., 7.7.1961.

national struggle for the leadership of independent Kenya.¹ In this context municipal politics was at best peripheral.

It is difficult to comprehend the insistence of members of the GWC on reviving institutions whose very existence was anchored in the reality of European domination of local government. One explanation for this was the composition of the GWC, especially in the early 1960s. Most of the councillors were ex-leaders of the Nakuru District Congress who had been deposed by KANU militants during 1960.² This may have been one way of satisfying their frustrated political ambitions. But even if they were forced out of the main political arena, they could still concentrate all their energies on the struggle against the very legitimacy of European supremacy in local government. The interest in the GWC can also be explained by the economic benefits which could be derived, at least by the businessmen among the councillors, from close contact with the municipal authorities.

The Shifting of the Balance on the Nakuru Municipal

Council 1957-1963

The GWC did press for increased African representation on the NMC, but their preoccupation with reviving the Council dissipated their efforts. In fact, the very acceptance of the validity of the GWC as representative of the African public weakened their argument for increased African influence on the NMC. The last time African representation was increased, from two to three, had been in 1952. The height of the Emergency was certainly not an appropriate time for demanding increased representation. The issue was re-opened in March

¹ See below, chapter Six.

² See below, pp. 283-284.

1957, when M. Kanyua suggested in the GWC that the number of African municipal councillors should be increased and that direct election should replace nomination.¹ Interestingly, these radical demands came first from a politician committed to "loyalism". It is possible that he was sensing approaching political change. In March 1958 the matter was again discussed in the GWC at the initiative of the South Ward Council. The GWC resolved that Africans should get at least two additional seats on the NMC and that all five African municipal councillors be directly elected.² In November of that year the Nakuru District Congress expressed the same demands in a letter to the Minister for Health and Local Government.³

On 21st February 1959 the matter was discussed by a special sub-committee of the NMC.⁴ The sub-committee was composed of four European councillors and only one African municipal councillor, S.L. Ojuka. The Asians, who at that stage might have been sympathetic to the African request, were excluded.⁵ Ojuka, presenting the African case, based their request on three arguments: 1. there was too great a burden on the shoulders of the three existing African councillors. 2. the Africans of Nakuru were permanent town dwellers. 3. the size of the African population in relation to its representation. The Europeans showed no sympathy with the request. First of all they wanted to divorce the question from politics. The chairman "urged all present to avoid confusion with the local government's responsibility here in Nakuru and the political outlook of the country as a whole". Another warned that "politics must not be allowed to damage or prejudice the work already carried out

¹ N.M.S.S D.F., Kanyua to GWC, 10.3.1957.

² NMA, Minutes of GWC meeting, 27.3.1958.

³ NMA, AAC, Agenda for meeting held on 18.11.1958.

⁴ NMA, Minutes of Sub-Committee (African representation) meeting, 21.2.1959.

⁵ By then, with independence in sight, Asians were beginning to change their political orientation.

by the Council." There seems to have been a real fear of nationalist politics among European municipal councillors. But politics, of course, is about power, and the NMC still had the power to decide on many issues affecting Africans. Thus the NMC could not hope to escape the attention of African political leaders.

There was also the usual argument of quality rather than quantity, a classically anti-democratic one. The Mayor stated "that he doubted very much whether increased representation based solely upon quantity without reference to quality would serve the needs of the African community or the town as a whole." He said that training at a lower level must commence before the question of representation could be considered. And there was the paternalistic nonsense that "every member of the Municipal Council served all races." It was also claimed that there were few Africans suitable for such high office.

In order to avoid the issue of change in the balance of power on the NMC, European councillors proposed to expand the responsibilities of the GWC. This was how the idea of a Parish Council for the African sector came about. In conclusion the sub-committee rejected the African request on the ground that "there was no evidence before them which indicated in any way that the affairs of the Council were not at the present time administered efficiently, nor that the services of the Council could be improved by the increase of two African representatives."¹

At a NMC meeting, the sub-committee's report was accepted.² It appeared, however, that ^{not} all the European councillors were happy with the attitudes demonstrated by the sub-committee. Prominent in this respect was Mrs. Blater, who said: "The important thing to my mind, is not whether African representation is increased, but whether we realize

¹ NMA, Report of sub-committee (African representation), 2.3.1959.

² ibid., 27.3.1959, p.7.

what our attitudes are to it all." She regarded the problem facing the Council as that of Kenya in miniature, a more realistic view. She asked the question: "why has all our good work only resulted in opposition in this country." She went on: "I submit that there is in our attitude a headmasterishness, a demand for gratitude and humble audience, and this is self-righteousness."¹ Mrs. Slater performed the role of the African "lobby" among the European councillors,² and there may have been other realists among their number.

European councillors, however, continued to advocate the alternative of increasing the responsibilities of the GWC. In April 1959 the Mayor invited the Minister for Health and Local Government to discuss the matter.³ At the meeting held on 14th May 1959 the African participants wanted to deal separately with the issues of African representation on the NMC and the formation of a Parish Council, since they realized that the latter militated against the former. The Minister refused because he regarded them as "essentially integrated". He did not see any "logical basis" for increased African representation and all he was prepared to consider was an adjustment in the NMC, about which he did not elaborate. He, as well, preferred some form of Parish Council.

Yet, within a year, the situation had changed completely. In April 1960 the NMC's constitution was amended to accommodate three African elected councillors, two nominated ones, and one African Alderman. There was also a change in favour of the Asian community but no alteration in the European representation.⁴ These changes had been

¹ Ibid.

² Interview: S.L.Ojuka.

³ NMA, Minutes of F&G.P.C. meeting, 22.4.1959.

⁴ KNA, NDAR, 1960, p.6. EAS, 29.4.1960, p.6.

brought about by the rapidly changing political prospects of the country as a whole. A year earlier some Europeans still believed that some sort of multi-racial constitutional settlement was possible. The less realistic among them could visualize themselves as guiding the destiny of Nakuru for a long time to come. Only thus can their late insistence on gradualism be explained. The first Lancaster House conference, early in 1960, however, allowed that the 'wind of change' blew hard in Kenya. The fate of local administration could not be divorced from the fate of the colonial government. In Nakuru, as in Kenya as a whole, the European community resigned itself to the fact that the future of the town and the country was to be in African hands. It was only surprising that Africans were not stridently demanding a larger share in the NMC and that generally the transfer of power within Nakuru's local authority was slower than in the central government.

The elections for the three African municipal seats were held in September 1960. Of the four candidates, three were prominent leaders of the newly formed KANU branch.¹ There were among them two Luo, one Muluhya and one Kikuyu. One of the two Luo was not elected.

The next move to improve the African position on the NMC was a result of an initiative of Mayor Bellhouse. He proposed that in May 1962, Ojuka, the senior African councillor should be elected Nakuru's first African Mayor.² Interestingly this important move failed because of divisions within the African camp. According to Ojuka's account, the two Luo elected councillors approached him offering their support to him on condition that one of them be elected deputy mayor.³ In addition

¹ *LES*, 3.9.1960, p.7. The fourth had been the secretary of the Nakuru District Congress.

² Interview: G.L. Bellhouse, S.L. Ojuka.

³ Interview: S.L. Ojuka.

to this evident struggle for power among African councillors, there seems to have been a clash between Ojuka who had co-operated with the Europeans throughout and the younger elected councillors coming from the ranks of the militant nationalist party. African elected councillors managed to enlist the support of the Asian councillors in preventing Ojuka's election as Mayor. At that stage, Asians were seeking to align themselves with the nationalist politicians. In the end, Bellhouse was proposed for another term and Ojuka was proposed as Deputy Mayor. The African-Asian alliance also objected to Ojuka as Deputy Mayor and staged a walk-out when they failed to get their way. 2. Imbihi, an elected African councillor, declared: "The Africans have no confidence in the Deputy Mayor. He is a nominated member and has never been elected." His colleague Odir Odera added: "We have got no quarrel with Bellhouse, Makuru needs him", a remarkable statement for a nationalist. An Asian councillor followed suit: "We refuse to see a Council monopolised by a handful of people who are determined to get their own way."¹

There seems generally to have been a certain amount of tension between the nominated and elected African councillors. The nominated had behind them long experience of being an insignificant minority. They had developed the strategy for achieving "half a loaf", and hence a mentality that was satisfied relatively easily. Their politics were those of courting European support rather than of adopting a militant line. Ojuka used to operate through Mrs. Slater who would then canvass support for the African requests among other European councillors.² Besides, being nominated and subject to dismissal for "misbehaving" had not imbued them with fighting qualities. On the other hand, the elected

¹ EAS, 30.5.1962, p.5.

² interview: S.L.Ojuka.

African councillors had gained their political training in the more militant atmosphere of the Nakuru District Congress. They came to the NMC with the belief that they could change its priorities radically. The reality of an automatic European majority was soon apparent, and they were frustrated by the lack of support from their nominated African colleagues.¹ The nominated councillors, for example, would not have contemplated taking an "extreme" step like walking out of Council meetings in protest against decisions unfavourable to Africans. In March 1961, when the elected African councillors stated a walk-out over the question of housing for the postal staff, they got no support from their nominated colleagues.²

The last stage of the story of African integration into the municipal system occurred in October 1963 when the first open municipal elections were held. Eighteen seats were contested, only two of them being reserved for Asians. The NMC was now a different proposition altogether. The elections were about the control of Nakuru in independent Kenya and not merely about playing a tertiary role in a European-dominated Council. This attracted the interest of political parties and became a focus for the ambitions of local politicians. Thirty-one candidates came forward for nomination, eighteen of whom were official KANU candidates. There was only one KADU candidate, the rest being independents. KADU was then in a state of confusion and could not put up much of a fight.³ About fourteen thousand people registered as voters, a manifestation of tremendous public interest.⁴ KANU won all but one seat, which was taken by an independent. The only European

¹ Interview: E.L.Ojuka, 2, Isibisi.

² EAJ, 31.3.1961, p.6.

³ See below, pp.

⁴ EAJ, 3.9.1963, p.5.

tempted to contest the election failed.¹ The new NMC was composed of fifteen Africans and three Asians. In addition the Council inherited the Aldermanic bench including one Alderman from each racial community.²

There were eight Kikuyu, three Luo, one Malahya and one Sudanese among the African councillors.³ In the sphere of municipal politics, as well, Nakuru was increasingly becoming a predominantly Kikuyu town. The Mayor was Kikuyu and his deputy Luo,⁴ another expression of the uneasy political alliance between the two tribes. The Mayor, G. Kamau, had been a resident of Nakuru for many years, starting his career as a hotel "boy" and eventually rising to the position of assistant manager of the same hotel. His life story during the colonial period in many ways symbolised Nakuru Africans' struggle for a place at the top.

Thus Africans were able to achieve a position of influence and authority in the NMC only when political power in Kenya as a whole was transferred to Africans. This highlighted the futility of attempts to achieve significant African participation in local government within the framework of the colonial system. It was European control at the centre of power which dictated the racial nature of local government and the Africans' subsidiary role in it. Against this background the increasing involvement of Nakuru Africans in nationalist protest politics from as early as the 1950s becomes clearer.

¹ EAB, 8.10.1963, p.1.

² EAB, 18.10.1963, p.3.

³ NMA, MAR, 1963, one councillor is tribally unidentifiable.

⁴ EAB, 18.10.1963, p.3.

Chapter FourFROM POLITICAL MODERATION TO MILITANCYThe beginnings of African Nationalist Political Organizations in Nakuru

The Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) was the first African political organization to be established in Nakuru, as early as 1935.¹

According to one account the KCA branch was founded by two local Kikuyu traders, H.K. Kamau and A. Wanyoike. The latter was known to Kenyatta, the prominent national KCA leader, who used him on his contact in Nakuru.²

An analysis of Nakuru's KCA leadership in these early days helps to reveal the nature of the Association. The chairman in about 1936 was Wagoni, an unskilled railway worker, and his successor in about 1938, M. Mute, worked as an unskilled labourer with the Posts and Telegraph Department. W. Gatura, a committee member, worked in a similar capacity for the same Department. J. Kamonjo was a driver, who later became a trader, and another committee member was a sanitary worker.³ All, including the founders of the branch, were either illiterate or at best semi-literate and had no knowledge of English. The few educated Kikuyu who lived in Nakuru at that period worked for the Administration and could not have been involved in politics.⁴ Education was certainly not a prerequisite for leadership.

¹D. Muhuhu. Although there is no direct evidence, it seems very likely that the KCA was established in Nakuru before 1935.

²Interview: J. Kamonjo.

³Interview: J. Kamonjo.

⁴Interview: W. Wamagata.

Two categories of people were represented on the committee. The two founders represented the emerging group of successful Kikuyu traders. The rest were unskilled labourers who constituted the vast majority of Nakuru's African population at that time. As a group the committee members were characterized by their stability of employment and their commitment to urban life. This may partly explain their readiness to get involved in an urban-based branch of a political organization.

The KCA in Nakuru, as elsewhere, was, at that time, basically a selective movement. They recruited only mature people recommended for their personal qualities by existing members.¹ Before 1940 there were about one hundred KCA members in Nakuru.² The local branch's activity was mainly holding members' meetings and discussing the Kikuyu grievances and the movement's aims. At that time the KCA was particularly interested in questions like the alienation of Kikuyu land, the plight of the Kikuyu squatters, the promotion of education and the preservation of tribal customs.

At the end of May 1940 the KCA, along with two other tribal political associations, was proscribed when the Government took advantage of the war situation to get rid of embarrassing political agitation.³ In Nakuru, as elsewhere, the KCA went underground. The effects of the proscription were not very disruptive although the movement's active membership fell to about thirty in the first half of the 1940s.⁴ With

¹ Interview: J. Kamonjo, J. Mwaure.

² Interview: J. Mwaure.

³ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, pp. 185-7.

⁴ Interview: D.W. Mutungi, G.Njeroge.

most of the national leaders detained the liaison with the centre was weakened, but locally there was no disruption of leadership, since none of the local leaders was considered important enough to warrant detention. Activity continued in secrecy, but this was not a radical change since secrecy had been an integral part of the KCA even before 1940. The local activity consisted, as before, of committee and members meetings to discuss Kikuyu grievances. The Nakuru KCA committee maintained contact with other branches in the District. Committee members from Nakuru continued to go to the other District townships and farms to participate in meetings and oathing ceremonies for new recruits. During the early 1940s, Nakuru seems to have developed, because of its central geographical position, as a centre of communication for the KCA branches in Nakuru District.¹

Around 1944-5 a few important additions were made to the Nakuru KCA leadership. They were made not by election but rather by co-option of those considered suitable. H. Kingori, the most enterprising Kikuyu businessman at that time, joined the other traders on the committee. Perhaps more important was the co-option of three Kikuyu clerks who had some formal education and knowledge of English. D.W. Mutungi, who became the local secretary in 1945, J. Mwaure and G. Njeroge were a new category in the committee.² People of still higher educational qualifications, like Kanyua, a Makerere graduate, or Getata, a graduate of the Alliance High School, began to join the local branch, but they preferred not to join the leadership of a proscribed and not

¹Interview: J. Kamonjo, D.W. Mutungi.

²Interview: D.W. Mutungi, G. Njeroge, J. Mwaure.

very prestigious organisation. The incorporation of the educated element in the KCA reflected the increase in the number of educated Kikuyu in the town who were not employed by the Administration. Those of them who showed interest in the KCA were promoted to positions of leadership. They added a new elitist element to an already elitist committee. They did not change the political orientation of Nakuru's KCA and accepted the lead of their uneducated colleagues.

This committee which crystallized around 1945 served, with minor modifications, until the eve of the Emergency in 1952. A few more observations regarding the composition of the local KCA leadership in those years may be useful as background to the eventful years leading to the outbreak of violence and the declaration of the State of Emergency in 1952. Most, if not all, committee members were Kikuyu who had come to Nakuru from the reserve, mostly from Kiambu where the KCA's centre was.¹ This was due to the fact that the early layer of Kikuyu settlers in Nakuru had come from the reserve. Although the immediate political sphere in which they operated was that of the NMP squatters with their particular grievances and militant inclinations, in terms of their background they belonged to the sphere of Kiambu moderate politics.² Considering that Nakuru's Kikuyu population in the latter part of the 1940s included a large proportion of ex-squatters this was to have significant consequences. KCA leaders on the whole were committed to urban life, most of them having had long association with Nakuru. They were respectful members of their tribal community, whether as prosperous traders, or as holders

¹ Interview: J.F.G. Kanyua.

² C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.247.

of prestigious jobs, or even as stable unskilled labourers, they had roots in the system. At least three committee members were followers of European churches without viewing this as contradictory to their activity in the KCA.¹

Within the context of the struggle against colonial rule, the KCA, as represented by Nakuru leadership, was basically a peaceful and moderate political movement. They certainly did not entertain any thought of resorting to violence in their struggle against the Government. They did not develop extreme anti-European feelings, neither did they advocate the use of violence. If Nakuru branch elders were representative of the KCA as a whole then the proscription of the KCA seems to have been a gross administrative misjudgement. It encouraged the development of an underground political activity which culminated in a violent and subversive movement.

With the proscription of the KCA and the other political associations in 1940, Kenya Africans were deprived of their own political organisations. While the KCA continued to propagate its ideas and aims among its members, it could no longer convey African protest to the colonial authorities. The formation in Nairobi on 1st October 1944 of the Kenya African Union (KAU) was, therefore, an important development. A month after its formation the party, under Government pressure, changed its name to Kenya African Study Union (KASU). The new party was formed with the blessing and encouragement of the Chief Native Commissioner who hoped "to interest serious minded Africans with some education in a form of study group, through which he [The Commissioner] might be able to help them to understand public affairs".²

¹ Interview: G. Njeroge, J. Mwaure.

² C.G. Hoebeg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.214.

In the circumstances, the political aims of the KASU, as expressed in its constitution, could not be other than vague: a) to unite the African people of Kenya; b) to interpret African life and thought and to study and promote the advancement of the interests and welfare of the Kenya Africans by all legitimate means; c) to co-operate with members representing African interests on the Kenya Legislative Council and to assist them in their work.¹

The Nakuru KASU branch appeared on record for the first time in March 1945.² E. Mathu, P. Gichuru and W.W. Wori had come to Nakuru at an earlier date to launch the branch. The first chairman of the branch was H. Yisbo, a Luo clerk who was also the chairman of the Luo Union in Nakuru, and his secretary was E.P. Getata, a Kikuyu clerk. Among other known committee members there were two Luo, one Kikuyu Mulim and one Muluha.³ The KASU was the first multi-tribal political organization in Nakuru. Whereas the Union's branches in the reserves were bound to be tribally monolithic, in the tribally mixed towns the party had a broader base which gave it a semblance of a truly Kenyan nationalist party.

That the Kikuyu did not figure prominently in the formation of the branch and in its leadership, seems surprising at first sight. Politically minded Kikuyu and the KCA leaders in particular were waiting to see how the Union developed. They could have hardly been expected to rejoice when the chairman of the party was Hary Thuku,

¹ /P.C
KN/Mku/dep.2/200, KASU constitution, undated.

² KNA/P.C./Mku/dep.2/200, P.C., H.V.P. to D.C., 24.3.1945.

³ Interview: E.P. Getata, J. Odada.

who had broken off from the KEA in 1935 to form the Kikuyu Provincial Association with its emphasis on loyalty to the colonial government.¹ Neither was the emphasis on "study" very appealing to Kikuyu who had had a long history of political struggle. In addition, the vague aims of the Union failed to include the land issue which was so fundamental to them.

The KASU Nakuru committee was instrumental in establishing branches in the District townships. These branches, however, were linked directly to KASU headquarters in Nairobi. Public meetings with speakers from Nairobi were normally held on Sundays so that the squatters from the surrounding farms could attend. There were also smaller local meetings. Resolutions adopted in such meetings were communicated to E. Mathu, the local branch thus performing one of the KASU's original aims, namely linking the African Member on the Legislative Council with his "constituency".²

Although KASU leadership in Nakuru, in line with the Union as a whole, was politically very moderate, the Administration was not very happy with the way the local branch was developing. This was at least the view of the P.C.: "I cannot help feeling that members of KASU tend too often to devote their discussion to political issues, which was never, I believe, one of the aims of the Union."³ Even talking politics appears to have been dangerous in the eyes of a paternalistic administrator.

At the second Annual Delegates Conference held in February 1946, the original name, Kenya African Union, was re-adopted.⁴ But before

¹ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, pp. 139-40.

² Interview: E.P. Getata, J. O'Gada.

³ KNA/P.C./Mcu/dep.2/200, P.C., R.V.P. to D.C., 16.11.1945.

⁴ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, p.215.

dealing with political developments leading up to the declaration of the State of Emergency in October 1952, a brief outline of post-war socio-economic problems in Kenya as a whole and the Kikuyu areas in particular is essential.

The post-war period brought prosperity to Kenya. New settlement schemes, a great increase in agricultural production and intensified development of industrial and commercial enterprises were indicators of a thriving economy. Africans, however, did not fully share in the economic boom.

One focus of African discontent was the towns. The rise in wages did not keep pace with the rise in cost of living and the African labourers were seldom able to support themselves, let alone their families. Many of those who flooded into the towns joined the already swollen army of unemployed.¹

The Kikuyu reserve was overcrowded, over-cultivated, and over-stocked and the balance between population and available land approached crisis. The Administration's attempts to redress the balance and prevent catastrophe by launching an anti-erosion campaign was met by an equally determined anti-terracing campaign which made improvement impossible.² The closure of the Kerugoya and Karatina dried fruit factories, in Embu and Nyeri Districts respectively, in December 1946, was another blow to the economy of these areas.³ The Government campaign of winning the Kikuyu through a policy of economic advancement suffered serious setbacks.

¹ H.P.K. Sorrenson, Land Reform in Kikuyu Country, p. 85.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 74-80; C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., pp. 237-8.

³ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., pp. 235-7.

The Kikuyu squatters in the N/P deserve more attention. Their presence in the immediate hinterland of Nakuru meant that their problems had a great impact upon the town. Already by the 1930s, European farmers were alarmed by the increasing numbers of squatters and their stock on their farms. The squatters at that period had a large measure of freedom in cultivating land and grazing cattle, which went a long way to compensate them for their low wages. While the Kenya Land Commission was sitting in 1934, there was a move among European farmers to make it easier for them to get rid of unwanted squatters. The revised Resident Labourers Ordinance, passed in 1937 and put into effective operation in 1944, demonstrated the influence settlers had on the Commission. The Ordinance made it clear that squatters were not tenants and had rights only so long as they were employed. Seven settlers-dominated District Councils were empowered to limit the size of squatters' land, to cull squatters' stock and increase the number of days they had to work for the farmer from a maximum of one hundred and eighty to one of two hundred and seventy, a year. Squatters who refused to sign new agreements under the Ordinance and those who were deemed redundant, could be and were evicted. In 1944 the Nakuru District Council began to enforce new rules based on the Ordinance to reduce considerably the size of land for cultivation and the numbers of stock allowed to the squatters. The squatters tried to resist the change but by 1947 the District Council succeeded in enforcing the rules.¹ The Ordinance and its consequences were hard for the squatters to swallow. Above all,

¹I owe this information to F. Furedi who is currently engaged on a study of the squatters in the Rift Valley Province. The Nakuru District Council made the rules in 1942 but began to enforce them in 1944. See also M.P.K. Sorensen, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

the sense of insecurity resulting from the change of their status was largely responsible for the widespread political unrest throughout the White Highlands in the post-war years. It was in those years that many, mainly second generation squatters, bitter and discontented, poured into Nakuru. It was a new and potentially explosive element whose impact was still to be felt.

The struggle between the Administration and the Kikuyu settlers in Olenguruone was another source of political unrest. The struggle about the terms of settlement resulted in the settlers' eviction which was completed by 1950. The determined and united stand of the settlers and the harshness of the Administration had a considerable impact on the political atmosphere among the Kikuyu, particularly in the RVP.¹ It was in Nakuru District, into which Olenguruone was incorporated in 1947, and in Nakuru town where the legal proceedings against Olenguruone settlers took place that this impact was very strongly felt.²

Against this background we now turn to the development of the nationalist movement in Nakuru and view the changes within KAU. The resignation of Thuku in January 1945, the subsequent election of J.S. Gichuru as the party's president in February 1946 and the assumption of leadership by Kenyatta in 1947,³ went a long way to allay the fears of KCA leaders and other politically minded Kikuyu as to the nature of the Union. In 1946 three local KCA leaders, J. Karanja, J. Mwangi and H.K. Ka

¹For a fuller account of the highly significant Olenguruone incident, see M.P.K. Sorenson, *op.cit.*, pp. 82-5; F.L. Cornfield, *The Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, Appendix C; C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, pp. 244-58.

²Interview: W. Wanjaga, M. Mwangi, R.M. Wambua.

³C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, pp. 214-5.

joined Nakuru's KAU committee. Two well educated Kikuyu clerks, Kangya and R.M. Wasbaa, also joined the committee as did E. Meso, a prominent Luo with some education, and Z. dhola, an educated and politically outspoken Luo. There was also at least one Maluahya in the committee at that time.¹ Kangya became the chairman, E. Meso the vice-chairman and R.M. Wasbaa the secretary. This committee, with minor changes, was in office until about 1950.

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The tribal balance with/the committee changed drastically, the Kikuyu being not only in the majority but also controlling the two most important posts. At the grass-roots level KAU support came largely from the Kikuyu. A pattern emerged in Nakuru, whereby tribal balance within the nationalist movement was possible only when the more politically conscious and committed Kikuyu did not join in. Rosberg and Nottingham attribute Kikuyu predominance in KAU as a whole to the fact that "only among the Kikuyu did the prerequisites of leadership and social communication exist to the extent needed to support a mass movement".² The multi-tribal situation in Nakuru does not bear this argument out.

While the local KCA branch came to support KAU and provided some of its leaders, it had never been a mass movement. In 1946, when the Kikuyu began dominating KAU, KCA membership probably did not exceed forty. The Rift Valley Agikuyu Union, the first Kikuyu tribal association, was formed only in late 1948, when the Kikuyu were already well in control of KAU's leadership. The Luo and Abaluhya on the other hand had by that time a complex network of tribal associations at the centre of which were the Luo Union and the Abaluhya Welfare

¹ Interview: J.F.G. Kangya, J. Odada, E. Meso, E.P. Getata, R.M. Wasbaa.

² C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, p. 219.

Association.¹ These hierarchically organized associations provided a network for both leadership, and social communication and control.

Thus Kikuyu predominance in KAU can not be explained simply in terms of a pre-existing network of leadership and social communication. On the other hand, it seems possible to explain it by the apparently higher degree of Kikuyu political consciousness. The issues which were at the centre of the Kikuyu struggle with the colonial authorities - land, female circumcision, education, squatting - had a wide appeal among the tribesmen. They fostered a sense of Kikuyu "nationalism", shared not only by a small educated elite but by many of the ordinary illiterate tribesmen. The Young Kikuyu Association in the early 1920s and the KCA from 1925, were two expressions of the Kikuyu's deep sense of politics.² By the second half of the 1940s Kikuyu national and local leaders could appeal directly to the Kikuyu masses and mobilize tribal solidarity and political receptiveness.

Among the two Nyanza tribes national political awareness had not penetrated deeply. Politics remained largely parochial, reflecting clan or location particularisms. KAU never succeeded in firmly establishing itself in the Luo and Ataluhya reserves.³ In Makuru these tribesmen occupied themselves mainly with their tribal associations. The networks of leadership and control provided by these associations were not as yet employed in the national political arena, when they

¹ See above, pp.

² C.G. Hosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., pp. 71-160, 177-81.

³ C.G. Hosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.218.

were employed for such purposes on the eve of independence they proved very useful.¹

Additionally the Kikuyu were by the second half of the 1940s the largest single tribe in Nakuru. They were on the whole more committed to urban life and showed interest in urban-based political organizations. The Luo and Abaluhya were more attached to their reserves and their tribal associations were more reserve orientated. The political position of the Kikuyu in Nakuru was further reinforced by the suppressed and restive Kikuyu squatters who formed the town's political hinterland. The political interaction between town and country was indeed a constant and major factor in the political development of Nakuru. The settlement of Nakuru by many ex-squatters created a unique Kikuyu town-country link which was not experienced by any other tribe in the town.

This evident disparity in the degree of national political awareness and commitment and the inter-tribal relations in general made harmony and unity within KAU difficult to achieve. KCA leaders could not fully trust non-Kikuyu committee members because they had not taken the oath which had become a pre-condition for establishing mutual trust among Kikuyu. For other Kikuyu it was the general distrust they had towards the other tribes and the Luo in particular. Referring to the Luo vice-chairman the then branch secretary recollected: "There was a point when Otata and myself had to say 'Mind you, he is a Luo, he is uncircumcised'. This was when we dealt with very secret matters."² A Muluha committee member during the early 1950s was no better informed about what went on among the Kikuyu.³ In a situation

¹Interview: J.F.G. Nandwa.

²See below, pp.

³Interview: E.M. Wambua.

⁴Interview: J.F.G. Nandwa.

where the secret nature of politics and fear of Government reprisals put a high premium on internal security, suspicion and xenophobia became normal. There was also a division between the KCA elders and the three educated Kikuyu on the KAU committee. One source regarded this division as one between moderates and militants.¹ Other evidence, however, strongly suggests that there was no difference in political orientation between the educated Kikuyu and the KCA elders. There were no basic arguments between them about the party's policies since they were all moderates who believed in a constitutional struggle. The division between the educated Kikuyu and the KCA elders reflected a difference in standard of education.² The more politically articulate Kikuyu clerks regarded themselves as more suitable to lead the party. They formed the inner circle of Nakuru's KAU leadership, to which both the non-Kikuyu and the KCA elders on the committee had limited access.³

In the KAU, education was an obvious, though not the only, attribute of leadership. The educated committee members were all young, newcomers to the town. The uneducated were older and had resided in the town for a long time. Not having the much sought-after educational qualifications, their claim to lead was based on success in business, prominence in other political or tribal organizations and a combination of personal qualities and length of stay which made them respected local personalities. At least five KAU leaders were also at different times members of the Nakuru African Advisory Council or the Nakuru Municipal Board.

¹ Interview: J.F.G. Kanyua.

² Interview: E.P. Getata, R.M. Wambua, J. Maura, D.W. Mutungi.

³ Interview: R.M. Wambua.

When reviewing the activities of KAU in Nakuru after the war, one must take into consideration the prevailing political atmosphere of that period. Nakuru, as the headquarters of the Provincial and District Administration and the hub of settlerdom, was among the most politically repressed area in Kenya. The town was small and the African population concentrated in a defined circumscribed area. Nakuru could hardly offer the relative security and confidence enjoyed by Africans in Nairobi with its large and somewhat uncontrolled African population. Nakuru political leaders in particular could only feel completely exposed and helpless. They could never be quite sure that their secret meetings were not reported to the police. There was always the fear, in the back of their minds, of getting involved with the authorities or losing their jobs.¹ This sense of insecurity was intensified by the multi-tribal composition of the local leadership.

Under these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the committee's functions were largely carried out in secrecy and informality. Official committee meetings were rare, even as rare as once a year.² Much of the business of the committee, at least in 1946-9, was dealt with by the Kikuyu "inner circle". They used to discuss party matters over a bottle of beer or a cup of tea as though part of a private social chat. Some matters discussed on such occasions were communicated to other committee members and others were not.³ If this was known in the town, such an arbitrary way of running a political organization could hardly have fostered confidence in the party among its members.

¹ Interview: R.M. Wambaa, S.K. Mwendia.

² Interview: E. Meso, R.M. Wambaa, E.P. Getata, J.F.G. Kanyua.

³ Interview: R.M. Wambaa.

Generally, judging from Nakuru which occupied an important position at the centre of the contentious RVP, KAU did not develop a well organized and controlled network of party branches even in Kikuyu dominated areas. Contact with headquarters seems to have been spasmodic and in many cases through personal contacts rather than through official channels. There was little guidance or supervision from the national leadership. While Nakuru was a centre of communication for the RVP branches it is doubtful whether it had ever operated as an effective provincial or district headquarters. Within the limits of ineffective communication system, however, Nakuru branch operated as a listening post, transmitting to Nairobi information about the squatters' conditions. Local party spies used to be sent to listen to discussions at settlers' meetings in the District. Reports about the content of these meetings were communicated to the party's headquarters.¹

Neither did KAU generate much activity locally. There were the occasional public meetings addressed by national leaders which attracted fairly large audiences. In 1947 Kenyatta addressed a large meeting in the local African stadium. In June 1950 a KAU public meeting attracted four hundred and fifty people and in the following month eighteen hundred Africans came to listen to an address by Kenyatta.² There were also the local annual general meetings at which the committee was reinstated by acclamation. Nakuru formed a part of the fund-raising network which enabled the headquarters to pay its bills. The local branch had neither office nor clerical staff.

Although there were membership cards and fees there was not an active membership taking active interest in the running of the branch. The following of the party seems to have been based on a vague acceptance

¹ Interview: J.P.G. Kangua, E. Maso, E.P. Getata, E.M. Wamban.

² Interview: E. Maso. N.M.S.S.D.F., NAKURU, June, July 1950.

of the party's policies and the national leadership, rather than on a well organized party machinery with regimented branches. In a small town like Nakuru there were not many politically conscious educated Africans and those who came forward lacked in experience, commitment and zeal. As a nationalist party struggling to achieve its aims constitutionally, KAU was rather inadequate. With the Administration aware of the party branches' weakness,¹ the nationalist leadership was deprived of a well organized, massive support, essential in making its political demands effective. This might be one of the reasons for the failure of constitutional nationalism in Kenya in the pre-emergency period.

The Crisis and Development of Mau Mau 1948-1952

We now turn to the development of the militant and violent alternative to constitutional politics, which culminated in the so-called Mau Mau revolt. The issue is still confused. British Administration, settlers and scholars alike have tended, from different motives, to confuse the issue. Faced with a deteriorating security situation without being able to understand or identify the forces behind it, the Administration tended to regard Kikuyu-dominated political, trade union, educational and religious organizations as parts of Mau Mau. Even Corfield, who wrote the official account of Mau Mau, published in 1960, subscribed to the same view. Referring to the years 1950-2 he says: "By this time Jomo Kenyatta had successfully ousted all moderate African opinion from the KAU. It was dominated by Kikuyu extremists and had become almost synonymous with Mau Mau."² European settlers, fearing

¹ Kenya African Affairs Department Annual Report, 1951, RVP Report, p.78.

² F.O. Corfield, op.cit., p.269.

that African political agitation, coupled with Government vacillation, was going to jeopardize their paramountcy were, in fact, trying to sell this thesis to the Government. As early as 1948 the executive committee of the Electors Union had passed a resolution urging the deportation of Kenyatta and others for their responsibility for the growth of subversive activity.¹ Leaky, a settler, described Mau Mau in words identical to those of Corfield: "In fact, in about 1951, KAU and Mau Mau became synonymous."²

Scholars who have studied Mau Mau (mainly in the Central Province and Nairobi) are no more precise. Rosberg and Nottingham, while emphasizing the Nairobi militants' role, seem also to regard KAU and the violent underground movement as two sides of the same coin: "KAU remained the public form of nationalism, but the widespread use of secret oath for mobilization and unity could only be carried by an equivalent structure for communication and action. By 1952 in central Kenya and other Kikuyu dominated areas, the leadership of these structures had been almost synonymous with those of KAU."³ It is hardly surprising that Buijtenhuijs, using no new sources, subscribed, with certain reservations, to the view that "Mau Mau is part of KAU, a militant part, a sort of a Stern Gang" which was adopted by the prosecution in Kenyatta's trial.⁴

Barnett, on the other hand, says that "the underground movement which most writers refer to as 'Mau Mau' was in fact a direct lineal descendant of the banned KCA, which ... underwent a dramatic

¹R. Buijtenhuijs, Le Mouvement Mau Mau, Mouton, The Hague 1971, p. 193.

²L.S.B. Leaky, Defeating the Mau Mau, Methuen & Co. London 1952, p. 53.

³C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p. 262.

⁴R. Buijtenhuijs, op.cit., p. 163.

shift beginning in 1950 from a highly selective, elite organization to an underground mass movement."¹ While Barnett's basic argument is broadly acceptable, he fails to bring to light the forces which were responsible for the transformation of the KCA from a peaceful to a subversive and violent movement. This transformation was at least as important as that from a selective to a mass organization.

For analytical purpose it seems useful to narrow down the definition of Mau Mau to include only groups and leaders who had advocated the employment of organised violence in pursuit of their political cause and who had started to organize themselves to that end prior to the declaration of the State of Emergency in October 1952. The isolation of the violent forces is essential to the better understanding of Mau Mau. The KAU was a loose party both organizationally and ideologically. Neither was the KCA a politically monolithic. Some Mau Mau leaders were members of both the KCA and the KAU but to regard these three bodies in Nakuru as identical would be mistaken.

The development of the KCA in the post-war years was a prelude to the emergence of Mau Mau. When its leaders joined the KAU leadership in Nakuru in 1946, the KCA did not cease its underground existence. They regarded KAU as a useful training ground for the other tribes. But the need for a strictly Kikuyu political movement was still acute in those crucial years when Kikuyu problems in the reserve and the White Highlands were approaching crisis. In fact G. Ndung'u, the KCA general secretary, tried persistently in 1945 and 1946 to persuade Government to allow the movement to function in the open.² In Nakuru the same committee composed of peaceful and moderate elders continued to hold office.

¹D.L. Barnett and K.Njama, Mau Mau From Within, Macgibbon & Kee, London 1966, p.5.

²C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.215.

In the context of the RVP the eviction of squatters and trouble in Olenguruone gave added impetus to the KCA in Nakuru District. The inclusion of Olenguruone in Nakuru District in 1947 was significant. The KCA provincial committee which seems to have been in existence theoretically since 1944¹ became active in 1946-7 to assist the Olenguruone settlers. It met, however, only once or twice and dealt also with the problems of the Kikuyu settlers in Kisii. Four Nakuru KCA elders were members of this committee.²

In the absence of a permanent provincial or district organization, Nakuru's KCA committee played an important part in the Olenguruone affair. Representatives of Nakuru committee visited the settlement to gather information and give advice. Samuel Koina, the settlers' leader, often came to Nakuru to discuss his problems with the local committee. In 1948, when settlers whose permits had elapsed were summoned to Nakuru Magistrate court,³ the Nakuru KCA committee looked after them. Nakuru branch participated in raising funds to finance their legal defence.⁴

The growing political unrest in the RVP after the War and the KCA activities it generated, brought about an increase in the pace of recruitment to the movement. The oath of unity, administered in Olenguruone by 1946 to virtually all the local population in order to strengthen their stand against the Administration had a strong impact on the KCA in the District and beyond. This Olenguruone oath was also administered to all those who visited the settlement.⁵

An intelligence report in 1948 talks about oathing of squatters

¹I owe this information to F. Furedi.

²Interview: D.W. Mutungi, A. Gumjiri.

³C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.256.

⁴Interview: D.W. Mutungi, N. Mwaura.

⁵C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.255. Interview: N. Mwaura, J. Karuggia.

in Njoro and Elburgon areas in Nakuru District by "the people of the three letters".¹ This was the KCA in its traditional form. Since there was an interaction between Nakuru and district branches it is very likely that the same membership drive was undertaken in Nakuru as well. On 21 September 1948 the Director of Intelligence reported for the first time that a new movement, Mau Mau, believed to be a KCA branch, had appeared in Matvasha not far from Nakuru.² Again, this movement was still the KCA and the words Mau Mau are probably a distortion of the Kikuyu word Maui - oath.

What was to have a far greater influence on later developments was the change in recruitment policy. Traditionally, as shown earlier, the KCA recruited only mature people. There had always been a very small number of young men acting mostly as messengers. The increase in the number of young recruits in 1947 or 1948 amounted to more than a quantitative change. By 1948 there were more than fifty young men in Nakuru branch alone.³ A further indication of the growing importance of this new category was the appointment, by Nakuru KCA committee, of A. Gunjiri as the leader of the young members. Gunjiri subsequently became the leader of the young KCA members throughout the District. He had come to Nakuru in 1947 from Bahati area where he had been a squatter. He was himself a KCA elder and a former member of the RVP KCA committee. As such he acted as a link between the KCA elders' committee and the movement's youth group.⁴

¹ F. O. Corfield, op. cit., p. 77.

² Ibid., p. 78.

³ Interview: A. Gunjiri, J. Karuggin.

⁴ Interview: A. Gunjiri.

This youth group was the direct predecessor of what was to become Mau Mau in Nakuru. It was certainly not intended to develop that way by the KCA committee which had brought it into being. They regarded their new creation not as a nucleus of a subversive and violent arm, but rather as a support to their increased but peaceful activities. The young members were in a subordinate position acting as messengers to maintain contact with the HVP branches and the Central Committee and as guards and look-outs during oath-taking ceremonies.¹

It is on such potentially para-military duties of the youth group that attention must be focused when attempting to trace the origin of the future guerilla movement. One of the tasks of the group's leader was to train his men for the proper performance of their duties. While this training could hardly be described as military, it laid the foundation for regimentation and discipline. To ensure commitment and discipline a special "guards' oath" was administered to the group's members from 1948 or even earlier.² This oath represented an important departure from the original KCA oath administered in Nakuru. The goat replaced the Bible as one of the main symbols and further, the "guards' oath" included a commitment to steal arms and to kill whenever duty demanded.³

The development of a district group of young, vigorous and impatient young Kikuyu, many of whom were embittered ex-squatters, enthused by a forceful oath, was soon to prove more than an embarrassment to the established KCA leadership in Nakuru. In about 1949 the youth began to challenge the leadership and the policies of the movement.

¹ Interview: J. Karuggia, K. Getwa.

² Interview: J. Karuggia, A. Gunjiri.

³ Interview: A. Gunjiri, J. Karuggia, N. Mwura.

They claimed that the peaceful methods had achieved nothing and that the Europeans would not yield to their demands unless forced to do so. While arguing with the KCA elders, the youths began to put forward violence as the alternative way.¹

The role of Kenyatta as the unquestionable national leader is important to the understanding of the division of young and old within the KCA. Referring to the clash between the two schools of thought, the then KCA secretary recalled: "These men said that Mzee [Kenyatta] wanted us to get hot. Because he spoke in strong political language these people interpreted it that he wanted more action and not just talking. This was not really Mzee's intention as we, the older people, understood it."² This serves to illustrate the ambivalent nature of Kenyatta's leadership in those crucial years.³

The KCA elders remained unconvinced by the youth ^{were} and/determined to pursue their moderate way. They tried to explain to their young members that violence would lead them and the movement into danger, but to no avail. The youths continued unabated to develop the idea of violent struggle and their impatience towards the "slow" KCA elders grew. There was only one KCA elder in the whole committee, Thuo Ngugi, who supported the views of the young militants.⁴

The first concrete issue around which the old-young division focused was the decision, taken in about 1950, to increase the pace of recruiting to the KCA. This membership drive was aimed at achieving a

¹ Interview: D.W. Mutungi, G. Maitumi.

² Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

³ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, pp. 266-70, 274-5, H. Buijtenhuijs, *op.cit.*, pp. 159-71.

⁴ Interview: D.W. Mutungi, J. Karugia.

higher sense of unity and commitment among the Kikuyu.¹ The KCA leaders expected that this would make their constitutional efforts more effective. It was well within the traditional KCA political strategy. In Nakuru, the KCA elders were determined that recruitment should be achieved through persuasion and social pressure only.²

In 1950 the Administration became alarmed by the growing secret activities and illegal oathing ceremonies in the RVP. It was all ascribed to the "Man Man Association". It came to the surface with a trial, in Nakuru Magistrate's Court, in which nineteen Africans were charged with participation in an unlawful oathing ceremony. This trial brought about the official proscription of Man Man.³ In August 1950 a police officer was posted at Nakuru for special duties in connection with Man Man investigations and prosecutions.⁴ In a meeting convened by the P.C. to discuss methods of combatting subversive activity, this officer reported that the "subversives" in Nakuru were known as "The Communists".⁵ In fact, the secret activities of 1949-50 were still under the full control of the moderate KCA elders.

But soon their control was to be challenged on the issue of the form of the recruitment oath. The members of the youth group regarded the oathing campaign not only as a means of achieving unity and commitment, but also for instilling more militancy. The KCA original oath with the Bible and the soil, as far as they were concerned, had not produced such. They wanted to extend their goat oath to the movement as a whole. When this idea was brought to them in 1950, the KCA

¹C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, p.259. According to these authors, it started in Kiambu in February 1950.

²Interview: D.W. Mutungi, J. Kamaujo, J. Mwaura.

³Y.O. Corfield, *op.cit.*, pp. 85-6.

⁴*Ibid.*, p.93.

⁵*Ibid.*, p.96.

elders strongly opposed it. They tried to maintain their control over the movement. The youths, on the other hand, were not prepared to listen to "reasonable" arguments. The elders warned them that they might get into trouble, but trouble was what they wanted. Confronted with the forcefulness and determination of their young subordinates the elders eventually gave in, and the introduction of the goat oath to the movement as a whole was sanctioned by the KCA committee.¹ A victory was then won for militancy and the youth proved their determination to force their norms upon the KCA as a whole. But they still had not worked out their alternative and their plans remained vague.

Against a background of growing division, the youths formed their own committee in about 1950. It was an institutional expression of their growing independence and influence. The chairman of the militants' committee was the leader of the group, Gunjiri. The town committee subsequently developed into a District one including representatives from all over Nakuru District where similar groups functioned.²

According to the then chairman of the militants' committee, he maintained constant contact with the KCA committee until about the middle of 1951. There were no open major disagreements between the two committees during this period.³ A modus vivendi was apparently established during this interim period, in which the young militants asserted their independence, and by forcing the elders to sanction the goat oath demonstrated that the balance of power within the KCA was changing in their favour. At that stage they were apparently not interested in completely overruling the elders' authority. Having proved their point, they preferred co-operation to a showdown until they were ready to go further.

¹ Interview: D.W. Mutungi, A. Gunjiri, J. Karuggia, K. Getwa.

² Interview: J. Karuggia, A. Gunjiri.

³ Interview: A. Gunjiri.

As a result the KCA committee was still in charge and controlled most of the oathing ceremonies which were performed in the town and the bordering farms, until about mid-1951. They tried as much as possible to use only persuasion and social pressure. In certain cases, however, when a person participating in an oathing ceremony refused to take the oath, he would be beaten up to prevent him from giving away the movement's secrets.¹

But even by then, the militants' committee had begun to organize its own oathing ceremonies. When this came to the notice of the KCA committee the elders tried in vain to persuade them to stop this practice. It seems, in addition, that before mid-1951, they had used, if not yet extensively, force, despite the elders' disapproval.²

In this period the growing militancy among the Kikuyu made its impact on the moderate Kikuyu KAU leaders. On 6 June 1950 Tom Mbotela, the KAU national vice-president, addressed a public meeting in Nakuru.³ It was a part of his anti-subversion campaign, in which he struggled with great courage against the rising tide of militancy and violence and for the assertion of KAU as an open and constitutional party. His efforts in Nakuru were not followed up by the moderate local leaders. When Kanyua and Getata, the chairman and secretary respectively, began to feel the pressure of the militants, they chose to give up rather than face the challenge. There was no official resignation. They drifted away quietly and gradually so as not to attract attention and antagonize the militants. They chose to concentrate their public activities in the

¹ Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

² Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

³ KAS, 12.6.1950, p.2.

sphere of municipal politics. With their withdrawal KAU's committee ceased to meet altogether and by 1951 the branch was virtually defunct. The Kikuyu KAU moderate politicians and the local committee as a whole played no part in the important political developments in those crucial years.

By about the middle of 1951 the young militants were ready to strike again. They were far from happy with the progress of the oathing campaign under the guidance of the elders' committee. The then KCA secretary remembered the mood of the young activists: "Those wages, why do they persuade people. They are too slow. When shall we have the good numbers so that we can fight."¹ A decision was accordingly taken by the militants' committee to move faster with the oathing campaign by using force. The idea of using force to speed up the pace of recruitment apparently originated in Nairobi.² The idea was to bring people to a certain place under various pretexts and to force them to take the oath.³

Even at that stage the militants' committee had not yet translated their militant alternative into definite operational plans.⁴ The acceleration of the pace of oathing was aimed at achieving the unity of the Kikuyu people as an essential preliminary to the future struggle. The scope, the pace and the methods used, constituted, however, a major departure from the KCA traditional policy.

¹ Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

² Interview: A. Gunjiri, J. Karuggia, K. Getva.

³ Interview: J. Warui.

⁴ Interview: A. Gunjiri.

The decision to resort to internal violence and intimidation was of particular significance. There were obvious dangers in such an ambitious scheme of forcing unity on the entire tribal group. Whereas persuasion combined with social pressure brought into the movement the passive, the vacillating or the indifferent, forcing and intimidation also brought in bitter opponents. These could be only a liability to the movement, a soft spot in a secret organization, and a blessing for the Government's security services.¹ The oath included the promise of non-disclosure of the movement's secrets, but many Christians and educated Kikuyu did not believe in its power. The militant leaders hoped that where the oath was ineffective, intimidation would not be.² They were to be proved wrong. Yet, they were so obsessed with the need for absolute unity that they discounted the disadvantages of their campaign.³ With no specific operational plans unity seems to have become the aim rather than the means. This obsession with unity reflected the growing sense of insecurity among the Kikuyu, and a lack of experience in underground organization among the militant leaders.

The KCA committee had not even been consulted about the launching of the forced oath-taking campaign. Their attitude to violence was known and their opposition to the new move was anticipated by the militant leaders.⁴ Having lost hope of getting the elders' support to their militancy, they chose to ignore their authority and take the lead. The elders, appreciating their inability to control the course of events and fearful of arousing the rage of the militants, chose to abstain from action.⁵ The KCA committee was withering away, its elders being also

¹ F. B. Corfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-7.

² Interview: G. Maitumi.

³ Interview: G. Maitumi.

⁴ Interview: A. Gungiri, G. Maitumi, K. Getwa.

⁵ Interview: J. Kamonjo, D. W. Mutungi, J. Muzura.

intimidated by the militants and even the election in 1951 of T. Ngugi, the militant elder, as chairman could not change its fate.

Mau Mau was on the way in. Most oathing ceremonies, if not all, from then on were organized and controlled by the militants' committee.¹ Those who had taken the oath were not necessarily incorporated into a regimented organization involving specific duties and obligations. In fact, many of them were subsequently left alone. It is doubtful whether the militant leaders aimed at all at a total regimentation of the Kikuyu. It would have been an impossible undertaking by any standards. By uniting the whole tribe they had in mind the establishment, through a passive wing, of a friendly and co-operative human and economic hinterland, within which the hard core militants could operate effectively and securely. It was thus important for them to have a grip on the Kikuyu masses, and in the absence of an organizational structure to control them, forced oathing, intimidation and internal violence made sense. People who took the oath after mid-1951, regarded it as Mau Mau oath, although it was still the old KCA oath with the goat replacing the Bible. For this, the press and the Government anti-Mau Mau propaganda campaign were largely responsible.

The organization of the hard-core under the militants' committee must have developed considerably after mid-1951. An oathing campaign on such a scale demanded an elaborate network of leadership to organize and direct it. A large cadre of oath administrators was also required. Oathing was organized according to the districts in the Central Province, from which the initiates had originated.² A well disciplined and organized para-military force was required for the protection of oathing ceremonies. Transport had to be organized since

¹ Interview: J. Karuggia, A. Gunjiri, K. Getwa.

² Interview: J. Karuggia.

many townsmen were oathed on farms in the District. Finally, at least a rudimentary intelligence service was essential to the security of the oathing campaign and the movement as a whole. Nakuru leaders who formed the nucleus of the District committee were involved in organising the movement throughout the District and even beyond.

A Police Report for Nakuru Division for the first half of 1951 revealed developments confirmed by African oral sources: "Information has been received that Mau Mau adherents have decided to lie low until June. They state that in this way they will lull the Government into a position of false security."¹ This was one way of interpreting the slow pace of oathing controlled by the KCA elders. However, the report also gave information about forced oathing at that period in other parts of the NVP and Nakuru District: "Forced oathing has been reported from Ol Kalou, where a large meeting, attended by about fifty people, was held, where oaths were taken. The meeting was reported to have been surrounded by guards armed with knives, and sentries were posted round the place. Further meetings were reported from Naivasha, Kinangop and Gilgil areas and among prisoners in Naivasha prison."² In a memorandum by the Director of Intelligence and Security, dated 18 February 1952 Nakuru figured, with other places, as a place where Mau Mau was rife.³

Two developments in the second part of 1951 demonstrated the further radicalization of the movement. First, a new name, Kiama Kip Bera, the fighting group, was adopted by the hard core young militants.⁴ The concept of fighting was evidently taking shape. Second, Wachira Kugi replaced Gumjiri as chairman of the militants' committee, the

¹ F.D. Corfield, op.cit., p.111.

² Ibid., pp. 111-2.

³ Ibid., p.130.

⁴ Interview: G. Maitumi, K. Getua, J. Manyoike.

later remaining an ordinary committee member. The reason for this change emerges from the evidence of a committee member: "In the beginning Gunjiri was good but then he started to go slowly and became like the old wage, so we dismissed him and elected Ruzi in his place."¹ The last link with the KCA committee was dropped. The time for vacillation was over and full commitment to violence became an indispensable pre-requisite for leadership.

An analysis of the young militants' leadership helps to appreciate better the distinct nature of Mau Mau. Amongst them were ten known leaders, at the town, district and provincial levels, who were residents of Nakuru.² With the exception of Gunjiri they were young men in their twenties. Seven of the ten came to Nakuru from the surrounding districts where they had lived mostly as squatters. Nine of the ten were self-employed, mostly as petty traders. Only one, J. Wanyoike who joined the committee in 1953, could have been considered as relatively prosperous. Most of them were newcomers, settling in the town in the post-war years. They were mostly uneducated and were either non-Christian or members of Kikuyu independent sects.

This is a distinct profile in comparison with the leadership of the KCA or KAU. Their youth perhaps explains their impatience, eagerness and their radicalism. It gave their relations with the KCA elders an element of generational conflict. Their socio-economic status was, however, of far greater importance. A pattern developed throughout the District whereby Mau Mau leadership was largely in the hands of young Kikuyu petty-traders, newcomers to the various townships.³ They had no roots in the town or the "system" and had nothing to lose besides their limited petty trading which barely gave them a living. At

¹ Interview: J. Karuggia.

² These were: W. Ruzi, A. Gunjiri, J. Karuggia, K. Mahugo, K. Wanjohi, K. Getwa, A. Nyata, K. Waihobo, G. Maitumi and J. Wanyoike. Except the last, who joined the committee in 1953, these were committee members at least from 1951.

the same time being a trader had a certain aura of success in the eyes of the masses of the illiterate Kikuyu, trade having a high value among the Kikuyu. Being self-employed these young people enjoyed much more freedom of movement and action than the employed townsmen or the squatters on the farms. Of comparably great importance were the origins of most of them from among the District's squatter population. Mau Mau in the RVP was largely a revolt of the Kikuyu rural masses. Much of their bitterness and hatred towards the Europeans stemmed from their experience as squatters. Even when moving to the town their families and friends remained on the farms. One Mau Mau leader stated that he joined the militant group after his parents had been evicted from the farm on which they had squatted.¹ These ex-squatters very personally highlighted the interaction between town and country, an important characteristic of Mau Mau in the RVP. Most of these leaders had been unaffected by the impact of European missions and education.

Referring to the impact of Operation Jock Scott which was carried out with the declaration of the state of Emergency and was aimed at depriving Mau Mau of its leadership, Duijtenhuijs says: "Puis, après la déclaration de L'état d'urgence et l'arrestation de la quasi-totalité de leaders nationaux Kikuyu, les masses paysannes se sont retrouvées de nouveau seules pour s'engager dans la résistance armée." He claims, in fact, that between the beginning of 1950 and October 1952 "des évolués et des leaders nationaux ont pris le pas sur les masses populaires anonymes".² The Makuru equivalents of the educated

³ Interview: G. Maitumi, K. Kabuba, A. Gunjiri.

¹ Interview: G. Maitumi.

² R. Duijtenhuijs, op. cit., p. 201.

and national leaders certainly had nothing to do with the "anonymous masses". Indeed, one of the most striking and fascinating aspects of Mau Mau in Nakuru, and probably elsewhere, was that the "anonymous masses" evolved their own leadership in defiance of the established political leaders and their political strategy.

The young militants evolved an elaborate and effective network of leadership which exerted a degree of control and influence unparalleled in the recent history of the Kikuyu tribe. It is wrong to assume that education was a prerequisite for leadership in a situation where the masses were largely illiterate. The young militants of Nakuru, rejecting the moderate leadership of the day, evolved their own standards of leadership qualities in which education did not figure at all. Devotion to the militant cause, enthusiasm and natural leadership qualities were far more important.

It seems that in 1951 Nakuru's militant leadership established contact with Nairobi's militant leaders, who began to assume control over the movement throughout the country, forming the nucleus of a central committee. Nakuru's committee sent representatives to Central Committee meetings and accepted Nairobi's paramountcy. The national leaders of the militant Mau Mau were in many respects similar to the Nakuru leaders. Among these Nakuru people came in contact with were Stanley Mathenge, Dedan Kimathi, Mbaria Kaniro, Kago Mhoko, Mburua Mwangi and Ngunjiri Karuguru,¹ some of whom were later to become famous forest "generals".

Settlers and Government officials alike, went to great pains in denigrating Mau Mau leaders as criminals, leaders of darkness, as leading their people back to their barbarous past, rejecting the benefits of progress and civilization "inflicted" on them by their colonial

¹Interviews: G. Maitani, J. Karugia, K. Getwa, K. Waihobo, J. Wanyoike.

benefactors. Nakuru Mau Mau leaders do not correspond to this stereotyping. While they were neither politically articulate nor subtle, they were certainly motivated by political ideals. It was land and freedom that they wanted and they had worked out their own way of achieving it. Mau Mau was indicative of the politicality of the Kikuyu grass-roots. Government and settlers who had misgivings about the constitutional political agitation of the educated African leaders could hardly be expected to regard Mau Mau as a political phenomenon.

The K.A in its traditional form as represented by the elders' committee received the last deadly blow when Nakuru's militant leaders introduced the Batum Oath in about March 1952. The origin of the oath is still inconclusive. Rosberg and Nottingham say that it originated from the Rift Valley squatters.¹ Some Nakuru ex-Mau Mau leaders claimed that it started in the Thompson's Falls area whence it spread to Nakuru and only then to Central Province and Nairobi.² One ex-Mau Mau leader was adamant that the oath originated in Nairobi and was introduced to Nakuru District by Stanley Mathenge.³ The first Batum Oath ceremony in Nakuru District was held on the estate of Lord Dela-sere, Soyambu, near Mbaruk Station, some ten miles from Nakuru on the way to Gilgil.⁴ This place remained the main centre for the administration of the Batum oath for the District and the tow.. New centres were set up later on. The oath was first administered to the District leadership and only then did it spread to the rank and file.

The Batum oath was much more compelling both in form and in content than the KCA oath, and was wholly the creation of Mau Mau's leadership and a development of the guards' oath. It committed those who

¹ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, p.248.

² Interview: G. Maitumi, A. Gungiri, N. Mwangi.

³ Interview: J. Karuggia.

⁴ Interview: A. Gungiri, J. Karuggia, G. Maitumi, N. Mwangi.

had taken it to action and violence and to a higher degree of loyalty and discipline. It was an initiation to higher standards of courage and devotion to the movement's cause. It created an inner circle within the movement with its own symbols, secrets and organization.¹

The word *Batun* was a Kikuyu distortion of the word *platoon* and had a clear military connotation. The introduction of the oath stimulated the growth of the hard-core organization by instilling in the Mau Mau activists a more pressing sense of purpose. In Nakuru the *Batun* warriors were divided into platoons under platoon commanders under the overall supervision of the town commander.² There also developed a distinct jurisdiction for the *Batun* warriors distinguishing them further from those who had taken only the first MCA oath.³

With the *Batun* Oath Mau Mau thus entered a distinct military phase. While staying in Nakuru for a week for the introduction of the *Batun* Oath Stanley Mathenge introduced the rudiments of proper military training to Mau Mau leaders.⁴ It included basic field-craft and the use of weapons. Subsequently military training was organized locally by Nakuru leaders, who also accelerated the pace of arms acquisition. This training hardly brought the Mau Mau warriors up to any reasonable standard for an effective guerrilla force by the time the Emergency was declared. However, combined with the introduction of the *Batun* Oath, it marked a turning point in the development of Mau Mau.

If Mau Mau was unprepared for fighting when the State of Emergency was declared, it was at least partly so because its leadership, its organization and its resources were largely employed in the enforced

¹ There were variations of the *Batun* Oath in form and content as it spread. For a description of a *Batun* Oath ceremony in Nyeri broadly similar to the one practiced in Nakuru, see D.L. Barnett and K. Njama, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-2.

² Interview: G. Maitani, J. Karuggia.

³ Interview: J. Njenga.

⁴ Interview: J. Karuggia.

oathing campaign. With the new wave of zeal and enthusiasm sparked off by the Batun Oath, the campaign was accelerated. In addition to physical coercion, social and economic pressures were more extensively applied. Traders who had not taken the KCA oath were boycotted until they joined the movement.¹ As the number of those who had taken the oath increased, the effects of the economic and social pressures were much more felt. There was a campaign of ostracism against those who had not taken the oath.²

After the introduction of the Batun Oath, Mau Mau leadership tightened its control over those who had taken the KCA oath and those who had taken the Batun Oath in particular. Prohibitions were introduced by the Mau Mau committee in order to discipline members and prepare them for the struggle. There were prohibitions on drinking European beer, smoking European cigarettes, wearing European hats and frequenting prostitutes.³ Two Kikuyu serving on municipal bodies got special exemption from the beer prohibition so that they could conceal the fact that they had taken the Batun Oath.⁴ To make prohibitions effective, a policing system was organised. In the words of a prominent KCA elder Mau Mau militants became the "ankaria" of the Kikuyu people.⁵ The active members of the "platoons" operating in the various sections of the African locations were largely preoccupied with effecting their leaders' control on Nakuru's Kikuyu population. An important part of their duties was to discover leakages of information and traitors.⁶

¹ Interview: J. Wanyoike.

² Interview: S.M. Ng'ethe, J. Karuggia, J.F.G. Kanyua, B.L. Barnett and K. Njama, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-7. They tell about a similar development in the reserve.

³ Interview: D.W. Mutungi, J. Karuggia, K. Getwa.

⁴ Interview: J. Njenga, K.P. Getata.

⁵ Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

⁶ Interview: G. Maitumi, J. Wanyoike.

With the mass forced oath-taking bringing into the movement's ranks many reluctant members, these duties of the young militants were becoming increasingly important. For many Kikuyu the fear of the young militants was much more effective than the power of the oath. Those who were caught acting contrary to the movement's code were brought in front of a movement's court and punished severely. There was a special court and jurisdiction for those who had taken the Haturu Oath.¹

The Mau Mau leaders thus established an effective system of control and intimidation which inhibited overt opposition to them among the Kikuyu in Nakuru. Those who were most affected by the rule of Mau Mau militants were members of the local Kikuyu elite. These were the educated, the prosperous businessmen and the prominent politicians who had been the leaders of the Kikuyu tribal community. They had lost their position and their influence among their tribesmen. They had to watch the turn of events which they regarded as disastrous without being able to oppose it. Finally they were completely exposed to intimidation and molestation by people of no consequence by their standards.² Even KCA elders were not exempted from this fate.³ The words of a prominent Kikuyu politician of the time illustrated their predicament: "It was an unpleasant experience for the educated and well-to-do Kikuyu to be pushed around and be told what to do by the illiterate leaders of the militant movement who were in day to day life of a much lower class. In order to avoid molestation one had to pretend that he understood what they were talking about and that he agreed with them. If one was stupid enough

¹ Interview: J. Njenga, E.P. Getata.

² Interview: J.F.G. Kanyua, E.P. Getata, S.M. Ng'ethe.

³ Interview: D.W. Mutungi.

to oppose them he found himself in danger."¹ In fact this man was sent to Zanzibar by the Administration before the Emergency, in order to relieve him from the militants' pressure.²

A few prominent Kikuyu in Nakuru were even forced to take the Batun Oath. Being in contact with the Administration, Mau Mau leaders wanted to use them as a source of information and to prevent them co-operating with the European authorities against the movement. One of them was a clerk in the D.C.'s office and another was a Municipal Councillor. The Batun Oath ceremony during which the initiates were lined up naked and beaten up severely was very humiliating for them. The commitment to violence was often against their beliefs and inclinations.³ One of them expressed, in retrospect, their dilemma: "Being detained was one of the best things that happened to me. I could not go and hang people or fight or pull out coffee plants and other things which the oath commanded us to do. Being detained I was a free man."⁴ The Mau Mau leaders for their part had little trust in the educated Kikuyu and the former Kikuyu politicians, even after they had taken the Batun Oath. They had no access to the movement's secrets and had little knowledge of its leadership, organization and activities.⁵

In mid-1952, while the militant campaign was gaining impetus, efforts were made to resuscitate the KAU local branch which had been defunct since 1950. In 1952 J.Kamanjo, the prominent KKA elder, approached the party headquarters urging them to revive the redundant

¹ Interview: E.P. Getata.

² Interview: J.F.G. Kanyua, J. Mandefield.

³ Interview: S.M. Ng'etha, D.W. Mutungi.

⁴ Interview: S.M. Ng'etha.

⁵ Interview: E.P. Getata, J. Njenga, D.W. Mutungi, S.M. Ng'etha

branch. The headquarters followed up this local initiative and a new branch committee was set up.¹ It was significant, however, that for about two years, from 1950 to 1952, KAU's national leadership had made no attempt to revive Nakuru's branch. These were two crucial years during which constitutional politics steadily lost ground. The chairman of the new branch committee was J. Kamonjo, and Z. Adhola, the Luo, became the new secretary. There was no basic change in the political orientation of the local committee, as had happened for example in Nairobi, a year earlier.² Kamonjo, though more politically committed, was a moderate politician. He opposed, with his KCA colleagues, the young militants. Two new known committee members, -K. Mwenda, the Kikuyu, and W. Mandwa, the Muluhya, added a moderate rather than radical flavour to the committee. The branch was launched in June 1952 with a mass meeting organized by the national headquarters and attended by about five thousand people.³ Three committee meetings were reported in June, July and August 1952.⁴ The Mau Mau militants were not represented at all on the committee. Involvement in an ineffective multi-tribal political organization could serve them no purpose. They concentrated their efforts on the Kikuyu, representing at that stage Kikuyu rather than Kenyan nationalism. The KAU in Nakuru remained outside the mainstream of political developments.

Mau Mau in Nakuru, far from being a focus of unity, brought about division and discord in the nationalist movement. Being an exclusively Kikuyu organization it accentuated political divisions between tribes

¹ Interview: J. Kamonjo.

² C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *op.cit.*, p.269.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWMR, June 1952, F.Kubai to MAAO, 19.6.1952.

⁴ F.N.M.S.S.D.F., NAWMR, June, July 1952, J.Kamonjo to MAAA, 26.8.1952.

in the town. But even within the Kikuyu tribe they emphasized the divisions between educated and uneducated, Christians and non-Christians, poor and affluent, militants and moderates. Tribal "unity" was achieved by the militants on the eve of the Emergency by intimidation. It remained to be seen if unity achieved by force could be maintained in the face of sustained external pressure.

Mau Mau during the Emergency

On 20 October 1952, the Governor signed the Proclamation declaring a State of Emergency in Kenya and authorized the detention of one hundred and eighty three leading Africans in what was known as Operation Jock Scott.¹ Rosberg and Nottingham, as well as Buijtenhuijs, referring to Kenya as a whole, emphasize the element of discontinuity between pre-Emergency Mau Mau and the forest revolt. Buijtenhuijs says it clearly: "A notre avis, la revolte mau mau n'a pas été déclenchée par le mouvement mau mau ou par le peuple Kikuyu, mais provoquée, ou en tout cas précipitée par le gouvernement du Kenya."² Rosberg and Nottingham share this view: "... such of the violence which occurred during the Emergency was not simply a continuation of either pre-Emergency political tactics or the Government's security measures, but derived from the conditions of the Emergency itself."³ They also emphasize the basic discontinuity in leadership between the pre-Emergency political groups and the forest fighters.⁴ These views fit in with the thesis

¹F.D. Corfield, op.cit., p.199.

²R. Buijtenhuijs, op.cit., p.192.

³C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.277.

⁴Ibid., p.278.

that the declaration of the State of Emergency, which sparked off the Mau Mau revolt, was largely the result of a settler conspiracy aimed at taking advantage of the militant expressions of African politics to eliminate the threat of moderate African political agitation.¹

It is true that European settlers pressurized the Government into taking tougher action against African political organizations and probably precipitated the declaration of the State of Emergency. It is equally true that the British military intervention added a new dimension to the situation. The evidence from Nakuru and the RVP in general suggests, however, that there was a large measure of continuity between pre-emergency and Emergency Mau Mau. Prior to the declaration of the State of Emergency there had been a Mau Mau movement in Nakuru distinctively organized and led and increasingly committed to a violent struggle. A campaign of internal violence, directed largely against Government supporters, had been launched before the Emergency. Thus the Government reacted to a rising tide of militancy and violence which was leading towards a break down of law and order. At the same time, while the declaration of the State of Emergency precipitated the era of forest fighting it certainly did not create it. The forest revolt was not the response of a leaderless anonymous mass but of an organized militant movement. The idea of fighting had been there, as had been the idea of using the forests.² The change which was brought about by the Emergency was quantitative rather than qualitative.

In Nakuru, the declaration of the State of Emergency and Operation Jock Scott had no effect whatever on the Mau Mau leadership. None of

¹R. Budjtenhuijs, op.cit., pp. 192-5.

²Interview: N. Mbugura.

the local leaders was rounded up in that Operation. The one person known to have been detained in that Operation was S.M.Ng'ethe, the Registrar of the Nakuru African Court. He had been the secretary of the Rift Valley Agikuyu Union from 1949 to 1952 but was active in neither the KCA or the KAU. He had taken the Batum Oath against his will two days before his detention, and knew little about the movement.¹ The ineffectiveness of the Operation in Nakuru suggests that the security services knew very little about Mau Mau in the town at that time. The first Mau Mau committee member from Nakuru was detained in February 1953. A few local leaders were detained around the middle of 1953, one in November 1953 and one in as late as 1954.²

It was only by about July 1953 that the Administration, after detaining most of the local Mau Mau committee members, succeeded in disrupting Mau Mau's organization and activities in the Nakuru area. It is not clear that even then the security forces knew who the Mau Mau leaders in Nakuru area were.³ They were detained in the massive anti-Mau Mau screening operations. The first big screening operation took place on 15 January 1953. It followed reported Mau Mau meetings in the town and the discovery of the decapitated body of an African teacher a few miles from Nakuru.⁴ In this operation some two thousand, five hundred Africans were screened. Four hundred and fifty Kikuyu were detained, fifty of whom were screened "much more closely".⁵ On 5 July 1953 a similar operation was carried out by the security forces in the Nakuru area. Two thousand Kikuyu Mau Mau suspects were

¹ Interview: S.M.Ng'ethe.

² Interview: G.Muitumi, A.Gumjiri, K.Getwa, J.Wanyoike.

³ Interview: J.Mandefield. Mandefield, the then MAAO, who was closely associated with anti-Mau Mau operation named as leaders prominent Kikuyu, like Nanyama and Getata, who had nothing to do with Mau Mau leadership.

⁴ EAS, 16.1.1953. p.1.

⁵ EAS, 17.1.1953. p.5.

held for further screening. A number of them were, according to police sources, known Mau Mau gang members.¹ The local police was reported to be satisfied that the operation eradicated all the subversive elements in Bondeni Location, Nakuru.² Towards the end of July 1953 more than four hundred and fifty Kikuyu were detained in a swoop on labour lines and settlements in an area of thirty miles around Nakuru. "A rewarding number of such wanted Mau Mau organizers, including oath administrators, secretaries and treasurers" were supposed to be among them.³

As these operations progressed, more information about Mau Mau was accumulated by the security forces. The intensive campaign of screening and interrogation, in which brutality was often used, at last brought results. One must also take into account that loyalty achieved by force could not be evoked when that force was removed. The large scale evacuation to the reserves of Kikuyu from Nakuru area in 1953 also had an effect on Mau Mau organization.⁴ A stricter system of residential permits enforced in Nakuru from March 1953 also helped the security forces to control the situation.⁵ In 1953 a campaign to win the "hearts and minds" of Africans was also launched in Nakuru. It was mainly carried out by the African Affairs Department of the Nakuru Municipal Council and included the expansion of the radio relay service to the African Location,⁶ the publication of Bondeni, a local Swahili

¹ EAS, 6.7.1953, p.1.

² EAS, 13.7.1953, p.5.

³ EAS, 29.7.1953, p.5.

⁴ KMA/RVP Annual Report, 1953, p.1.

⁵ MMA/AAC, report about compulsory photography, 1953; N.M.S.S.D.F..

⁶ Emergency Regulations, March 1953.

N.M.S.S.D.F., MAAO to Nakuru European Chamber of Commerce, 12.5.1953.

and English newspaper full of Government propaganda, and a general increase in the volume of social activities for Africans organised by the Department.¹

But until mid-1953 Mau Mau continued to operate effectively, though under increasing pressure. The name Mau Mau committee which had been in charge of the movement in the town and the District, continued to function in Nakuru. It controlled the same organizational structure which had existed prior to the Emergency. It also continued to maintain contact with the movement's central committee in Nairobi.² The oath-taking campaign continued unabated for both the "first" and the Batun oaths.³ In June and July large sums of money contributed to Mau Mau treasurers were reported to have been confiscated by the security forces.⁴ The Mau Mau committee continued to maintain tight control over those who had taken the oath, through the town "platoons" under its command.⁵ As part of the campaign against traitors an attempt was made, in March 1953, on the life of J.F.G. Kanyua who co-operated with the Administration.⁶ This attempt failed as did the few others also planned by Mau Mau committee.⁷ In late June 1953 two armed Kikuyu tried to shoot an Asian Police Reserve officer.⁸ Operations to acquire arms also continued.⁹

¹ EAS, 13.7.1953. N.M.S.S.D.F., African Affairs Department (AAD) Annual Report 1953. Interview: J. Mandefield, M. Hardy.

² Interview: K. Kabuba, J. Wanyoike, G. Maitumi.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., A confession taken by a screening team, 13.7.1953. The woman concerned confessed that she was forced to take an oath in Nakuru in April 1953. African Affairs Department Annual Report, p.6; in June-July 1953 five oath administrators were prosecuted in Nakuru. Interview: J. Wanyoike.

⁴ N.M.S.S.D.F., AAD Annual Report 1953, p.6.

⁵ Interview: J. Wanyoike.

⁶ EAS, 17.3.1953.

⁷ Interview: J. Wanyoike.

⁸ EAS, 1.7.1953, p.7.

⁹ Interview: J. Wanyoike.

Towards the end of May 1953, a group of Africans, reported to have been Mau Mau members, was surprised by the police while attempting to break into a local store which had a large quantity of ropes in stock.¹

After the declaration of the State of Emergency Nakuru developed as a logistic centre supporting the forest revolt. It seems that Mau Mau national leaders realised that their main problem was not so much sending people to the forest as securing regular supply of food, arms and other materials which would enable them to carry out a sustained fighting. They decided, therefore, not to disrupt the existing Mau Mau leadership in Nakuru. Indeed, only one of the known Mau Mau leaders in Nakuru joined the forest fighters, the rest having remained in the town. Nakuru was established as a centre of recruitment and supply to the forest forces. Nakuru's Mau Mau leadership decided not to launch an extensive guerilla campaign in the town, largely because they feared that it might jeopardise the performance of their main function.²

It is improbable that Mau Mau fighters had actually been sent to the forest from Nakuru before the Emergency. In the beginning of 1953 the Mau Mau District committee started to send big groups to the forest.³ It was a planned and organized operation. Early in 1953, for example, Joseph Karuggia, a committee member from Nakuru, led a group of about four hundred young fighters from the town and the District to the Aberdare forest. There they joined the force led by "General"

¹ EAS, 29.5.1953, p.3.

² Interview: G. Muituni.

³ Interviews: A. Gunjiri, K. Kabuba.

Makuru Mwangi, one of the movement's national leaders before the emergency.¹ One report stated that by about February 1953 some four hundred recruits from the town had gone to the forest.² Another source claimed that by July 1953 between six and seven hundred Mau Mau members from Nakuru had made their way to the forest.³ A third source claimed that by November 1953 the figure had reached more than a thousand.⁴ The intensification of the screening operation no doubt stimulated the influx of fighters to the forest. Reports in May 1953 of action against Mau Mau "gangs" in Bahati Forest, North East of Nakuru, may have reflected the movement of fighters to the Aberdares, the main destination of Nakuru people.⁵

Nakuru was at the same time a centre of supply for the forest. Communication between the forest leaders and Nakuru committee was maintained by messengers. Leaders in the forest sent lists of supplies required which included food, arms, clothes, medicines and money. The Nakuru committee collected the required items and organized their delivery to the edge of the forest. Supplies were transported by cars if the situation allowed or by groups of carriers organized in the town.⁶

Although the backbone of Mau Mau in Nakuru had been broken by July 1953, the movement was by no means dead. Remnants of the leadership and the hard core militants continued to operate in the town,

though on a much smaller scale. Now they were on the run and could count on the co-operation and loyalty of only a few. They had to operate in extreme secrecy which greatly reduced their effectiveness. The

¹ Interview: J. Karuggia.

² Interview: G. Maitumi.

³ Interview: K. Getwa.

⁴ Interview: A. Gunjiri.

⁵ EMB, 4.5.1953, p.1.

⁶ Interview: G. Maitumi, J. Manyoike, K. Getwa, J. Karugata.

committee ceased to function from around July 1953 and the remaining leaders operated largely informally, relying on a limited number of trusted members. But groups of fighters made their way to the Aberdare forest until as late as November 1953.¹ Contact with the forest was intermittently maintained and supplies were sent there in 1954 and probably even later.² In May 1954 a police constable was attacked by six Africans in the African Location and his rifle taken. Three months later the rifle was recovered during a police anti-Mau Mau action in Naivasha area.³ In August 1954 a known "gangster" was arrested in the centre of Nakuru.⁴ In 1955, groups of Mau Mau fighters, hard pressed in the forest, began to make their way to the Rift Valley. One of them established itself around the Menengai Crater on the boundary of the town.⁵ The presence of "terrorist" groups in Nakuru District was also reported in the first half of 1956.⁶ According to one report some of these groups received supplies from the remaining militants in Nakuru.⁷

The security forces for their part continued their screening operations in order to completely eradicate Mau Mau activities in the town. Besides cutting off the forest fighters from a potential supply base, the aim of these operations was to ensure that all the Kikuyu who had been "contaminated" by Mau Mau would go through the rehabilitation process.⁸ In November 1953 a big screening operation, in which six

¹ Interview: A. Gunjiri.

² Interview: K. Getwa, D. Muhuhu.

³ EAS, 10.5.1954, p.5; 14.8.1954, p.5.

⁴ EAS, 5.8.1954, p.5.

⁵ KNA/NDAR 1955, p.1. Interview: P. McIntee.

⁶ KNA/P.C./Mau/dep.2/840, S.L.O., R.V.P. Report, January, February, March and April 1956.

⁷ Interview: D. Muhuhu.

⁸ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.334.

screening teams took part, was carried out in Nakuru. The screeners had a list of forty-four wanted Mau Mau members. At least half of them were detained. Mau Mau documents were reported to have been discovered by the Special Branch and further arrests were subsequently made.¹

In February 1954 another such operation resulted in the detention of sixteen Kikuyu suspects. By this time, as a result of detention and repatriation, Nakuru's Kikuyu population had fallen, according to one report, from four thousand to about one thousand eight hundred.² The last reported screening operation in Nakuru was carried out early in July 1955. Eighteen Kikuyu thought to be forest "gangsters" or members of Mau Mau committees were picked up by hooded "loyalist" screeners.³ By then Mau Mau was virtually defeated.

The Role of the "Loyalists" in the anti-Mau Mau Campaign

The "loyalists" played an important part in the Government anti-Mau Mau campaign. The Administration and the local authority began to organize the local loyal Africans late in March 1953. This was a direct result of the first two large scale Mau Mau operations which were carried out successfully on the night of March 26, 1953. These were the attack on Naivasha Police Station some forty miles south of Nakuru and the "Lari Massacre" in Kiambu.⁴ It was only then that the potential threat of Mau Mau was fully realized. Nakuru's European community reacted by forming a European Home Guard. In addition, an African Home Guard was organized with the active support of European employers. By the end of March 1953, three African Home Guard

¹ EAJ, 19.11.1953, p.1.

² EAJ, 12.2.1954, p.29.

³ EAJ, 8.7.1955, p.29.

⁴ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.286. Kenya Weekly News, 3.4.1953, p.60.

platoons plus a HQ platoon had been formed under the command of the MAAO.¹ Mau Mau leaders were then well in control and it was hazardous for Kikuyu to join this force. In spite of this, four prominent educated Kikuyu joined the African Home Guard as clerks at that early stage. Among the section commanders of this force was the current KAU local branch secretary, a Malukya.² Shortly after its formation the African Home Guard was replaced by the "M" Force which consisted of paid askaris commanded by the MAAO. In May 1953 most of the twenty six members of this force were Western Kenya tribesmen. This force actively participated in anti-Mau Mau operations in the town.³

It was, however, the view of the Administration that Mau Mau was as much the problem of the loyal Kikuyu as it was theirs. The idea was to organise the loyal Kikuyu and to enlist their support in the security operations. In April 1953, Kanyua, the former KAU chairman, took the initiative suggesting to the MAAO ways and means of controlling the town's African population. He proposed the formation of a committee which would help the security forces in screening operations.⁴ The assistance of Kikuyu "loyalists" in screening operations was of particular value since they knew the language and customs and had access to inside information. It was, however, only after the disintegration of the Mau Mau organisation in the town that the loyal Kikuyu became organised. Towards the end of June 1953, Kanyua felt safe enough to condemn Mau Mau publicly. In a Municipal Council meeting

¹ N.M.S.S.D.F., African Home Guard Routine Orders, 29.3.1953.

² Ibid.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., AAD Annual Report 1953; MAAO to M. de la Hay Moores, 2.5.1953.

⁴ MMA/AAC, Kanyua to MAAO, 10.4.1953.

he denied having any links with Mau Mau and denounced it as "an evil and unhealthy organization" which was "destructive to the well-being of my people". He urged the Kikuyu "to denounce Mau Mau and to co-operate with the Government and the forces in the task of restoring happiness in Kenya".¹ In July 1953 the Kikuyu Home Guard was formed in Nakuru under the command of a European police officer. The vice-president of the Home Guard Kiama (committee) had been until 1948 a KCA committee member.² The Home Guard Kiama participated in screening operations soon after its establishment.³ In 1954 the Nakuru Home Guard screening team was found to have used brutal methods during screening operations.⁴ The position of the Home Guard Kiama was enhanced by its authority to recommend people for rehabilitation and for benefits such as trading licences.⁵

But much more than mere assistance to the security forces was expected from the loyal Kikuyu. They were to bring the Kikuyu back to the "right ways" and present them with a political alternative which would accommodate European supremacy. In denouncing Mau Mau Kenyas outlined this alternative: "I strongly appeal to all people of my tribe and all other Africans to recognize that there can be no future for us unless we learn to co-operate fully with all other races living in Kenya and to voice our legitimate complaints through democratic and constitutional channels."⁶

¹ Kenya Weekly News, 26.6.1953, p.21.

² NMA/Application for Plots in Rendani, 1955-7, G. Njeroge to the Plot Allocation Committee, 5.4.1954.

³ N.M.S.S.D.F., a statement by T. Wambui screened by the Home Guard Kiama, 13.7.1953.

⁴ KNA/ND 1, 1954, p.13.

⁵ N.M.S.S.D.F., a statement by T. Wambui screened by the Home Guard Kiama, 13.7.1953: "The Kiama recommended that T. Wambui be granted a licence as she has really confessed and become a good Christian."

⁶ Kenya Weekly News, 26.6.1953, p.21.

The campaign for an alternative political ideology received a touch of a Christian crusade with the formation of the Torchbearers Association, also known as the Misumba Cĩa Kikuyu. The Association was originally formed in Naivasha in February 1953, by four loyal Kikuyu inspired and assisted by Europeans.¹ Nakuru's branch was inaugurated on 29 August 1953.² The Association operated mainly in the settled areas of the RVP and in Nairobi.³ Its office was in Naivasha and the usual place for worship and gathering was in the Church of Goodwill on Lady Cole's farm near Gilgil.

The main aims of the Association were "to lead the Kikuyu people back to the right ways; to help the Government and all good citizens in maintenance of law and order, to make Kenya a great country, in which all people will prosper and live happily together, to be loyal to God and always do the right in his eyes; to be loyal to the Queen and server."⁴ In the words of P. Keritu, the Association's founder, at the inaugural meeting of Nakuru branch, the Association set out to help the security forces "e.g. help on raids, provide screening teams, bring in information, protect other members etc."⁵ In fulfilling these duties there was a large measure of co-operation and overlapping between the Torchbearers Association and the Kikuyu Home Guard. Members of the Torchbearers Association were used by

¹ KNA/D.C/Mku/dop.2/217, Torchbearers Association. Agenda A.G.M., 18.7.1954. The four Kikuyu were Parmenas Keritu, Elijah Methu and James Mugo from Naivasha and Reuben Karari from Gilgil. H. Slade, a prominent settler and the D.C. Naivasha were instrumental in the establishment of the Association. Other prominent settlers joined them later on.

² KNA/D.C/Mku/dop.2/217, Inaugural meeting of Nakuru branch of the Torchbearers Association, 29.8.1953.

³ During its existence the Association had branches in Nairobi, Nakuru, Naivasha, Gilgil, Dundori, Ol Kalou, Thompson's Falls and Maji Maruri-Sabatia-Eldama Ravine.

⁴ E.S.A., File 510, Torchbearers Association's constitution, undated.

⁵ KNA/D.C/Mku/dop.2/217, Inaugural meeting of the Torchbearers Association, Nakuru branch, 29.8.1953.

leaders to join the Home Guard and instil in its members the spirit of Christianity. This was expected to add efficiency and honesty to the Home Guard's activities. Torchbearers Association's leaders often met with the Home Guard to discuss their duties.¹ Early in November 1954 David Wanguku, a prominent Torchbearer, was appointed Chief of Nakuru town, his main task being to co-ordinate between the Torchbearers Association and the Kilogy Home Guard.²

The Torchbearers Association's co-operation with the security forces and the Government was based on an ideology which accepted European domination as beneficial to the Africans. Addressing the inaugural meeting of Nakuru branch in August 1953, P. Keritu said that the Association "was no party to those who intended to get rid of the Europeans from this country".³ On another occasion, in November 1953, he elaborated on it: "In the last fifty years great benefits have derived to the Africans, but new and bad ideas have come and spoilt all this. If we can follow the Christian way of life and co-operate we shall go ahead under the Queen whose loyalty we cherish under God who is over all."⁴ The Torchbearers represented a spirit of dependence on their European patrons: "I also wish to pay special thanks to the Missions and the Administration who taught us the way of peace, and those settlers who have helped us to follow the right path."⁵

¹ Interview: C. Wanguku, H.O. Odaba, P. McIntos.

² EAS, 3.11.1954, p.4.

³ KMA/D.C/Mcu/dep.2/217, Inaugural meeting of Nakuru branch of the Torchbearers Association, 29.8.1953. (Minutes)

⁴ KMA/D.C/Mcu/dep.2/217, Torchbearers Association A.G.M., 15.11.1953. (Minutes)

⁵ KMA/D.C/Mcu/dep.2/217, P. Keritu, Torchbearers Association A.G.M., 17.4.1955. (Minutes)

The source of evil in Kenya, according to David Waruhiu, son of the murdered "loyalist" Senior Chief Waruhiu, was racial hatred. "We are reminded that this Association was founded with the aim of providing an answer to the burning race hatred which bad leaders had inculcated into the minds of our unfortunate Kikuyu tribe. This would have condemned us to decades of conflict and chaos." To avoid this bleak prospect the Kikuyu tribe had to be rehabilitated. "We are met here with the realization that the Kikuyu tribe must be rebuilt on a firm moral foundation and with the conviction that Christianity by its example can give us that foundation which is the only basis of our survival." In political terms the future of Kenya rested on the co-operation between Africans and Europeans: "This Association realises as never before that Black and White need each other in the task of building a prosperous and peaceful Kenya."¹ On another occasion Waruhiu stated that "the only hope for the future is that all races will share the Government".² This was the African counterpart of multi-racialism which was fashionable in settler and Government circles during the 1950s and which was implemented by the Lyttelton Constitution of 1954.³

A closer look at the prominent members of the Association in Nakuru may help us to understand its nature. All eight known Torchbearers from Nakuru, who served on either the local or the national committee, were, as could have been expected, staunch members of European churches or missions. Five of the eight belonged to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, two were leaders of the African Inland Mission and one was a lay reader in the Anglican Church.⁴ The fact that there

¹ Ibid.

² KMA/D.C/Mu/dep.2/217, Torchbearers Association A.G.M., 15.11.1953. (Minutes)

³ J.N.Crowley- Colonial Policy and Nationalism in Kenya, 1952-63, Ph.D. thesis, University of Washington 1967. pp. 68-97.

⁴ Interview: R.N. Mombaa, C. Wanguh.

were no Roman Catholics among them, although the Roman Catholic mission had been active in Nakuru for a long time, deserved further research. This background of the Association's leaders, explains their brand of "loyalism" with its distinct Christian bias.

Socio-economically most of them were either successful businessmen or well-educated and well-paid employees occupying prestigious jobs. David and Charles Wanguhu, the most prominent Torchbearers in Nakuru, were, for example, prosperous building contractors. This socio-economic background also characterized known leading "loyalists" who were not Torchbearers. They certainly had stakes in the system from which they derived obvious benefits. David and Charles Wanguhu, for example, thrived on contracts which they secured from Government and missions.¹ Prominent "loyalists" and Torchbearers were well represented in the Nakuru African Advisory Council, the General Ward Council and the Nakuru Municipal Council. On the whole they were representatives par excellence of the urban kikuyu elite and natural leaders of their tribal community. Their position was challenged and threatened by Mau Mau leaders who brought into prominence the illiterate urban masses. The political ideology of the "loyalist" leaders can certainly be related to their vital interests.

It was hardly surprising then, that the Torchbearers Association was strongly supported by the Administration, the Missions and settlers. In fact the functioning and the success of the Association were largely dependent on European support. In November 1953 the chairman of Nakuru branch said clearly that his branch would face troubles without assistance, expressing the hope that "with official support we may have more definite news in the future".² This tutelage could

¹ Interview: C. Wanguhu.

² KJA/D.C/Nku/dep.2/217. Torchbearers Association A.G.M., 15.11.1953. (Minutes)

hardly produce a viable political alternative.

Both the peak and decline of the Torchbearers Association could be traced back to the first half of 1955, when Mau Mau revolt was nearing its end. In the Association's Annual General Meeting held on April 17, 1955 a sense of achievement was still present as was the belief in the future of the Association.¹ But towards the end of the same month, the Association suffered a serious blow when some eighty-five of its members in Naivasha admitted to having been involved in Mau Mau activities. Among them was the Association's secretary, who had allegedly been a Mau Mau treasurer.² This resulted in a growing distrust of the Association in European circles,³ in a period when its services were expendable, with the formation of African district political parties from the end of 1955, and the political role played by leaders of the Kenya Federation of Labour and Tom Mboya in particular, it became increasingly clear that the partners for political settlement would be the future nationalist leaders and not the loyal Kikuyu as such.⁴

The Torchbearers Association started to decline. In his speech in the Association's Annual General Meeting in April 1956 Nakuru branch could report only one meeting during the previous year.⁵ A sense of frustration was also reflected in the reports of the Association's national president and the chairman of its executive committee.⁶ The

¹ KMA/D.C/Mau/dep.2/217, Torchbearers Association A.G.M., 17.4.1955. (Minutes)

² EAS, 1.5.1955, p.5. KMA/D.C/Mau/dep.2/217, Torchbearers Association A.G.M., 29.4.1956. (Minutes)

³ Ibid.

⁴ G. Bennet, Kenya Political History, pp. 137-41.

⁵ KMA/D.C/Mau/dep.2/217, Torchbearers Association A.G.M., 29.4.1956. (Minutes)

⁶ Ibid.

Association in Nakuru tried to preserve its viability and usefulness by initiating welfare activities for the destitute Kikuyu,¹ but to no avail. Good deeds were no substitute for sound political plans or popular support. In 1956-7 the Torchbearers Association was on the wane. Some of its European supporters still continued to try and re-suscitate it as a potential ally for multi-racialism but it was flogging a dead horse.²

The declaration of the State of Emergency in October 1952 did not put an immediate end to African overt political activities. KAU was allowed to continue functioning. In Nakuru, the Emergency brought about important changes in the KAU branch's leadership. The KCA elders and others were replaced by a very moderate leadership. With the Emergency Kikuyu dominance in KAU came to an end, the new leadership being tribally balanced. Of the seven officers there were two each from the Kikuyu, Luo and the Abaluhya tribes, one being a Swahili.³ Again tribal balance based on political moderation was achieved only when the more politically radical Kikuyu were removed. The new KAU local leadership reflected more than its predecessors the emergence of the urban elite of educated clerks and successful businessmen. The new leadership was not disturbed or pressurised by Mau Mau militants,⁴ and remained outside the main stream of the political developments of

¹ EAS, 21.10.1955, p.6.

² KMA/D.C./Mau/dep.2/217, Torchbearers Association A.G.M., 29.4.1956 (Minutes); A.G.M., 22.9.1957, Nakuru and District Branch A.G.M., 26.5.1956. (Minutes); (Minutes);

³ KMA/A/AHS/8/120, a list of KAU's officers, 1952.

⁴ Interview: B.K. Mwendia.

the day. With the proscription of KAU in June 1953,¹ the first phase in the development of African political parties came to an end. During the height of the Mau Mau revolt only the loyal Kikuyu were allowed, and indeed encouraged, to organize. In June 1955, with the improvement in the security situation, the Government decided to allow Africans to form political organizations again. This decision opened a new chapter in the development of ^{the} Kenyan nationalist movement.

Since racial committees were impossible unless the Africans were also granted the right to organize themselves politically. The restriction of African political parties to the district level reflected Government's insistence upon controlling the development of African political organizations. As early as February 1955, James Boyd, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, indicated that in these district political associations might be allowed to form a decentralized federation. Even this federation could be only formed after several years. He was adamant that a centralized party like KAU should never be allowed.² The idea probably was to encourage the emergence of regional and provincial political leadership which might be more inclined to accept centralization, in far as Africans were concerned. These unorganized divisions developed in accordance existing disparities in political development between different tribes and between urban centers and tribal reserves. Coming, however, after two years of a complete ban on African political organizations, the Government announced held a rather prospect.

Before Africans were given the floor to respond to the new opportunity by organizing, on 9 November 1955, the British African Progressive Party (BAPP).³ The BAPP's view of the political situation

¹ J.N. Crowley, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

² J.N. Crowley, *Political Policy and Administration in Kenya, 1945-1963*, p. 58.

³ J.N. Crowley, *Political Policy and Administration in Kenya, 1945-1963*, p. 58.

Chapter FiveAFRICAN DISTRICT POLITICAL PARTIES 1955-1960

The Government decision, in June 1955, to allow the resumption of African political activity¹ must be seen in relation to its attempt to implement the Lyttelton multi-racial constitution. Significant African participation in the governing of the colony alongside the two other racial communities was impossible unless the Africans were also granted the right to organize themselves politically. The restriction of African political parties to the district level reflected Government's insistence upon controlling the development of African political organizations. As early as February 1955, Lennox-Boyd, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, indicated that in time district political associations might be allowed to form a decentralised federation. Even this federation could be only formed after several years. He was adamant that a centralised party like KAU should never be allowed.² The idea probably was to encourage the emergence of moderate and parochial political leadership which might be more inclined to accept multi-racialism. As far as Africans were concerned, these superimposed divisions threatened to accentuate existing disparities in political development between different tribes and between urban centres and tribal reserves. Coming, however, after two years of a complete ban on African political organizations, the Government concession held a brighter prospect.

Nakuru Africans were among the first to respond to the new opportunity by inaugurating, on 5 November 1955, the Nakuru African Progressive Party (NAPP).³ The founders' views of the political orientation

¹G. Bennett, Kenya, a Political History, p.138.

²J.N. Crowley, Colonial Policy and Nationalism in Kenya, 1952-1963, p.98.

³H.D. Odaba Private Papers (PP), NAPP Inaugural Meeting, 5.11.1955. (Minutes)

of the party could not have disappointed the Administration. They rejected the political legacy of the past, being determined to introduce a new spirit into African politics. The future party's president spelled it out in October 1955 in a letter to the D.C.: "We feel confident also that the new party should result in the creation of a new loyal and healthy political spirit amongst the local African population, inasmuch as the party will endeavour to work for the creation of better understanding between its followers and government in the maintenance of law and order and the creation of healthy co-operation between members of all races in Kenya."¹ The future party's secretary, holding the same views, added a personal touch: "One of the reasons for my accepting this offer is because I feel that I could be of help to the new party by seeing to it that they do not make similar mistakes as were made by their unworthy predecessors (The Kenya African Union) of which I was at one time a member."²

The party's constitution displayed its moderate political orientation. It neither challenged the legitimacy of colonial government nor made demands which would significantly alter the political structure of the country. In a vague manner the party undertook to work "for the promotion of African economic, social and political development within its area and within Kenya in general". There was also the echo of multi-racialism: "The Party will work for the promotion of friendly co-operation between Africans in this District and members of other races." The civic virtues which the party hoped to instil into its followers would certainly not have aroused the opposition of the Government. They included "a sense of decency, loyalty, responsibility and

¹ H.D.Odaba P.P., Odaba to D.C., 20.10.1955.

² H.D.Odaba P.P., Kanyua to D.C., 20.10.1955.

progressive citizenship".¹

In a memorandum presented to the African Members of the Legislative Council, in January 1956, the NAPP specified its demands.² Some of these reflected grievances of African business interests which were represented on the NAPP's committee. They included a demand for African representation on the Nakuru Liquor Court and on the Transport Licensing Board, which would have helped African traders to compete with the Asian traders under more favourable conditions. They also requested that business plots be given to African traders in the towns' main commercial centres and that Africans developing their plots with permanent materials be given title deeds.

Their political demands, which they hoped to pursue through the African Members of the Legislative Council, whilst not challenging the colonial structure, did not accept the existing extent of African participation in it. Their aim was to increase African participation within the system of European domination. Locally the party demanded an increase in African representation on the Nakuru Municipal Board from three to six. They also sought to introduce African representation on the settler-dominated Nakuru County Council. Nationally, the memorandum went far beyond the framework of the existing Lyttelton Constitution. It sought an increase of African representation in the Legislative Council (Legco) from six nominated to ten elected and four nominated members. A specific demand was made for an increase of the Rift Valley Province representation from one to four, one to represent the squatters as well, arguing that an African Member whose political base was in the reserve could not speak for Africans living outside it. The memorandum also demanded the appointment of African Parliamentary Under-Secretaries to all ministries. Lastly, the memorandum

¹R.E.A., File 1027, NAPP constitution.

²H.D. Odaba P.P., Memorandum, 28.1.1956.

requested that the ban on political activity of the Kikuyu, Luo and Meru be lifted. The request was not for a universal political participation of these tribesmen: "The party believes that amongst the Kikuyu in particular there are bound to be found men of courage and knowledge who can make good elders of their fellow Africans like those who have suffered at the hands of the Terrorists etc."¹ The NAPP revealed itself again as a "loyal" party.

While some of the NAPP's demands might be regarded as radical in the context of that time, the party had not worked out any effective way of carrying them through. The African Members of the Legislative Council, who were expected to take up these issues with the Government, were far from being determined and assertive political leaders. Indeed, those of them from whom the NAPP sought leadership and guidance did not encourage the party to adopt a nationalist political line. D.T. Arap Moi, the newly elected Member for the RVP, addressed the party's inaugural meeting. He promised to co-operate with the party and to take up with the Government "genuine" grievances such as the questions of title deeds and leases of plots for Africans in the urban areas.² The message of B.A. Changa, the Member for Central Nyanza and the Minister for Community Development, in another party meeting was even less stimulating. He criticised the use of the name "Party" because it "suggested division rather than unity", claiming that the time was not yet ripe for the formation of African political parties. He went on to "greatly deplore the lack of honesty and integrity shown by African domestic servants" and ended up by calling on Africans to support the Government in its fight against lawlessness.³ The political

¹The memorandum was drawn up after the Kikuyu committee members of the party were disqualified by the Administration, see below, p.

²H.D. Odaba P.P., NAPP, Inaugural Meeting, 5.11.1955. (Minutes)

³H.D. Odaba P.P., NAPP public meeting, 3.12.1955. (Minutes)

atmosphere of late 1955 emerges very clearly from these "inspirations".

The moderate outlook of the NAPP may be also explained in terms of its leadership. Kanyua, one of the three initiators of the idea of forming the party, was a leading Kikuyu "loyalist" in Nakuru. Another, H.D.Odaba, had just left the Government service as Assistant District Officer having been actively involved ⁱⁿ the anti-Mau Mau campaign.¹¹ Odaba and Kanyua were elected in the inaugural meeting as the party's president and secretary respectively. Another committee member elected at that meeting was a member of the Torchbearers Association. At least two of the Kikuyu who took an active interest in the inaugural meeting were leading Kikuyu "loyalists". The non-Kikuyu elected to the committee were newcomers to the political scene and no more politically radical. Tribally the committee was dominated by the Kikuyu and the Luo. It was composed of four Kikuyu, four Luo, one Maluhya and one Kalenjin. The committee consisted largely of educated Africans, mostly clerks.

The NAPP was shortlived not having enough time to test its brand of politics and its acceptability with the African masses. At the beginning it looked as if the party was off to a good start. In spite of the Emergency conditions there were many Africans eager for some kind of political activity. In November and December 1955 the NAPP organized two public meetings with outside speakers. Committee meetings were held in which party policies were worked out. Contact was maintained with the African Members of the Legislative Council and the Administration. The NAPP was, in fact, the first political organization in Nakuru to use systematically written records and keep minutes and files. The party even began to make contacts in the District with a view to extend its network beyond the town.²

¹ H.D.Odaba P.P., A meeting convened by H.D.Odaba, J.F.G.Kanyua and Owalla Awino, 17.10.1955. (Minutes)

² H.D.Odaba P.P., NAPP circular letter to people in different parts of Nakuru District, undated (around November-December 1955).

Soon after its formation, however, the NAPP suffered what turned out to be a fatal blow. Towards the end of December 1955 it became clear that the Government was not prepared to permit Kikuyu, Embu and Meru to take part in political parties. Consequently all the four Kikuyu committee members had to resign,¹ although none of them could really be regarded as a political threat. Explaining the Government decision the P.C. said that it was impossible to say "with any certainty which Kikuyu are still subversive and helping Mau Mau, and which are not".² He referred to the involvement of leading Torchbearers in Naivasha with Mau Mau. The Government decision was to be a lesson to Africans: "It must be made clear to the Kikuyu and to other tribes, that participation in rebellion against the Government retards, not advances, the tribe concerned, and it would not be right that Kikuyu should have the same start and privileges in taking to politics as the other loyal tribes." Odaba, the party's president, tried to convince the P.C. to apply the ban only on those involved in subversive activity.³ The P.C., however, insisted that the party's constitution must include a specific undertaking that Kikuyu, Embu and Meru would not be eligible so long as this was contrary to the Government instructions.⁴ The party complied with this demand after a mild protest.⁵

The party never recovered from this blow. In spite of the suppression of the Kikuyu during the height of the Emergency, they still exhibited more interest in politics than Africans from other tribes. Those Kikuyu involved in the NAPP were basically "loyalist" and certainly did not regard themselves as the advance-guard of a future militant

¹ H.D. Odaba P.P., Kanyua to Odaba, 30.12.1955; S. Mbote to Odaba, 31.12.1955; M.N. Waweru to Odaba, 5.1.1956.

² H.D. Odaba P.P., P.C., RVP to Odaba, 5.1.1956.

³ H.D. Odaba P.P., Odaba to P.C., RVP, 10.1.1956.

⁴ H.D. Odaba P.P., P.C., RVP, to Odaba, 16.1.1956.

⁵ H.D. Odaba P.P., J.H. Odhiambo to P.C., RVP, 23.1.1956; Statement by Odaba, 17.1.1956.

nationalist movement. They demonstrated, however, the Kikuyu taste for political power and their sensitivity to changing political realities. The exclusion of the Kikuyu not only deprived the party's committee of a third of its members and its active general secretary. It also demonstrated the party's helplessness in its relations with the Government. This may have been one of the reasons why three additional committee members resigned in December 1955 and January 1956. The party's president had great difficulties in finding replacements.¹ In about February 1956 the president himself was forced to leave Nakuru upon failing to obtain a business licence.² This was more than the party could stand and by February 1956 it became redundant, to all intents and purposes.³ Until then the NAPP did not have registered membership,⁴ neither did it open branches in the District.⁵

The Nakuru District Congress 1958-60.

The fact that more than two years had elapsed before another African political party was formed in Nakuru may serve to show that the NAPP was premature. Important developments took place during 1956 to 1958 which were conducive to nationalist political activity. The independence of Ghana in March 1957 raised enthusiasm and hopes.⁶ In Kenya, as the military phase of the Emergency came to an end, Africans started to take the political initiative. Rejecting multi-racialism, African political leaders and Members of the Legislative Council were

¹ H.D.Odaba P.P., Odaba to D.T.Arap Moi, 10.1.1956. Interview: H.D.Odaba.

² Interview: H.D.Odaba.

³ KNA/NDAR 1956, p.3. Interview: H.D.Odaba.

⁴ H.D.Odaba P.P., Odaba to NAPP secretary, 31.1.1956.

⁵ Interview: H.D.Odaba.

⁶ Interview: R.A.Kuboka.

pressing for self-Government and undiluted democracy. Many of them were in no mood to accept anything less than African majority rule. In June 1958 Oginga Odinga, the Luo leader, started a campaign proclaiming Kenyatta as the revered leader of Kenya Africans. By 1958 it became increasingly clear that the future lay with African nationalism rather than with multi-racialism. Political leadership of the nationalist movement was in the hands of African Members of the Legislative Council backed by numerous district political organizations. The advance-guard of the nationalist movement was, no doubt, the Nairobi People's Convention Party (NPCP) led by Tom Mboya. The NPCP ushered in a new era in Kenya African political organization. Mboya built a vocal and militant party well organized and disciplined which channelled the political energies and aspirations of many Nairobi and Kenya Africans. It was the first fully effective mass political party in Kenya.¹

Despite this conducive political atmosphere, Nakuru's Africans needed an external stimulus to embark on a new party. This was provided by C. Kiprotich, a Kalenjin, who had come from Nairobi with the specific intention of establishing a district party in Nakuru. Kiprotich had been the organizing secretary of the Nairobi African District Congress but later he followed Mboya into the NPCP. It may have been that he was sent by Mboya who wanted to expand his influence beyond Nairobi. One source claims that Kiprotich came to Nakuru to establish for himself a political base as a stepping stone to the Legislative Council.² When Kiprotich came to Nakuru he found local Africans responsive. In fact the question of forming a local district party had been discussed by leading Nakuru Africans prior to his arrival.³

¹ For fuller background to this period, see, G. Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-50; J. M. Crowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-53; T. Mboya, *Freedom and After*, Andre Deutsch, London 1963, pp. 75-81.

² Interview: S. L. Ojuka, 2.3.1964, Interview:

³ Interview: Z. Imbini, B. A. Kutoka.

The new party, the Nakuru District Congress (NDC), was inaugurated on 18 May 1958 at a mass meeting with Tom Mboya as guest of honour.¹ The events of this meeting reflected the political mood of Nakuru Africans. Whereas only one thousand people could be accommodated in the hall where the meeting was held, a further two thousand crowded outside. Disappointed by their exclusion from the meeting the crowd stoned the police before being dispersed by reinforcements. At the meeting a decision was taken to join the boycott declared by the NKPUP of cigarettes, beer and buses during the forthcoming trial of six African Members of the Legislative Council.² The response of Nakuru Africans was indicative of their readiness to follow a more assertive political leadership.

This time there was no real difficulty in recruiting local leadership. There was the inspiration and encouragement from national political leaders uncompromisingly committed to the goal of Uhuru. Additionally the relaxation of the Emergency made political leadership a less hazardous proposition. It was, in fact, a relatively safe investment for the future. All the original officers of the NDC were newcomers on the local political scene. They were all educated and mostly young. Kiprotich, the chairman, was a Kalenjin, and of the five other officers there were three Abaluhya, one Luo and one Kikuyu.³ The Kikuyu were hesitant to join the front line of political leadership. They were certainly not encouraged to do so by the Administration.⁴ On the other

¹ KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/167, C.Kiprotich to D.C., 5.5.1958; NMA, MAAD to Mayor, 20.5.1958.

² Ibid. The six African Members were brought to trial for denouncing the eight Africans who had come forward as candidates for the special seats in the Legco as "stooges, quislings and black Europeans ...". See, G.Bennett, op.cit., pp. 142-3.

³ R.S.A., File 2114, NDC officers 1958.

⁴ KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/167, C.Kiprotich to D.C., 5.5.1958. Interview: G.Mbote.

hand the Abaluhya, who had never before played an important role in Nakuru politics, were well represented. In June 1958 the NDC executive committee included, in addition to the officers, some five Luo, four Kikuyu, three Abaluhya and one Kalenjin.¹

The first major change in the NDC leadership occurred in December 1959 when Kiprotich was forced to resign. His main weakness was lack of local support. He tried, without success, to recruit a Nairobi politician as the party's organising secretary in order to strengthen his position.² Kiprotich was forced to resign because of an alleged mishandling of party's funds.³ The chairmanship was taken by R.A. Kuboka, a Muluha.⁴ This leadership crisis seems to have been followed by a decline in the party's activity.⁵ Kiprotich had worked full-time for the party, and it took the local politicians some time before they evolved an effective collective leadership. Towards the end of 1959 the NDC was revitalised.⁶

In September 1959 the NDC's new leadership was considerably different in composition from its predecessor. Nine of the twenty-three committee members were Kikuyu, the rest being Luo and Abaluhya.⁷ Five of the nine officers elected on 15 November 1959 were new.⁸ Four of the nine were Abaluhya, three were Luo and two Kikuyu. The Kikuyu

¹ Kama Nakuru Files (KNF), NDC executive committee, 6.6.1958. (Minutes)

² KNF, E. Omolo Ragar to Kiprotich, 23.7.1958.

³ KNF, NDC to D.C., 18.12.1958. Interview: E. Migu.

⁴ R.A. Kuboka P.P., NDC general meeting, 3.7.1960, speech by Kuboka.

⁵ KNA, NDAR 1959, p.2.

⁶ Ibid. R.A. Kuboka P.P., NDC general meeting, 3.7.1960, speech by Kuboka.

⁷ R.A. Kuboka P.P., NDC committee members, 17.9.1959.

⁸ R.A. Kuboka P.P., NDC general meeting, 3.7.1960, speech by Kuboka.

still lagged behind. This leadership remained in office until the NDC was dissolved in July 1960. The period from September 1959 to July 1960 was one of constant growth in membership, organization and volume of activity. Between November 1959 and May 1960 the party's membership throughout the District rose from 556 to 3,920.¹

The NDC leadership was an interesting mixture. It was tribally mixed, representing mainly the three largest groups. Inter-tribal harmony was one of the most encouraging facets of the NDC. It was, in this respect, perhaps Nakuru's finest hour. This spirit of harmony may be partly explained by the fact that independence had still to be achieved by political struggle and the 'scramble' for the potential fruits of Uhuru had not yet begun. It was also made possible by the exclusion of the Kikuyu militants from politics. With the hard-core militants locked up, politicians from the three major tribes were able to evolve a harmonious leadership based on a fundamentally moderate political orientation. Both Kikuyu officers elected in November 1959, Kanyua and S.K.Mwendia, were ex-KAU chairmen who had turned "loyalist" during the Emergency. They represented the efforts of Kikuyu "loyalists" to reintegrate themselves into the nationalist movement. The rest of the officers did not think that their "loyalist" record justified their disqualification.² Two of the party's officers from November 1959 were nominated municipal councillors, committed to unreserved co-operation with the European majority and accepting the dictates of the Administration. The party's president repeatedly condemned violence and secret political activities.³ The only militant committee member was the young Mark Mwithaga, who had at that stage little influence among the party's leadership. He was, in fact, very unpopular

¹ H.S.A., NDC Annual Return, 17.11.1959, 20.5.1960.

² Interview: Z.Imbisi, R.A.Kuboka.

³ K.A.Kuboka P.P., Press release by Kuboka, 9.7.1960; NDC general meeting, 3.7.1960, speech by Kuboka.

on the committee because of his tendency to get "involved" with the police over unauthorized political activities. Early in 1960, after he was released from prison where he had spent three months for organizing an unauthorized political meeting in Njoro, an unsuccessful attempt was made to oust him from the committee.¹ The NDC committee was, as a whole, committed to peaceful and constitutional political struggle. They advocated respect for the law of the country and made efforts not to antagonise the Administration.

The apparently militant political positions adopted by the NDC could be better appreciated in terms of the general political climate in the country and the lead given by national political leaders, than in terms of the inherent militancy of the local committee. In its first constitution the NDC declared itself a nationalist party committed to self-determination and freedom.² Its second constitution drafted in January 1960 echoed the influence of Tom Mboya and his NCP: "We African people of Nakuru ... are convinced that the only true and just system of self-government for Kenya is genuine parliamentary democracy motivated by the desire to make our country politically free, economically prosperous ... Dedicating ourselves to the task of ridding Kenya of imperialism, racial bigotry, economic exploitation..."³

This spirit of uncompromising African nationalism was echoed in the party's attitude to the current political issues. In a public statement issued on 13 December 1958 the NDC made its position clear.⁴ It pledged to support any steps taken by the African Elected Members

¹ Interview: N. Muthiga, E. Imbisi.

² R.S.A., File 2114, NDC constitution, undated (probably 1958).

³ R.S.A., File 2114, NDC constitution, 25.1.1960.

⁴ R.A. Kuboka P.P., NDC public statement, 13.12.1958.

to "smash and destroy" the Lennox-Boyd Constitution.¹ It urged them to continue pressing the Government to restore to Africans "fundamental human rights". It called them to press for the immediate revocation of the Emergency Regulations. It endorsed their demand that Kenyatta and other detained leaders be released. The statement made the party's attitude towards Kenyatta unequivocally clear: "This Congress ... regard JOMO KENYATTA as the ONLY AND FIRST HERO OF AFRICAN FREEDOM." It demanded the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Kenyan soil. Finally, it requested the African Elected Members to hold frequent meetings with African political leaders which would enable them to keep in touch with the views of the African community. In January 1959 the NDC president attacked Arap Towet, the M.L.C. for Kipsigis, for dissociating himself from the ban declared by some African M.L.C.s on the Queen Mother's visit to Kenya.² In June 1960 the NDC condemned the formation of the Abaluhya Political Union and the Coast African Political Union for their divisiveness.³

NDC's relations with African Members of Legco and other district parties were largely dictated by its political creed. The party's constitution advocated co-operation with "other progressive and advancing organizations not in opposition or contradictory to the principles of the Congress."⁴ Its closest and most significant relationship was with Mboya's NACP. Mboya aspired to develop the NACP as the nucleus of the future countryside nationalist party. Although limited, by Government rules and its own constitution, to Nairobi, the NACP became politically active in other districts. Its leaders met leaders

¹Lennox-Boyd Constitution issued in November 1957 was rejected by the African Elected Members, see G. Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-5.

²R.A. Kuboka P.P., Kuboka to the editor, *EA*, 21.1.1959; F.N. Crowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-6.

³R.A. Kuboka P.P., Press release, 8.6.1960, 28.6.1960.

⁴R.S.A., NDC constitution, undated (probably 1958).

of various district parties discussing possible mergers and signing joint statements.¹

Such a joint statement was signed on 8 February 1959 by the NPCP and the NDC following a meeting between representatives of the two parties. The two parties undertook to work in close co-operation in all matters. In order to forge the unity between them, a common constitution was to be drafted. The NDC was expected to change its name to Nakuru People's Convention Party. Joint consultative machinery was to be set up to co-ordinate policies and activities of the two parties.² The NPCP's position in this alignment was particularly strong since it controlled whatever financial resources could be allocated. This formed, in fact, part of the joint statement: "The Nairobi PCP shall endeavour to bring as soon as possible, the financial and other organizational aspects of the Nakuru District Congress on to a stable basis." For the NDC, which was constantly short of money, this was a real bonus.³ The expectations of the NPCP were not fully materialised. The NDC did not change its name and the constitution, modelled on that of the NPCP, was drafted only in January 1960. NDC leaders did not want to give up their independent existence. When the NPCP started to recruit members in Nakuru District in 1960, it was strongly rebuked by the NDC which threatened to report the matter to the police.⁴ Yet the influence of Mboya on the NDC was considerable.

Another way of circumventing the restriction on countrywide political organizations was to organize leaders' conferences for all

¹T.Mboya, op.cit., p.80; J.N.Crowley, op.cit., pp. 143-4.

²R.A.Kuboka P.P., Joint statement NDC-NPCP, 8.2.1959.

³R.A.Kuboka to Mboya, 23.7.1959, 25.8.1959, 24.9.1959.

⁴R.A.Kuboka P.P., NDC to NPCP, 11.4.1960.

the interested district parties. These conferences which started in 1957 and were held every few months, aimed at coordinating policies and notions.¹ NDC representatives actively participated in these conferences. They sided with the more radical national leaders like Mboya, Odinga and Kiano.² When in July 1959 the majority of the African Elected Members took part in the formation of the multi-racial Kenya National Party (KNP),³ the NDC supported those who opposed it. On this issue the NDC took to task the Member for the Central Rift who supported the KNP. He was invited to a party public meeting to explain his position but was shouted down by a hostile audience and was forced to walk out.⁴

The NDC supported the decision of the radical African Elected Members, in August 1959, to form the Kenya Independence Movement (KIM) as a counter force to the KNP.⁵ KIM's motto was Uhuru Sasa (independence now). Whereas KNP was allowed to operate on a countrywide basis KIM was refused registration due to its racial exclusiveness. Consequently the Movement's leaders decided to get round this by calling on all the political parties supporting them to adopt KIM's name and constitution. A meeting of KIM's supporters was held at Nakuru on 13 September 1959 to discuss the new strategy. The thirteen district political parties present resolved to adopt KIM's name and constitution and to form part of an unofficial yet centralised countrywide party.⁶

¹ T. Mboya, op.cit., p. 82; J. N. Crowley, op.cit., p. 143.

² R. A. Kuboka P.P., NDC to E. E. Khasakhala, 7.2.1959. E. E. Khasakhala to all African Political Associations, 11.3.1959.

³ T. Mboya, op.cit., pp. 82-3; G. Bennett, op.cit., pp. 145-6; J. N. Crowley, op.cit., pp. 147-8.

⁴ R. A. Kuboka P.P., NDC general meeting, 3.7.1960, speech by Kuboka. Interview: E. Migwe.

⁵ J. N. Crowley, op.cit., pp. 147-8.

⁶ R. A. Kuboka P.P., T. Mboya to all KIM supporters, 1.9.1959. Oginga Odinga Speech at the Leaders' Conference, Nakuru, 13.9.1959; EAS, 14.9.1959, p. 5.

Since by then constituency political parties were allowed the NDC promptly applied for the registration of the Central Rift Independence Movement (CRIM).¹ The party's inaugural meeting held in Nakuru on 18 October 1959 was attended by more than two thousand people who had come from all corners of the Central Rift constituency - Naivasha, Gilgil, Njoro, Nakuru, Hoey's Bridge and Thompson's Falls. Representing a predominantly squatter constituency, the meeting criticised the Government's Sessional Paper on Land Tenure outside the African reserves in particular. It was claimed that the implementation of such policy would perpetuate the exclusion of Africans from the White Highlands and leave Kenya in the hands of the immigrant races, putting the Africans in a position of "beggars and aliens". Speakers demanded that "the land should not be sold to Africans since it was already theirs".² The urban political leaders played the role of articulating the aspirations of their illiterate and landless followers. It emphasised again the importance of Nakuru as a focus of interaction between town and country in the particular context of the Rift Valley. In this respect it was significant that the leadership of the CRIM came exclusively from Nakuru. In fact, it was almost identical to the NDC's leadership.³

CRIM energetically began to open branches and recruit members outside Nakuru District.⁴ Its registration, however, proved to be a complicated issue. To begin with, the Registrar of Societies objected to the fact that the party's objectives went beyond the constituency boundaries. He also asked the party to change its name omitting the

¹R.S.A., File 2494, E.K.Mwendia to Registrar, 16.9.1959.

²KW, 23.10.1959, p.29.

³R.S.A., File 2479, CRIM, application for registration, 1959.

⁴Interview: M.Mwithaga, L.Nigwe.

term "Independence Movement" before he would consider registration.¹ When the party changed its name to the Central Rift Labour Party (CRLP) the registrar continued to delay its registration under various pretexts.² Finally, in July 1960, the party was refused registration on the grounds that "it appears to me that the interests of peace, welfare and good order in the colony would be likely to suffer prejudice by reason of the registration of such society."³

Such a verdict on a party whose president and chairman had been active Kikuyu "loyalists" was astonishing. It seems, however, that the Administration was suspicious of the party because it employed militant ex-detainees as official collectors. Their activities at the grass-roots allegedly caused unrest among the rural population.⁴ This was the first re-emergence of the Kikuyu militants on Nakuru's political scene. At that stage they were still playing a minor role, but the Administration was most concerned. By the time the CRLP was refused registration the whole issue had become irrelevant, since countrywide political parties were by then allowed. The NDC's representatives participated in the two meetings in March and May 1960 in which the formation of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) was decided upon.⁵ Nakuru representatives supported the decision and the NDC declared its intention to become a KANU branch.⁶

¹R.S.A., File 2497, Registrar to CRIM, 19.12.1959.

²R.S.A., File 2497, Registrar to CRIM, 25.3.1960; Registrar to CRLP, 16.4.1960; CRLP to Registrar, 28.4.1960; 29.6.1960; Registrar to CRLP, 7.7.1960.

³R.S.A., Registrar to CRLP, 25.7.1960.

⁴KNA/D.O/Mov/dep.2/154, NDMR, May, June 1960.

⁵G.Bennett, op.cit., p.152. Interview: E.K.Mwendia, R.A. Kuboka.

⁶KMF, NDC to KANU, Nairobi, 14.6.1960.

Thus the NDC played an active part within a framework of a divided nationalist movement. The effectiveness of the party's contribution to the national political struggle can be better appreciated in the light of its local organization and its scope of activity. The weakness of the previous political parties was that they were largely elitist. They existed, if at all, at the level of the committee and their following was vague, uninvolved and uncommitted. The significance and effectiveness of the NDC stemmed from the fact that it was the first party to be organized on the lines of a mass political movement.

Here again the influence of Mboya and the NPCP was evident. Mboya realized that in a colonial situation in which the only conceivable struggle was political, the weakness of the nationalist political organization amounted to weakness at the bargaining table. In August 1959, in view of the forthcoming constitutional conference, he presented the case for mass organization to a Leaders' Conference.¹ In addition to considerations of political strategy Mboya seems to have been motivated by the belief that the dynamics of the anti-colonial struggle would be maintained by a constant interaction between the political leaders and their real source of power, the African masses. He outlined a programme based on mass political education, elaborate organization, discipline and centralization. It was largely derived from the experience of the NPCP.

NDC leaders too came to realize that unless they got ordinary Africans to identify with the party and its objectives, they could not count on their support.² One way of achieving this was through an intensive propaganda campaign aimed at the political education

¹R.A. Kuboka P.P., "The case for mass political organization", a memo to African Leaders' Conference, 23.8.1959.

²Interview: M. Mwithaga.

of the African masses. Numerous public meetings held in the town and the district were used for the propagation of the party's political objectives.

In a situation in which the masses were largely illiterate, straightforward political indoctrination was not always effective. Here the role of the NDC propaganda unit was vital. It was organised on the lines of the NPCP youth wing.¹ In fact, until the NDC's propaganda unit was formed in September 1959, use was made of the NPCP youth wing.² The propaganda unit was the party's offensive arm whose task was to penetrate to the masses and arouse their enthusiasm. It was composed of a nucleus of about twenty-five unemployed youths who were fully committed to it. They used political songs and slogans mostly composed locally. They used to divide into small groups and delivered their messages in the various housing estates in Nakuru and in the District townships. They were present at every party public meeting to arouse the enthusiasm of the audience. They occasionally launched door to door campaigns in the town.³ Party collectors and propagandists were also active among squatters on European farms.⁴

The propaganda unit was led by Mark Mwithaga the only "militant" on the NDC committee. Under Mwithaga's guidance the group developed its own political dynamism. Having no support within the committee he sought to organise the propaganda unit as a militant pressure group. The youth who were at the forefront of the party's campaign had little respect for the law and no inhibitions about getting involved with the police. This created a certain amount of tension between the "respectable" party's leaders and the "rough" youth. Early in 1960 when

¹The NPCP youth wing was known as the "Kenya Ginger Group" or the "NPCP Uhuru Singers".

²H.A. Kuboka P.P., Kuboka to Mboya, 16.9.1959; Mboya to Kuboka, 15.7.1959. Interview: S.L. Ojuka, E. Migwe.

³Interview: E. Mbote, M. Mwithaga, Z. Imbini.

⁴Interview: Z. Imbini, M. Mwithaga.

some committee members tried to oust Mwithaga from the NDC leadership, members of the propaganda unit beat up the party chairman. On another occasion it was the organising secretary who was manhandled by them.¹

The NDC went beyond political propaganda to establish itself as a popular and effective mass political movement. Even an effective political education campaign could not ensure the loyalty and commitment of the masses. The majority of Nakuru District Africans were illiterate and for many national consciousness was far from evident. Thus the NDC increasingly dealt with the day-to-day problems affecting the life of Africans in the District. In this way ordinary Africans could relate their grievances and their personal protests to the overall nationalist programme as represented by the NDC.

Within the context of municipal politics, the NDC challenged, in February 1959, the system of nomination of African councillors to the Nakuru Municipal Council.² The party claimed that nominated councillors failed to maintain contact with those they were supposed to represent. It called for the application of the elective principle on all public bodies. In June 1960 the NDC demanded six elected and three nominated African municipal councillors instead of the proposed three elected and three nominated members.³

The biggest local issue dealt with by the NDC was the intended demolition of Bondeni Location. The party strongly opposed the demolition on the grounds that it would be a gross injustice to deprive the landlords, many of whom were old people, of their only means of

¹ Interview, M. Mwithaga, Z. Imbizi. KNF, Imbizi to NDC, 16.6.1960.

² KNF, NDC to D.C., 7.2.1959.

³ EAS, 4.6.1960, p.7.

livelihood. The NDC organised the landlords and after a prolonged struggle succeeded in preventing the demolition. The way in which the party related this particular struggle to the overall Government - African confrontation can be gauged from its president's address to Bondeni landlords: "I beg to finish by appealing to you that let us unite, be one thing and work together. Nakuru is being oppressed from all corners and as no one is seeing the oppression, the oppression is growing stronger and stronger."¹

In 1959 the NDC reacted similarly when the Municipal Council raised the rent in the Kaloleni Housing Estate. A party committee resolution stated that the rise was incompatible with the cost of living and that the standard of accommodation in fact warranted a reduction in the rents. The NDC was instrumental in forming a Tenants Association in response to the rise in rents. The officers of the Association were largely recruited from the ranks of the party leadership. The party was also actively involved in a rentstrike campaign which it had advocated.²

Representing the feelings of the educated African elite, the NDC complained to the police about the increasing number of prostitutes in African high-class bars.³ Another problem which the NDC addressed itself to was the illegal brewing of beer, which mainly affected ordinary Africans. While not encouraging this practice, the party suggested that an appropriate way of combatting it would be to improve the standard of beer served in the municipal beer-halls.⁴ In a letter to the Nakuru Prison authorities, the NDC complained, on behalf of five

¹ B.A. Kuboka P.P., a draft of a speech by Kuboka, undated. Interview: M. Mwithaga, Z. Imbisi, R. A. Kuboka.

² LAS, 6.10.1959, p.7; 4.12.1959, p.7; 11.12.1959, p.3. Interview: R.A. Kuboka.

³ D.C/Mem/L&O/17/19/1. Kuboka to Officer i/c Nakuru Police Station, 18.3.1960.

⁴ INP, Kuboka to MAAO, 15.2.1960.

hundred prisoners, about the ill treatment of a prisoner.¹

The NDC also took up, with the appropriate authorities, a variety of personal problems and grievances. It put forward a case against the intended dismissal of the president and vice-president of the Nakuru African Court.² It intervened on behalf of the old Mzee Bin Jhari, whose shop was demolished and who failed to obtain other premises.³ Among other personal matters which the NDC took up was the plight of a widow who could not pay her rent and the complaint of a hawker who had been mistreated by a hospital watchman.⁴

Industrial relations, appropriately the domain of trade unions, was another sphere in which the NDC was involved. There were African employees who preferred to lodge complaints against employers through the NDC which had established the reputation of being a more effective organization than most trade unions in the town. As early as August 1958 the general secretary of the Kenya Federation of Labour asked the party to direct complaints and complainants to the appropriate trade unions.⁵ Although the NDC responded to this request,⁶ there were cases in which it continued to contact the employers concerned directly.⁷

The NDC took a particular interest in the District rural workers, mainly squatters, who were almost completely helpless in their relations with their employers and had no trade union to protect them. The NDC became the patron of the squatters. The most pressing problem was the eviction of squatters and their families from the farms.

¹ KMF, Kuboka to Assistant Superintendent of Prison, Nakuru, 5.6.1960.

² KMF, C. Kiprotich to D.C., 24.6.1958.

³ B.A. Kuboka P.P., NDC to Minister for Local Government, Health and Town Planning, 23.1.1959.

⁴ KMF, Kuboka to MAAO, 27.6.1960; NDC to Medical Officer, Provincial General Hospital, 24.3.1960.

⁵ KMF, Kenya Federation of Labour to NDC, 15.8.1958.

⁶ KMF, Kuboka to KLGWU, 12.2.1960.

⁷ KMF, Kuboka to Gingalili Ltd., 1.6.1960; Kuboka to G.M. Patel, 24.4.1960;

Other grievances taken up by the NDC involved mainly non-payment of wages and crops which had been left behind by evicted squatters. The NDC contacted the farmers concerned or the appropriate authority in an attempt to rectify wrongs done to rural workers.¹ The Senior Labour Officer, RVP, was aware of the implications of the involvement of political parties in rural labour relations: "Despite the fact that the employees have to pay for this privilege, they are reporting to these political organizations in increasing numbers and as a result are extremely truculent when returning to their employers and very often refuse to leave the farms." He suggested the introduction of a minimum wage in rural areas as one way of counteracting political agitation among the squatters.² In the first half of 1960 the NDC assisted H.Oduor to organize the General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU). When it was registered, all the problems of rural workers were handed over to it.³ The NDC looked after evicted squatters who drifted to Nakuru. It provided them with temporary shelter and food and tried to find them permanent accommodation in town or the reserve.⁴

The NDC role of patron of the rural workers strengthened the political alliance between town and country and fostered a bond between the urban political elite and the masses of illiterate squatters. It is interesting to note in this context that while the squatters in Nakuru District were almost exclusively Kikuyu, the NDC's leadership

Kuboka to M.Haina, 15.5.1960.

¹KNP, Kuboka to Labour Commissioner, Nairobi, 23.4.1960; Kuboka to S.L.O., Nakuru, 13.2.1960; Kuboka to Gilgil Police, 23.5.1960; Kuboka to Gilgil Police, 23.5.1960; Kuboka to Divisional Forest Officer, Londiani, 19.4.1960. These are a few of numerous letters of the same nature.

²KMA/D.C/Mca/5/2, S.L.O., R.V.P. to Labour Commissioner, Nairobi, 13.5.1960.

³Interview: R.A.Kuboka, Z.Imbisi.

⁴Interview: S.Mbote, Z.Imbisi, R.A.Kuboka.

was predominantly non-Kikuyu. It was indicative of the inter-tribal harmony within the party. The squatters in this alliance, however, were only at the receiving end. By mid-1960 their political initiative was very limited. They were too oppressed and too disorganised after more than seven years of the Emergency regime. The leadership of the NDC which covered the whole District was throughout exclusively urban.

The two years during which the NDC operated held great promise for the future development of an African nationalist movement. Despite various restrictions on political activity the NDC developed into a well-organised, active and dedicated political party. Its activity at grass roots level, its inter-tribal harmony and the bond between town and country, were three of its outstanding achievements. These achievements however did not survive the 'scramble for Uhuru' of the early 1960s.

The impact of this upon the development of Kenya's nationalist movement was considerable. Before the first Lancaster House Conference could start the will had to be defined the struggle to implement a multi-racial constitution and to pave the way for universal African majority rule. To achieve these goals the leaders of the Kenya National Party and the Kenya Independence Movement agreed to merge their differences and to present a united nationalist front at the forthcoming conference. After the conference the struggle was shifted to the independence and primarily against the Government and the settlers. It was not until the independence and repatriation of an independent Kenya, the subsequent reorganisation of the white settlers of the remaining population.

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Chapter SixTHE 'SCRAMBLE FOR UURU'POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, 1960-1.KANU, KALU and the 1961 General Election

The beginning of 1960 was the most significant turning point in the political and constitutional development of Kenya. In February 1960, McMillan, the British Prime Minister, concluded his tour across Africa with his famous "wind of change" speech. The first Lancaster House Conference held in January-February 1960 blew the "wind of change" into Kenya translating it into language of political realities. For the first time independence and African dominance were accepted as the guiding principles for the future constitutional development of Kenya.¹ Although some European settlers had illusions about the length of the process of transfer of power to the Africans, it became increasingly clear that it was imminent.²

The impact of this upon the development of Kenya's nationalist movement was considerable. Before the first Lancaster House Conference their aims had still been to defeat the attempts to implement a multi-racial constitution and to pave the way for eventual African majority rule. To achieve these goals the leaders of the Kenya National Party and the Kenya Independence Movement agreed to bridge their differences and to present a united nationalist front at the forthcoming conference.³ After the conference the struggle was neither for independence nor primarily against the Government and the settlers. It was now about the leadership and constitution of an independent Kenya. The contestants represented the two main streams of the nationalist movement.

¹ J.N. Crowley, op.cit., pp. 19-61.

² M. Blundell, So Rough a Wind, p.277.

³ J.N. Crowley, op.cit., pp.144-50.

To attribute the origins of that schism in the early 1960s to the restriction on colony-wide political parties in the second half of the 1950s would be only partially valid. The enforced division probably reinforced existing differences but did not create them. In 1958-60 in Nakuru, there had been encouraging signs of inter-tribal political harmony and there was also a large measure of colony-wide co-operation. The basic reason for the schism of the early 1960s, besides personal rivalries and ambitions, was the uneven social, economic and political development of different tribal groups. Existing disparities were intensified by the prospect of controlling the power structure of independent Kenya. The most significant change of the early 1960s in political development was the emergence of the tribe as an effective political category.

One of the outcomes of the first Lancaster House Conference was the increase in the scope and volume of political activity. Government lifted the restrictions on political organisations and Africans were allowed to form exclusively African national political parties. Attempts to establish a unified nationalist party failed and 1960 witnessed the formation of two mutually antagonistic parties. The Kenya National African Union (KANU) was launched in two consecutive conferences in March and May 1960 and was finally registered in June that year.¹ The Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) was inaugurated on 25 June 1960.² The KANU was basically an alliance between the Kikuyu, Luo and Meru, the Luo and the Kamba tribes. KADU's backbone consisted of the Kalenjin, Masai and Giriama tribes and of sections of the Abaluhya. The KANU tribes were on the whole more politically advanced and the party represented the more radical stream of Kenya's

¹ D. Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

² J. N. Crowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-1.

nationalist movement. KANU, on the other hand, was an alliance of the more peripheral tribes who feared the outcome of domination by the KANU tribes and the Kikuyu in particular. KANU represented, on the whole, a more moderate nationalism.

KANU was first to establish itself in Nakuru. A meeting of the NDC held on 3 July 1960 resolved, virtually unanimously, to dissolve the party and to become KANU's local branch.¹ In his concluding speech the NDC's president expressed the political mood in Nakuru which brought about the formation of KANU branch: "Now that the whole country is moving so fast, there is no reason why Nakuru should not tune itself to that speed instead of remaining behind. We are the people who live with the very rich settlers and it is our duty to show that this province requires a very powerful political organization. There is no time to waste. Europeans and Asians have money ... but we have one weapon only and this is Unity."²

At that juncture it seemed that "unity" in Nakuru was not impossible. The fact that KANU was the direct successor of the NDC held a promise that KANU would monopolize Nakuru's national politics and that inter-tribal harmony would not be disrupted. KANU's original leadership was well balanced. Interim officers elected at the inaugural meeting on 3 July 1960 included three Luo, two Abaluhya and two Kikuyu.³ At least five of them had been officers or committee members of the NDC. Most importantly the chairman and organising secretary, the most prominent Abaluhya politicians in Nakuru, committed themselves without

¹ K.S.A., File NDC, NDC meeting, 3.7.1960. (Minutes)

² R.A. Kuboka P.P., NDC meeting, 3.7.1960, Kuboka's speech.

³ K.S.A., File 3027; they were: chairman - R.A. Kuboka, vice-chairman - E.P. Getata, secretary - S. Mboto, assistant secretary - M.O. Oponde, treasurer - J. Odir Odera, assistant secretary - S.L. Ojuka, organising secretary - N. Imbiai.

reservation to KANU's cause. They firmly rejected pressures to join the rival party.¹ R.A. Kuboka, the Mulukya chairman, condemned the intended meeting called by Amalamba and Maliro with a view to forming the Balukya Political Union. He stressed the need for unity and concluded his statement with "to hell with tribalism".² They remained unaffected by the fact that Maliro, the most prominent Mulukya political leader, and others joined KADU.

In the reserve the Abalukya were badly divided between KANU and KADU.³ The Abalukya, manifestly lacked the tribal cohesion of the Luo. They transferred the parochialism of their local politics to the national scene. It was predictable that the same pattern would be repeated among the Abalukya in Nakuru, strongly attached as they were to their tribal groups in the reserve. Without wholesale support from the Abalukya, KADU could not hope to make any impact in Nakuru. The Kalenjin were in a minority and could not alone face the formidable Kikuyu-Luo alliance of KANU. Nonetheless the KADU branch, formed in Nakuru in September 1960, received the overwhelming support of both the Kalenjin and the Abalukya tribesmen. Where KANU inherited the leadership, political experience and organizational structure of the MDC, the KADU branch had none of these assets. Yet within about five months of its formation KADU won the Nakuru Open Seat in the 1961 general election albeit under particularly favourable conditions.

That KADU became a viable political force capable of challenging KANU was proof of the strength of ethnicity in the town. KADU in Nakuru owed its strength to its appeal to the sense of solidarity of the KADU tribes and to its ability to mobilise the existing networks

¹ Interview: R.A. Kuboka, E. Imbisi, E. Muleri.

² R.A. Kuboka P.P., press release 28.6.1960.

³ G. Bennett and C.G. Rosberg, Kenya Election, Kenya 1960-1961, OUP, London 1961 p.214.

of leadership and social control provided by the tribal associations, whereas nationally the Kalenjin were perhaps the staunchest supporters of the party, in Nakuru the Abaluhya tribesmen provided its backbone at both leadership and grass-roots levels. The Kalenjin were the junior partners. In March 1961 seven of the eight KADU officers were Abaluhya, the other being Kalenjin. This was logical since the Abaluhya were by far the biggest group. They were also much better organized in tribal associations.

Abaluhya in Nakuru dominated KADU because they also exhibited a strong sense of tribal cohesion in support of the party. In fact, as mentioned earlier, they showed in town a much greater sense of tribal cohesion than did their brothers in the reserve. This was the more striking considering that the great majority of Abaluhya in Nakuru came from the North Nyanza District in which KANU had a particularly large following. The urban "melting-pot" provided favourable conditions for the development of cohesion among the Abaluhya tribesmen. Those from Maragoli Location were the only ones who refused throughout to collectively commit themselves to KADU. Only about half of them supported the party.¹ For a few months in early 1961 the people from Sandia Location also opposed KADU.² Within the context of Nakuru the Abaluhya's share in business and in African representation in different local bodies was proportionately less than that of the Kikuyu and even the Luo. Possibly this local sense of deprivation reinforced the more general fear of Kikuyu-Luo domination, and helped to cement internal divisions. The fear of the Kikuyu-Luo alliance was a source of strength to KADU. An official report for 1960 summed up KADU's position in Nakuru: "KADU maintained its cohesion, upheld the law and

¹ Interview: E. Maleri.

² Interview: M. E. Maji.

order and at the end of the year was increasing its influence."¹

The KANU branch's strength at its formation seems to have rested not only upon apparent inter-tribal unity among its leadership but also to a large measure of continuity, in leadership and organization, with the NDC. This continuity promised that the new branch would reap the full benefits of its highly popular predecessor. The branch's leadership represented the local urban elite, and was politically moderate. The interim vice-chairman had been the KAU secretary in 1949-50. He was detained in 1953, and whilst in detention he aligned himself with Moral Re-Armament.² Shortly after his election as KANU's vice-chairman he, and another Kikuyu committee member, attended a Moral Re-Armament conference in Switzerland. Upon their return to Nakuru in November 1960 they "announced their intention to reform the African political leaders, however unpopular it might prove to be."³ The new interim secretary had been a member of the Torchbearers Association. An unsuccessful attempt was again made at the election of the interim committee to keep Muthiga, the militant, out.⁴

On 9 September 1960, R.A. Kuboka announced his intention to contest, as KANU candidate, the Nakuru Open Seat, in the general election to be held in February 1961. His platform was his past record as the NDC president and his position as KANU's interim chairman. That a political leader without a tribal following within the party could so base his appeal on his personal record was indicative of the remarkable sense of unity and inter-tribal harmony in the local KANU branch. This

¹ KNA/NDAR 1960, p.1.

² Moral Re-Armament was involved in the rehabilitation of the Kikuyu Mau Mau suspects.

³ KNA/D.C./10cu/dep.2/154, NDMK November 1960, p.1.

⁴ Interview: M. Muthiga.

was to prove illusory. Within a few months the branch was hopelessly split into mutually antagonistic factions struggling for power and in the process shattering the party organization, prestige and chances of winning the election.

The developments which so badly divided the Nakuru branch must be seen with KANU's position at the national level. It was specifically unfortunate for KANU that soon after its formation it had to plunge into the first general election campaign in which Africans fully participated. KANU seems to have had more than its fair share of politicians who regarded themselves as potential Legco Members. The result was that the party had little time to settle down and bridge the divisions in its national leadership. It could not concentrate on consolidating leadership and building a centralized party as laid down by its constitution. This fragile situation was accentuated by the absence of the detained Kenyatta, the only generally accepted leader of KANU and the Kenyan nationalist movement. In the vacuum left by his absence, other party leaders were busy destroying their opponents' positions rather than working for the benefit of the party. Under these circumstances KANU's national leadership could exert no effective control over the branches which were left, more or less, to their own devices.¹

There were suggestions that the divisions in the Nakuru branch were a reflection of those within the national leadership.² The truth is that they were basically caused by local factors. The apparent stability and harmony which characterized the branch leadership in the first few months of its existence was made possible by the absence

¹G. Bennett and C.G. Rosberg, op.cit., pp. 41-2; J.N. Crowley, op.cit., pp. 201-2.

²G. Bennett and C.G. Rosberg, op.cit., p. 174.

from the political arena of the "hard-core" militants and the containment of their potential allies.

The nucleus of the militants within KANU's Nakuru branch was the KANU Youth League led by Muthiga. As long as KANU leadership was in the hands of the moderate members of the urban elite, they had little influence on the running of the branch. Soon, however, they began to take the initiative. In September 1960, in two letters addressed to the party's national president and to the local interim chairman, the young militants made the first move in their bid for power.¹ These messages reflected an assertive mood. The Youth League expressed its dissatisfaction with the "present so-called" leadership of the branch and called upon the national leaders to arrange an immediate mass-meeting for the election of a new committee. Failing to do so would result in a take-over of the party's Nakuru office by the Youth League until such time as proper elections took place. They denounced the interim committee's plan to hold an election meeting on a Friday and demanded that it be held on a Sunday so that squatters living in the District could participate. The strategy of the Youth League emerged clearly. Realising that the public support they could mobilize in the town was limited, they planned, for the first time, to break Nakuru's monopoly of political leadership: "KANU branch will not be for Nakuru Town but for the district as a whole."² They hoped that the more militant squatters and residents of the smaller township would shift the balance within the party in their favour.

Towards the end of 1960 the militant minority was considerably reinforced. 1960 witnessed the re-emergence of the Mau Mau hardcore militants as a political factor. Many of them, repatriated to their

¹ E.A. Kuboka P.P., KANU Youth League Nakuru to KANU Nakuru interim chairman, 29.9.1960; KANU Youth League Nakuru to KANU national president, 29.9.1960.

² E.A. Kuboka P.P., KANU Youth League, Nakuru to KANU Nakuru interim chairman, 29.9.1960.

respective reserves when released from detention, made their way back to the Rift Valley Province following the revocation of the State of Emergency on 1 January 1960. These veterans joined the leadership struggle in KANU's Nakuru branch organized in what was known as the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA).

Since there is no authoritative study of this movement, a short account of its origins and development is needed. The Government's version of the history of the KLFA was presented in 1961 by the Minister for Defence.¹ According to him the movement owed its origin to Kariuki Chotor who had in Nairobi, in 1953-5, a "gang" called the Land Freedom Army. This "gang", according to this source, tried to become the supreme command of Mau Mau, but its influence was, in fact, confined to Nairobi. The LFA was revived among Mau Mau convicts in Mbagathi prison in 1957.

Oral sources do not support this account.² There seems to have been no connection between the Land Freedom Army "gang" and the KLFA which developed later. It is, however, true that the idea of forming the movement was discussed among former Mau Mau leaders in one of the detention camps. Behind it was the desire to continue the struggle and to prove that although Mau Mau had suffered a serious blow it was by no means dead. The years of detention and the Government's efforts to rehabilitate the detainees seems not to have affected the "hard-core". It is difficult to decide whether the KLFA was a new movement or a mere continuation of Mau Mau. There was undoubtedly a large measure of continuity in terms of aims and personnel.

The idea of continuing the struggle was taken up by some of these

¹ EAS, 9.8.1961. R. Buijtenhuijs, *op. cit.*, p. 381. Buijtenhuijs adopts this version as it appeared in The Times.

² The account of the origins and development of the KLFA is based on the following interviews: K. Kabuba, W. Kahiga, M. Ochoyo.

detainees when they were released and repatriated to Fort Hall District Locations nine and twelve. It was there that the KLFA came into being in mid-1958. Among the first KLFA committee members there were Mau Mau veteran leaders and famous forest leaders.¹ The chairman was Mbaria Kaniu the famous forest "general". At least six of the eight known committee members had lived and operated in the Rift Valley Province before the Emergency.

In 1958, with the colonial government and the settlers still entrenched in the country, the basic aim of the KLFA was to unite the African people for the purpose of achieving independence. The founders of the movement were also determined not to allow those who had collaborated with the Government against Mau Mau to rule the country. The latter was, most probably, the more important aim.

Towards the end of 1958 the KLFA extended its sphere of influence by establishing itself in Nairobi. At that time a national committee was set up in which Fort Hall leaders played a prominent part. There were also a few committee members who came from Nyeri and one or two from Kiambu. In about March 1959 the KLFA central committee decided to establish the movement in the Rift Valley Province, one of the main centres of Kikuyu militancy.² Four Fort Hall men who had lived in the RVP were chosen for the task.³ They first established themselves in Nakuru where they made contact with Kamau Karu who had been in detention with them. The movement soon expanded to the District and the Province. The method of recruitment was similar to that of Mau Mau. The recruitment oath was, in fact, the Batun Oath. The lessons of Mau Mau were, however, well learnt. There was no repetition of the forced oathing

¹The eight known committee members are as follows: Mbaria Kaniu, Wanjohi Ndungu, Mwangi Kairishi, Waweru Kahiga, Kariuki Kabuba, Mwangi Keiro, Kahara Wabungu and Mboche Kasanduku.

²The account of the KLFA in the RVP is based also on the following interviews: Joseph Karuggia, Kamundi Getwa, Kiariri Waihobo and Mark Mwithaga.

³They were Waweru Kahiga, Mwangi Kairishi and Mwangi Arusha.

campaign. Recruitment was exclusively voluntary and was based on an intimate knowledge of the prospective members. The first to be oathed were old hard-core Mau Mau members and then people who were recommended by them.

By 1960 the KLFA in the RVP developed an organisational hierarchy of Province, Districts (Nakuru District was divided into two zones) and Divisions. There was a Provincial committee and a District committee. Nakuru Town Division did not have a committee. It was led by Kiarri Waihobo and Kamundi Getwa as division leader and division deputy leader respectively. Both had been Mau Mau committee members in the town in the early 1950s. On the whole, the Provincial and District committees were largely composed of past Mau Mau leaders in the RVP. Many were unemployed and thus could devote time and energy to the movement. Government sources admitted that the KLFA was better organised than Mau Mau but claimed that it lacked the public support that the latter enjoyed.¹ Recalling that much of Mau Mau public support was achieved through terror and intimidation, it is doubtful whether there was a significant basis for comparison. The decision to organise the KLFA as a well organised, voluntary movement was a source of its strength rather than weakness. While it is impossible to quote accurate figures, the KLFA in the RVP seems to have had a considerable following. Besides its membership it had wide support among the insecure and dispossessed squatters and among the thousands of unemployed Kikuyu who roamed Nakuru and the District townships. It seems that although the KLFA had its origin in Fort Hall and its central committee in Nairobi the RVP became the main centre of its activities.

The rapidly changing political situation during 1960 called for a re-evaluation of the KLFA's goals. It was clear by then that colonial rule was ending. Government as such ceased to be the target. The main

¹ EAS, 9.8.1961, p.1.

concern was the political order that was to succeed it. There was the fear that, being unable to hold on to Kenya, the Government would leave behind a "stooge" government. The release of Kenyatta and his assumption of the leadership of independent Kenya thus became one of the major goals of the KLFA. In the RVP the movement showed keen interest in the land question. Representing the hopes of the landless squatters it demanded that the European-owned farms in the White Highlands be redistributed to those whose sweat had made them bloom. There was a vague intention to force the European farmers off their farms.

With the formation of KANU and KADU as two contending parties for governing the country, the KLFA leaders saw it as their duty to ensure that KANU would rule independent Kenya. Whereas the Kikuyu militant leaders of the KLFA recruited members from the KANU tribes like the Luo and the Kisi they had no Kalenjin or Abaluhya in their ranks.

But the KANU which the KLFA leaders encountered in Nakuru was not really the party which they had in mind. They viewed KANU as the successor, in the field of constitutional politics, of Mau Mau and the KLFA and expected that it would follow a similarly militant course. The militant, rurally-orientated KLFA leaders could not tolerate the monopoly of leadership in KANU's Nakuru branch by representatives of the moderate urban elite. They bitterly opposed the prominence of some of those who had collaborated with the Government during the Emergency. During the early 1950s when constitutional politics were at their lowest ebb, Mau Mau leaders in Nakuru viewed KANU as peripheral to their struggle. In 1960, with the considerable increase in the scale of constitutional politics and the growing effectiveness of political parties, the KLFA leaders found themselves on the political periphery. They realised that a strong position in KANU was essential for the achievement of their goals and for their own position in independent Kenya. This change of perception reflected a much greater degree of political maturity cultivated during the long years of

detention. They came to view their own struggle within a wider context.

Their natural ally within KANU was the party's local militant Youth League. The relationship between Mwithaga, the League's leader, and the KLFA leaders was thus crucial. Contact between Mwithaga and the KLFA in the RVP was established soon after the KLFA was formed in Nakuru. In late 1959 or early 1960 Mwithaga took the oath and became a member. Whilst not on the committee, he acted, in an unofficial capacity, as a political adviser to the movement's leadership in the RVP. He was instrumental in their awakening to the importance of constitutional politics. For Mwithaga, as a militant and ambitious politician constantly in the minority within the party, the alliance with the KLFA presented a unique opportunity to promote both his political beliefs and personal position. Mwithaga's plan was to seize the leadership of KANU in Nakuru District by enlisting the support of the Kikuyu rural population and the KLFA.

The KLFA entered the political arena of Nakuru with a big show of force. A KANU mass meeting for the election of the branch's permanent officers was to be held in Nakuru early in December, 1960. A meeting of the KLFA leadership in the District, in which Mwithaga participated, was held in Elburgon Forest to plan what would be termed in Nakuru the "first KANU coup". The "coup" was aimed at ensuring the transfer of the KANU branch's leadership into the hands of the KLFA. The KANU leadership was unaware of the plan which was designed to unseat them. The Abaluhya chairman and organizing secretary went home to the reserve and came back to Nakuru a few days before the election meeting. Getata, the vice-chairman, felt secure enough to go overseas and to return in November. They expected to be reinstated by the mass meeting.

The turn of events during the meeting which was supervised by the

party's national president was a complete surprise to them. The majority of the participants were KIPF members and sympathisers who were mobilised from all corners of the District and even from as far as Limuru in Kiambu District. They were carrying posters denouncing the interim officers¹ and turned the meeting into a demonstration against them. The "coup" was a complete success. All except one of the interim officers were ousted and replaced by KIPF members. At least two of them were prominent KIPF leaders in the District. Mark Muthiga emerged from a mere committee member to be the new Nakuru District branch chairman.² The vice-chairman, W. Mijoyo, was a Luo member of the KIPF. On 17 January 1961 K/NU Nakuru District governing council elected two additional officers. Kuboka was elected as secretary and Gatheca Gatheri, a Kikuyu member of the KIPF, as propaganda secretary. E. Inbisi, the other Maluhya interim officer, failed to secure election for the latter post.³

The change in the profile of K/NU's leadership was striking. Five of the eight officers were uneducated and some of them were unemployed. Kuboka and J. Cair, the moderate educated officers, found it difficult to operate effectively in a committee controlled by uneducated militants.⁴ With four of the officers coming from the District township Nakuru's monopoly of political leadership was broken. The shift in the balance between town and country was all the more drastic considering that the branch's governing council was composed of representatives from the various District sub-branches. Nakuru representatives

¹One of the posters read: "Kuboka, where is the Congress money."

²R.S.A., File 3027, K/NU Nakuru branch office bearers, 4.12.1960: chairman - M. Muthiga, vice-chairman - W. Mijoyo, secretary - Kariuki Kaluba, assistant secretary - David Karicki, treasurer - John Cair, assistant treasurer - Joseph Karuggia.

³R.S.A., File 3027, K/NU Nakuru branch to Registrar, 28.1.1961.

⁴Interview: E.A. Kuboka.

forming an insignificant minority. Furthermore, the leadership of the District sub-branches was under the control of the KLF. The militants had won a famous victory.

The effects of the "coup" in Nakuru were considerable. According to an official report there was substantial local opposition both to the method of election and to the results. The branch was more hopelessly divided than ever before.¹ The members of the Kikuyu urban elite, who had lost their position in KNU, were particularly resentful. They now had scant representation on the branch's executive committee and governing council. This blow was particularly serious since the town had no committee of its own and was run by the branch officers. Towards the end of 1960 the branch was in such a state of confusion that officials of KANU's Nanyuki branch were sent to re-organize the party's Nakuru office. This move was resisted by the local officials who reported the matter to the police.² Kuboka put the blame for the state of the branch on the undisciplined members of KANU's Youth League who mishandled even their own leaders.³

The approach of the general election to be held in February 1961, in which Nakuru was to be contested as an open seat, further intensified and complicated KANU's internal divisions. The outcome of the election in Nakuru had a significance beyond the town itself. Towns had always been in the vanguard of the nationalist movement and it was, therefore, important for both parties to show their strength in them. In addition, tribally mixed towns were among the few constituencies which were seriously contested by both parties.

¹ KNA/D./Nku/dep.2/194. NAKR, December 1960.

² THE, 30.12.1960, p.17.

³ R.A. Kuboka P.P., press release, 28.12.1960.

By calculations based on "tribal arithmetic" KADU stood no chance against the Kikuyu-Luo alliance. KANU, however, seemed determined to defeat itself. R.A.Kuboka, whilst still the branch's interim chairman, declared his intention to stand for election as KANU's candidate. His subsequent deposition from the chairmanship and his lack of tribal backing within the party made his prospects gloomy. Despite an attempt to revive his candidacy early in January 1961¹ he ultimately abandoned the race. E.P.Getata, the Kikuyu interim vice-chairman, also indicated his intention to contest the election prior to his departure for Europe in September 1960. He returned to Nakuru a week before the "coup", only to find out that he too, was to lose his post. Neither he nor his supporters were put off by this misfortune. He was the candidate of the Kikuyu urban elite and was officially supported by the Kikuyu Welfare Association of which he was chairman.² For Getata and his supporters who had been so badly defeated by the Kikuyu militants the election presented an opportunity to prove their strength and popular support in the town. Since the militants' support came mainly from the District, the Kikuyu urban elite had a good chance to prove their point in a strictly urban election.

The KLF militants, however, had not taken over KANU leadership, only to be represented in Legco by a person they regarded as a collaborator. In fact, part of their plan was to ensure the election of their own candidate. Their choice was E.Adholla, a Luo who had lived in Nakuru from about 1946 to 1953 and was active in the KAU and other local bodies. In 1953 he was detained for alleged membership of Mau Mau. Whilst in detention he became very popular with Kikuyu Mau Mau activists. In the words of his proposer: "I supported Adholla because

¹ EAS, 2.1.1961, p.5.

² Interview: E.P.Getata, E.Mbote.

we were together in detention and I knew how brave he was. Oetata, on the other hand, surrendered when he was in detention."¹ Adholla was educated, militant and apparently a KLEA member in Nairobi. Although currently living in Nairobi, he could be presented as a Nakuru man. The Kikuyu militants showed that for them political creed was more important than tribal origin. They had gone a long way since the early 1950s when they very rarely trusted a non-Kikuyu. It seems that they were gradually transformed from Kikuyu nationalists to Kenya nationalists. The candidacy of Adholla fostered an alliance between the Kikuyu militants and the Luo community which supported him as a tribal candidate.² The well-organized Luo Union gave its unreserved support to Adholla.

In January 1961 the situation in KANU's camp was further complicated when A.A.Ochwada, the party's national assistant secretary, joined the race. Bennett and Rosberg suggest that he was supported by Odinga.³ Nakuru branch's officials who regarded Adholla as their candidate opposed his candidacy.⁴ The control of the party headquarters over the branches was, however, ineffective, and the support Ochwada might have got from his promoters gave him little advantage. On 1 January 1961 Ochwada was launched, by his Kikuyu proposer, as a non-tribal candidate whose claim was based on his political ability and experience in contrast with the "seasonal politicians".⁵ Six of the nine known proposers and supporters of Ochwada's candidacy were Kikuyu,

¹ Interview: G. Muitumi.

² KMF, Notice, General Election 1961, Nakuru Town Constituency (Open Seat), 24.1.1961.

³ G. Bennett and C.G. Rosberg, op.cit., p124.

⁴ ibid., 2.1.1961, p.5.

⁵ K.A. Kuboka F.P., press handout, 5.2.1961.

only one being a Mubukya from his own tribe.¹

KANU had none of these problems. They all agreed to the candidacy of Wafula Wabuge, a Mubukya, although he was an outsider who had had no previous connection with Nakuru. The party, free of internal divisions, was able to mobilise all its human resources to support its candidate. There was also an independent European candidate. He was G.L. Bellhouse, the Mayor of Nakuru who had resided in the town since the late 1920s. He might have hoped to attract, in addition to the European vote, a fair part of the Asians' support and perhaps even some of the moderate Africans. He claimed, however, that his aim was primarily to encourage the Europeans to exercise their vote and demonstrate their preparedness to identify themselves with an independent Kenya.²

The internal rivalries between the three KANU candidates and their supporters overshadowed the more important confrontation with KADU. The bitterness and animosities produced by the internal strife occasionally developed into violent clashes between the three factions.³ The supporters of Getata and Ochwada were particularly enraged by the fact that Adholla had the use of the branch's office and resources in his campaign. On one occasion the branch's car was handed over to the police by Adholla's opponents to prevent him from using it.⁴ In January 1961 Muthiga's position was challenged. In a letter addressed to his ten executive committee members demanded that the KANU office be closed until new officers could be elected. Their demand

¹KNF, Notice, General Election 1961, Nakuru Town Constituency (Open Seat), 24.1.1961.

²Interview: G.L. Bellhouse.

³EAS, 19.1.1961, p.5; 23.1.1961, p.1; 14.2.1961, p.5.

⁴EAS, 14.1.1961, p.5.

was based on the state of branch finances and Mwithaga's lack of co-operation with committee members. They complained that he nominated his own supporters to party posts and convened meetings without the consent of other committee members. In a meeting which was convened to discuss the allegations Mwithaga apparently fought back to retain his position.¹ Mwithaga had the upper hand because his militant supporters controlled the branch's executive committee and governing council. His opponents who tried to unseat him were most probably Getata's supporters who were in a minority.

All the three candidates aspired to become official party candidates. This could have improved their chances on polling day. Adholla, who was the official candidate of the branch, was not recognized as the official party candidate by the other two candidates. Failing to achieve a local compromise the candidates tried to obtain official recognition from the party's national leadership. According to Kuboka, who may have exaggerated, "there are almost daily fleets of lorries and cars to Head Office of KANU from Makuru to protest and fight as to who is not and who is the KANU candidate of Makuru".² The national leadership, torn and ineffective as it was, could not arbitrate in such a complicated case in which deep feelings and ideological differences were involved. The militants in particular were infuriated by the national leadership's refusal to endorse the branch's official candidate.³ By January 24, 1961, the closing date for nomination, all the three contenders had registered themselves as candidates. Only then

¹EAS, 23.1.1961, p.1.

²R.A.Kuboka P.P., press release, 24.1.1961. Interview: I.P.Getata.

³Interview: M.Mwithaga.

did Kuboka, whose candidacy had almost been forgotten, announce his official withdrawal. He claimed that tribalism and hunger for power were responsible for the confusion in the party's ranks and warned that if there were more than one KANU candidate Nakuru seat would be won by either Ballhouse or KADU.¹

It might not have been solely as a result of this warning, but efforts continued to be made to arrive at a compromise which would establish one official KANU candidate. At the end of January 1961 local party supporters called on the candidates to attend a public meeting in which two of them would be asked to withdraw. Getata and Gchwada responded positively but Atholla refused.² He probably believed that having the party's local machinery on his side his chances were good, even under the existing unfavourable circumstances. On 13 February 1961, little more than a week before the election, Gichuru, the party's president, came to Nakuru in a last attempt to break the deadlock. He found the candidates and their supporters in an uncompromising mood and failed to fulfil his mission. According to Getata, Gichuru advised him, unofficially, not to give up.³ The party was to face the electorate in a considerable state of confusion and disarray.

KANU, busy as it was with its internal struggle, found the time and energy to deal with KADU, which otherwise could not have hoped for a more favourable election campaign. At that stage KANU took the offensive with its Youth League in the forefront. As early as 10 November 1960, before the election became a popular issue, KANU's youth, led by Mwithaga, attacked a KADU recruiting party.⁴ On 15 January 1961, at the height of the election campaign, KANU again took the offensive.

¹ R.A. Kuboka P.P., press release, 24.1.1961.

² EAS, 1.2.1961, p.5.

³ Interview: L.P. Getata.

⁴ EAS, 10.11.1960, p.5; 12.1.1961, p.1.

Following a KADU mass meeting they attacked KADU vehicles while the branch's executive committee was meeting with the party president, R.Ngala. MADU supporters retaliated and marched on KANU's office. Sticks, bottles and stones were used by both sides before a police riot-squad restored order.¹ Next day, KANU reinforcements from all corners of the District, making their way to Nakuru, were intercepted by police and turned back.² KANU attempted to take advantage of its numerical superiority in the District. The police who searched the offices of both parties confiscated a great variety of weapons. The D.C. responded to the violence by banning public gatherings of more than twelve people.³ No more clashes were reported until election day.

By the time registration of voters had closed on 7 October 1960, 731 Europeans, 1,911 Asians and 5,608 Africans had registered in Nakuru.⁴ Although registration qualifications barred many Africans,⁵ they were still the dominant element in Nakuru's electorate. Over a third of the voters were Kikuyu. The poll was very high; 7,182, 87.8% of the electorate, cast their votes. The election results were as follows: W.Wabuge (KADU) - 2,124; E.P.Getata (KANU) - 2,097; Z.Adholla (KANU) - 1,521; G.L.Bellhouse (Independent) - 1,129; A.A.Ochwada (KANU) - 311.⁶ KADU thus won the election on a minority vote - less than a third of the votes. The small margin of twenty-seven votes which gave W.Wabuge his seat only dramatised KANU's defeat in its own stronghold.

¹ EAS, 16.1.1961, p.1; 7.2.1961, p.5.

² EAS, 17.1.1961, p.1.

³ KNA/D.C/Nku/dep.2/173, D.C.'s press statement, 17.1.1961.

⁴ Kenya Weekly News, 14.10.1960, p.71.

⁵ G.Bennett and C.G.Rosberg, op.cit., p.62: "The vote was given to all over forty years of age, and to those above twenty five with one

An analysis of the election results would help to understand the nature of Nakuru politics in this important period of Kenya's history. The high poll suggests that the candidates used every means to mobilise their potential supporters. Although we do not have the breakdown of the African voters by tribe and certainly not the way in which they cast their votes, certain tentative conclusions may be drawn. What emerged most clearly from this election was the important role played by ethnicity in Kenya's politics.

The only sizeable group of ethnically uncommitted voters were the Asians, who did not have a candidate of their own. Considering that they controlled about a quarter of the electorate, it was hardly surprising that candidates courted them. All the candidates, with the exception of the militant Adhella, had Asians supporting their candidacy.¹ Bellhouse received some four hundred votes in excess of the Europeans on the roll, most of them probably from Asians. The majority of the Asian votes, however, were given to African candidates. Getata held a special meeting for the Asian community and received some assistance from its members.² He presented himself as a moderate and westernised candidate, as a local man who was keen to represent all the town's residents regardless of race. Most Asians who thought of voting for KANU would probably have given their vote to Getata. The lion's share of the Asian vote, however, seems to have accrued to the KANU candidate. The party had made a concerted effort to win

of certain qualifications: literacy, an income of £75 per annum, property worth £200, membership of a Local Authority Council or employment as a sub-chief or tribal policeman, the property or income qualifications of a man making his wife or wives eligible too."

⁶ Ibid., p.210.

¹ KNP, Notice, General Election, 1961, Nakuru Town Constituency, 24.1.1961.

² L.P. Getata.

the Asian vote because of its numerical inferiority in the African sector. A KADU meeting for the Asian community was addressed by a number of national leaders including Ngala, the party's president.¹ On election day, Maliro, the party's deputy leader, stood outside the polling station making a last effort to win the Asian vote.²

KADU as the less militant party was more attractive to Asians who thought of making independent Kenya their home. A struggle between two parties in an urban area known for its outspoken African nationalism was ironically probably decided by an alien minority.

The role of the Asian vote was crucially important because the African vote was largely committed and inflexible. The commitment was largely forged on the basis of tribal affiliation. W. Wabuge got the bulk of the vote of the Abalukya and Kalenjin, the main KADU tribes in Nakuru. KADU appealed to the sense of tribal solidarity and loyalty and made use of the network of tribal associations to mobilize its potential supporters. The Abalukya, who in the reserve split their vote between KANU and KADU, exhibited a much greater solidarity in support of their tribal candidates in Nakuru. The Abalukya, in spite of their notorious disunity, demonstrated more than any other the introduction of the tribe to the political arena, both as the focus of solidarity and the organizational network.

Getata who followed Wabuge received the majority of the Kikuyu vote. He courted his tribesmen through the Kikuyu Welfare Association whose office he used as his campaign headquarters. Getata, who was opposed by the Kikuyu militants, was supported by the local Kikuyu establishment and their clients. He probably got the vote of other Kikuyu who supported him as a tribal candidate against the non-Kikuyu

¹EAS, 16.1.1961, p.1.

²G. Bennett and C.G. Rosenberg, *op.cit.*, p.175.

candidates. An effort to the development of the Luo Union and the
 Adholla received the vote of the Luo with their strong sense
 of tribal solidarity. He was actively supported by the Luo Union.
 Adholla was, however, originally the choice of the KLF leaders, who
 were predominantly Kikuyu. This was the only case of substantial
 trans-tribal support, when the tribal group concerned, the Kikuyu,
 had its own candidate. The Kikuyu militants gave priority to political
 considerations. Their disadvantage was that many militants re-
 cently released from detention were both illiterate and unemployed
 and did not, therefore, qualify as voters. Realizing this weakness
 the Kikuyu militants tried to secure wider Kikuyu support. In the
 process some of them made interesting uses of ethnicity. They presented
 Adholla, whom they gave the Kikuyu name Mwangi, as a Kikuyu in spirit,
 claiming that Getata was not a Kikuyu at heart.¹ The usefulness of
 the appeal to tribal solidarity was recognized by those who chose to
 ignore it. Their failure to obtain wide Kikuyu support proved that
 ethnicity in its strict form was a very potent force.

Ochwada had to suffer the humiliation of being the only candidate
 to lose his deposit. His record as a prominent trade unionist and a
 KANU national leader was of little help to him. His results high-
 lighted the hazard of facing the electorate without a substantial tribal
 base. Being a Maluhya, he was regarded as a traitor by the majority
 of his tribesmen. He got, however, the collective support of the
 Abaluhya who came from his own rural Location of Samia. Significantly
 the Samia people rejoined KADU as soon as the election was over.²

The election marked the end of a chapter in the development of
 KANU and KADU in Nakuru. Patterns which emerged in this formative

¹ Interview: E.P. Getata. In KANU Speech Collection, 1962.

² Interview: M.S. Maji.

period had an effect on the development of the two branches and the relationship between them.

KANU's Nakuru Branch 1961-3

The KANU militants having lost the election were now even more determined to tighten their control over the branch. Kuboka was the first victim. If his election in January 1961 was viewed as an attempt to give the committee the respectability which might have helped Adholla to get through, he became expendable after the election. Kuboka soon realised that he was obstructed in carrying out his duties as the branch's secretary by the militant officers. They openly showed their mistrust in him and excluded him from discussions on party matters. Kuboka found his position untenable and tendered his resignation two weeks after the election. In his letter of resignation he said: "This shows that my being in the office is just like a tool if not as a tribal cover."¹ The hard core had proved, however, that they were not tribally minded. Kuboka was disposed of mainly because he was a moderate whereas "we wanted a militant committee".² There was also, no doubt, an element of settling old scores by Muthiga who now had the upper hand. John Odir Odern, the last survivor from the MKC moderate leadership, also lost his position soon after the election. Consequently, the KLFAs militants came to monopolize KANU's top leadership in the period immediately following the 1961 general election.

The growing militancy of the leadership found expression in its public face as they emerged as spokesmen for the landless squatters of the RVP. With independence as the main preoccupation of the national politicians, there was a danger that the land issue might be relegated

¹R.A.Kuboka P.P., Kuboka to KANU branch chairman, 3.3.1961.

²Interview: M.Muthiga.

to a position of secondary importance. The question of the European land in the White Highlands was the main feature of addresses by the Nakuru branch leadership at a public meeting held in Elburgon on 16 July 1961. Referring to a call by a KADU leader to buy the land, the Luo vice-chairman said: "the land is ours and we shall not buy it". The meeting reaffirmed that "Land and Freedom are our rights and we must fight for them."¹ European farmers who had been previously reassured by a KANU-KADU joint statement regarding land title, were now greatly concerned and anxious.²

Another major issue which preoccupied KANU's Nakuru leadership at that time was the anti-KLFA campaign launched by the Government. As early as the first half of 1960 the Administration was aware of the revival of oath-taking in the RVP. In July that year it placed restrictions on the movement of Kikuyu into the Province.³ These measures were apparently effective for only a few months and oath-taking, particularly in Elburgon and Molo areas, continued to cause anxiety to European farmers. The murder of Mrs. Osborne in May 1961 in Mau Narok area by a gang of Kikuyu robbers seemed both to confirm the farmers' worst fears and to refute Government's repeated assurances.⁴ On 8 July 1961 Government officially proscribed the organization under its five aliases: "The Kenya Land Freedom Army", "Kenya Land Freedom Party", "Kenya Parliament", "Rift Valley Government", "Rift Valley Parliament". Previously KLFA members had been prosecuted as Mau Mau members. It was now thought advisable to proscribe the movement under

¹KNF, KANU public meeting, Elburgon, 16 July 1961. (Minutes)

²KNA/D.C/Mau/dep.2/154, NLMR September 1961, p.1.

³Kenya Labour Department Annual Report 1960, General Security, p.2.

⁴KNA, RVP Annual Report 1961, pp. 1-2.

its existing names. The Minister of Defence announcing the prescription said that an Emergency would have become inevitable had the Government not taken action at that stage.¹

This was more than an embarrassment to the KLFA. By then it became clear that the two main aims of the KLFA were to ensure that KANU, and not KADU, would rule independent Kenya, and to see that the European land in the White Highlands was given to the squatters. Any unnecessary confrontation with the Government could only reduce the strength and effectiveness of the movement in the ultimate struggle. In fact the close association of the KLFA with KANU in the RVP could be used by the Government as a pretext for leaving the country under KADU rule. Against this background one can understand the eagerness of KANU militants to join, for tactical reasons, the Administration's anti-KLFA campaign. In a press handout dated 1 June 1961 Mwithaga himself attacked the D.C. for deciding not to invite politicians to speak in his anti-oathing Barasag.² In the meeting at Alburgon on 16 July 1961 the chairman, vice chairman and two other officers who were prominent KLFA leaders, denied knowledge of and condemned the oathing and secret societies.³

The Administration remained unconvinced and unappreciative of these gestures. It apparently had information about the involvement of some of KANU's Nakuru branch leaders with the KLFA. Some of the branch officers were detained during August and early September 1961. Mwithaga himself, who had been on the police black-list for a long time, was restricted to Mombasa. Mwithaga's presence in Nakuru was regarded as such a threat to security that as late as July 1962 the D.C.

¹ EAS, 9.8.1961, p.1.

² KNF, press handout 1.6.1961.

³ KNF, KANU public meeting, Alburgon, 16.7.1961.

advised his successor: "Do not allow Mark Muthaga out under any circumstances."¹ By September 1961 KANU's militant leadership disintegrated.

KANU's moderates tried to take advantage of the militants' setback and regain their influence. Their dissatisfaction with the running of the party grew considerably after the 1961 general election. Not only did the party lose the election unnecessarily, but their representatives on the branch committee were almost completely eliminated. The moderates dissociated themselves from the branch and did not support it financially. At the end of 1961, a representative of the party's Womens' Wing complained that "Nakuru Wages /Elders/ have been away for quite a long time and they challenge the office's work while they are away." S.Mbote, the moderate, replied: "Nakuru elders have refused to pay monthly dues since September 1960 when they saw that the money which they were paying went only towards fines. When Executive will start to call meetings in town and elders see that money is cared for they will start to pay their monthly dues. They like KANU, I know."² In September 1961 when the militant leadership had crumbled in such dramatic fashion, the moderates thought that the time was ripe for change. A group of them took over and ran the branch in an interim capacity.

Their success, however, was shortlived.³ The militants were quick to recover and reassert their position. On 19 September 1961 at a meeting of delegates from all the District divisions, they staged what some referred to as the "second coup".⁴ Since the majority of the

¹KMA, Nakuru District Handing Over Report, Howard to Brown, July 1962. (Minutes)

²KMF, KANU Nakuru District governing council's meeting, 31.12.1961.

³Interview: S.Mbote.

⁴Interview: S.Mbote. KMF, KANU Nakuru District governing council's meeting, 19.9.1961. (Minutes)

delegates were from the countryside, the militants had a clear advantage. Nyeri's delegation of ten included seven militants. The meeting revealed an undercurrent of antagonism between town and country. A delegate from Njoro expressed this crudely: "I would like to know whether we shall elect officials and then Nakuru people will call us fools and will undermine those officials because they always say that farm people are fools." When it came to the election of the branch's new officers there was little surprise. Four of the six officers were militants. The elected chairman, W. Ijeyo, was a Luo member of the KLFA although forty-nine of the fifty-nine delegates were Kikuyu. The Kikuyu militants again showed their indifference to tribal origin. The vice chairman, G. Maitumi, was an ex-Man Maa leader, though not a KLFA member. The two other militant officers were active KLFA members: W. Ogoron a Kisii by tribe, and F. Magwe, a Kikuyu. There were, significantly, two moderates among the new officers: M. Ndumati, a Kikuyu, and C. Odiwuor, a Luo. Experience had shown that the monopolization of the leadership by the militants was hazardous and tended to alienate important sectors from the party, particularly in Nakuru. The division between militants and moderates persisted, but the latter were accommodated and a modus vivendi was established.

Significantly, at least five of the new officers were Nakuru residents. This was a sharp reversal of Muthiga's strategy which was based on the assumption that the militants' control could be best achieved by shifting the balance within the party's District leadership in favour of the rural areas. While this strategy was well founded in terms of the difference in political orientation between town and country, it ignored the centrality of Nakuru and the need for a sympathetic and co-operative following in the town. The election of the two Nakuru educated

moderates as secretary and assistant secretary was aimed at improving the management of the branch and at attracting the party's supporters among the urban elite. Additions made to the branch leadership on 29 October 1961 confirmed the pattern of achieving reconciliation with Nakuru's moderate politicians while preserving the militants' supremacy. One of the two additional officers was a moderate Kikuyu from Nakuru, and the other was a KLF member from the rural areas. Five people were elected to form, with the titled officers, the branch's executive committee. Two of them were Kikuyu moderates from Nakuru and three were militants from the District.¹ The tribal composition of the executive committee reveals a strong Kikuyu bias. Of the thirteen committee members nine were Kikuyu, two were Luo, one Kisi and one African from Sudan. It was the integration of the town and the predominantly Kikuyu District, which entrenched the Kikuyu's new domination of KANU's Nakuru branch.

A special gesture towards the Nakuru moderate "elders" was extended by the branch leadership in November 1961 in connection with Kenyatta's visit to Nakuru. In the special reception committee formed to organize the visit one finds J. Kamunjo, the prominent KCA leader, E. Neso, the Luo who was active in the KAU and the NDC, J. B. Arara and F. Odir Odera, the prominent Luo NDC leaders, and even Kenyua the "loyalist".²

Another sphere in which the militants proved that they were coming to terms with political realities was KANU's attitude towards the expatriate communities. It will be recalled that the militant supporters of Adholla were the only ones to ignore the Asian vote during the 1961 general election campaign. It was Kenyatta's visit again which precipitated

¹ KNF, KANU Nakuru District governing council meeting, 29.10.1961. (Minutes)

² KNF, Kenyatta Reception Committee meeting, 23.11.1961. (Minutes)

a change in their attitude towards the Asian community. While discussing the Asians' request to meet Kenyatta, S. Njoto, the moderate, suggested a new approach: "We better have some Asians to be with us and as soon as we do that, they will unite with KANU. I am sure that Asians are following KADU because of Ngala. If Mr. Gichuru could come here we would have many following KANU."¹ The initiative which came from the moderates was accepted by the militants and the Asians were invited to welcome Kenyatta.² In terms of their numerical strength and financial resources it was inadvisable to throw the Asians into KADU's welcoming arms.

At the same time the branch established contact with Bruce Mackenzie, the opportunist settler-politician who was making efforts to jump on KANU's band-wagon.³ This was certainly in line with Kenyatta's reconciliatory attitude towards the settlers when he attempted to ensure economic stability and smooth transition to independence. Bruce Mackenzie was also approached for financial assistance to the branch.⁴ In May 1962 Mackenzie and an Asian addressed a KANU rally in Nakuru in which Kenyatta was the main speaker.⁵ In 1961 there was, however, opposition to non-Africans becoming full party members on the grounds that they would then claim their right to become party officials.⁶ It was only later that the branch applied the party rules which opened membership to all races. In the beginning of 1963 two Asians were

¹ KMF, KANU Nakuru committee meeting, 6.10.1961. (Minutes)

² KMF, KANU's secretary to Dr. Pansar Singh, 7.11.1961.

³ KMF, KANU's secretary to Bruce Mackenzie, 17.10.1961.

⁴ KMF, KANU officials meeting, 29.4.1962. (Minutes)

⁵ KMA/D.C/Mru/dep.2/175, Special Branch, Nakuru, Information Report No. 740/60, 21.5.1962.

⁶ KMF, KANU Nakuru District Governing Council, 31.12.1961. (Minutes)

co-opted to the branch's executive committee.¹

The tendency towards a balance between militants and moderates within the branch's leadership, manifested itself more clearly during 1962. At the beginning of that year M. Mubatai, the Maluhya ex-secretary of the local KADU branch, joined KANU's executive committee.² In June 1962 he replaced a KLFA member as the organising secretary.³ His place on the executive committee was taken by a Masai resident of Nakuru. Towards the end of 1962 when the militant vice chairman was detained, S. Mbote, the chief spokesman of the moderates, was installed in his stead.⁴ By 1963, Asiama had been included on the executive committee. All these changes enhanced the influence of the moderate urban politicians. In 1962 Nakuru was re-organised as a separate division with its own committee.⁵ With Mubatai as the divisional chairman and S. Mbote as the secretary the town sub-branch certainly had a moderate bias. The Nakuru representation to the branch's governing council also betrayed the trend towards moderation, three of the four delegates being moderate politicians.⁶

The gradual decline of the militant element in KANU's leadership was certainly in line with Kenyatta's efforts to give KANU a reasonable image. The increasing coverage of the KLFA activities in the local and foreign press was a serious embarrassment to KANU's national leadership, especially since KANU officials at the local level were

¹ KNU, executive committee, 23.1.1963. (Minutes)

² KNU, executive committee meeting, 27.1.1962. (Minutes)

³ KNU, executive committee meeting, 13.6.1962. (Minutes)

⁴ H.E.A., File 3027, KANU's Nakuru branch officers, 31.12.1962.

⁵ KNU, S. Mbote to KANU Nakuru branch chairman, 12.6.1962.

⁶ KNU, governing council meeting, 1.4.1962. (Minutes)

implicated. It could give Government a pretext to delay independence or to force a constitution which would deny KANU the control it felt entitled to. It intensified the apprehensions of the KADU minority tribes, thus increasing the danger of inter-tribal strife. It was certainly used by KADU and put KANU on the defence.¹ Within KANU the persisting impact of Kikuyu militancy intensified the existing fears, among other KANU tribes, of Kikuyu domination in independent Kenya. One result of such fears was the break away of the Kamba tribe which brought about the formation of the African People's Party (APP) by Paul Ngei in November 1962. Another result was a milder reaction of some Luo who formed the Luo United Movement (LUM).

The LUM was formed in Nairobi in August 1962, threatening the strong Luo-Kikuyu alliance. Interestingly the Movement's president was Z. Adholla, the Kikuyu militants' candidate for the Nakuru seat in 1961 general election. Many of its supporters were former members of the NPP. A clear warning was given to the Kikuyu in the Movement's inaugural meeting: "We will remain in KANU to give the Kikuyu a chance to discipline themselves, put an end to oathing and subversion and drop their ideas of dominating the other tribes in Kenya."² LUM was established in Nakuru two months later.³ In Nakuru the prospect of Kikuyu domination seemed imminent. Whereas at the national level both Mbatia and Odinga figured prominently in KANU's leadership, in Nakuru the accepted leaders of the Luo community had lost their positions in the party. The Luo in Nakuru were relegated to the role of minor partners. It was those members of the local Luo elite, regarding themselves as potential local political leaders, who formed the LUM

¹ KMF, KANU Nakuru branch press release, 29.1.1962.

² EAB, 20.8.1962, p.5.

³ D.C./Nku/Adm/15/12/173, LUM formation meeting, 21.10.1962.

in Nakuru. Prominent among them was J. Odir Odara who had lost his position in KANU in 1961. LEM failed to breach Kikuyu-Luo co-operation or to become an effective pressure group within KANU because it failed to get the full support of either Odinga or Mboya,¹ and to establish itself in the Luo reserve. By the beginning of 1963 the LEM in Nakuru was dying. It was, however, indicative of the tensions within KANU and a portent for the future. The formation in Nakuru of an APP branch had little impact on the town's politics since the Kamba, the backbone of the party, were a small minority.²

Finally, as independence was approaching and it became clear that KANU would form the government with Kenyatta as the head of state, the KLFA was increasingly viewed as a potential opposition to the party's policy and authority. The only outstanding issue which remained unsolved, as far as the KLFA militants were concerned, was that of European-held land. In this respect their view and that of the party were diametrically opposed. Kenyatta himself gave firm assurances to Europeans regarding the validity of their land title.³ This could not have been treated with equanimity by the KLFA leaders who were preaching to their followers that the White Highlands were the squatters' promised land. This was a hard blow to take even from their beloved leader and Government sources claimed that some members of the KLFA consequently took an oath to kill Kenyatta.⁴ While this piece of information must be treated with great care, there is no doubt that Kenyatta's land policy caused considerable frustration among his militant

¹ Interview: A.A.A. Macarding.

² R.S.A., File 4770.

³ J. Kenyatta, Suffering Without Bitterness, pp. 147, 149, 160, 161.

⁴ SAS, 7.12.1961, p.1.

adherents. The attitude of KANU's national leadership towards the KLFA can be better appreciated in retrospect. In July 1964 with Kenya independent for just over six months, Fred Kubai, who was very involved in Nakuru's politics, described the KLFA and similar organisations as "subversive and tantamount to treason".¹

It was hardly surprising that denouncing the KLFA and secret oath-taking became KANU's expressed policy. While the earlier denunciations by the KLFA members themselves could be regarded as tactical lip-service to Government, those which came later from KANU's national leaders reflected genuine attitudes. On 20 May 1962, addressing a KANU rally in Nakuru, the centre of the movement, Kenyatta made his position in a clear though inoffensive manner: "After this meeting I do not want to hear that Kikuyu are taking oaths. In the past Kikuyu took oaths to release Kenyatta from restriction, now he is free."² A week later, at Thompson's Falls, he said that those involved in secret societies were enemies of Uhuru.³ The services of Mboya were also mobilised for the anti-KLFA campaign in Nakuru District.⁴

The KLFA was further weakened by the intensive Government campaign which was gathering momentum during the second half of 1962. Between February and October 1962 two hundred and thirty three people were arrested for alleged membership of the KLFA, mostly in the RVP.⁵ In November 1962, two hundred people confessed their membership of the KLFA in the heart of Alburgon Forest.⁶ KANU's chairman in Alburgon, Kinyanjui Matigi, the party's secretary in Molo and a party official

¹ EAS, 14.7.1964.

² KMA/D.C/Nm/dep.2/175, Special Branch, Nakuru, Information Report 740/62, 21.5.1962, p.5.

³ J. Kenyatta, Struggling without Bitterness, p.183.

⁴ EAS, 10.10.1962, p.5.

⁵ R. Buijtenhuijs, op. cit., p.382.

⁶ EAS, 13.11.1962, p.5.

from Njoro were arrested and charged with membership of the KLF.¹ In October 1962 the KANU Nakuru branch's vice chairman was also detained although he was not a KLF member.² In the same month, Kiarri Waihobo and Kamundi Getwa, leader and deputy leader of the KLF in Nakuru, were convicted as KLF leaders.³ Large quantities of arms and ammunition belonging to the KLF were discovered by the police.⁴ On 16 January 1963 it was reported that a police team was still operating in Nakuru area and that KLF members were being arrested in Nakuru almost daily.⁵

The impact of these internal and external pressures must have affected the movement's organization and morale considerably. The militant cause in Nakuru certainly suffered a setback. The militants' decline and the strengthening of the authority of Kenyatta and the party's moderate national leadership, encouraged Nakuru moderates to reassert their lost position. Militancy in Nakuru, however, was far from dead, and its survival in the post-independence period proved this in no uncertain terms.⁶

When the new executive committee took over the branch's leadership in September 1961 they set out to re-organise the branch and to run it efficiently. Nwithaga's period was referred to as a reign of chaos and mismanagement and the urgent need for reform was repeatedly emphasized. This was the message of the newly elected chairman: "I ask you to be united and understand each other in order that we may

¹ EAS, 12.10.1962; 27.11.1962, p.5.

² EAS, 11.10.1962, p.15.

³ EAS, 11.10.1962, p.15.

⁴ EAS, 5.9.1962, p.5; 8.9.1962, p.1; 24.9.1962, p.1; 27.9.1962, p.5; 13.10.1962, p.5.

⁵ EAS, 16.1.1963, p.5.

⁶ J. v. Harbeson, The Kenya Little General Election: A Study in Problems of Urban Political Integration (an unpublished paper), pp. 9-10.

arrange everything bad in the branch to be good. There is a lot of work in the office to be done and without co-operation, mark you, we cannot clean all the dirt in KANU offices in Nakuru."¹ In a letter sent the next day to all the sub-branches regarding the new rules of running the branch, emphasis was laid on open and lawful activity, unity and good leadership and on the elimination of "misbehaviour" and lawbreaking.²

Putting the branch's finances in good order proved to be a difficult task. Allegations of mishandling of party funds were an almost permanent feature of branch committee meetings.³ The obvious target was the treasurer and his department. "Not a challenge but facts to say that Treasurer's Department is dirty" said the branch chairman in January 1962, and another officer followed suit: "unless we clear off the dirt in the Treasury office we are doing nothing".⁴ People who misappropriated party funds were summarily expelled from the party.⁵ In May 1962 the branch's organising secretary was suspended and later dismissed for mishandling party funds.⁶

The leadership's efforts to re-organise and reform the branch brought them into open conflict with branch's youth wing. The youth and women's wings of KANU in Nakuru had their origin in the NEC. It was KANU, however, which perfected them as effective propaganda arms. According to an official report in October 1960: "the technique employed

¹ KNF, officials meeting, 21.9.1961. (Minutes)

² KNF, Secretary to all KANU Agency offices, Nakuru District, 22.9.1961.

³ See, for example, KNF, executive committee meeting, 15.3.1962. (Minutes)

⁴ KNF, executive committee meeting, 15.1.1962. (Minutes)

⁵ KNF, secretary to all KANU members, 19.1.1962. KNA/D.C/Mru/dep.2/175, KANU Nakuru branch to C.I.D., Nakuru, 21.3.1962.

⁶ KNF, Secretary to organising secretary, 8.5.1962.

in Nakuru is to enlist support by the singing of political songs which often starts in the KANU office, continues as a procession to Bondoni and ends up by all-night singing in the Locations.¹ A similar technique was used in the District townships. The report emphasized the potential threat to law and order inherent to such technique. The youth wingers, in particular, tended to have little regard for the law and in consequence frequently got involved with the police. This proved to be a financial burden on the party which had to pay the fines. In addition, the youth wingers' resort to violence exposed them to condemnation from within the party. As early as December 1960 Kuboka, the former interim chairman, condemned violence by the youth wingers and called upon the party to discipline them.² In January 1961 one of the points raised by the executive committee members, who sought to depose Mwithaga, was that meetings organized by youths and women without the committee's consent had led to disturbances.³

Most of the youth wingers were unemployed and spent much of their time in or around the party's office disturbing work there. Many of them were KILFA members, eager for action even more than their superiors. KANU's constitution clearly defined the subordinate position of the youth wing: "While retaining a measure of self-identity, the organization of KANU Youth Wing shall be an integral part of KANU and amenable to the Union's control and discipline..."⁴ In practice, however, Nakuru division's youth wing in particular did not habitually accept the branch's authority. Mwithaga's period was hardly conducive to instilling discipline. It so happened that many of the party

¹ KNA/D.C/Nku/dep.2/154, NLMR, October 1960, p.1.

² R.A.Kuboka P.P., press release, 28.12.1960.

³ SAS, 23.1.1961, p.1.

⁴ KNA/D.C/Nku/dep.2/175, KANU's constitution.

collectors were youth wingers so that much of the financial disorder was also of their making.

With respect then to the two main objects they set out to achieve, namely control over the branch and financial order, the new leaders, elected in September 1961, found themselves confronted by Nakuru youth wingers. In his report for the period between September 19, 1961 and December 30, 1961 the branch secretary summarized the position: "Always there are difficulties to control youths ... They have misused party's money in their own ways. Up to date they are not yet clearly controlled."¹ The attempts of Nakuru branch to control its youth wing were in accordance with the recommendations of KANU's national committee for re-organization.² A directive was sent to all the District sub-branches: "We have youth and women wing under our constitution which must run under KANU."³

The task was difficult to achieve especially with the Nakuru division youth wing. On 23 October 1961 the District's youth wing leaders were invited to the branch's officials meeting to discuss the following allegations levelled against them: "1. misusing party's money. 2. using KANU name while misbehaving and also closing bars without consulting officials. 3. spoiling officials' name."⁴ In defence, the District youth wing chairman claimed that the wing's District leaders had no control over Nakuru division's youth wingers.⁵

¹KNF, Secretary's report, 19.9.1961-30.12.1961.

²KNF, Nakuru District governing council meeting, 31.12.1961. (Minutes)

³KNF, Secretary to all KANU Agency Offices, Nakuru District, 27.10.1961.

⁴KNF, officials meeting, 22.10.1961. (Minutes)

⁵KNF, officials meeting, 23.10.1961. (Minutes)

This meeting had apparently no positive results. The main item discussed at an officials' meeting on 5 February 1962 was the use of force by youth wingers against branch's officers.¹ Some of the officers threatened to resign. The meeting decided to suspend the Nakuru division youth wing until a full report by the Nakuru division committee could be submitted. These measures seem to have achieved their aim as later records do not reveal further antagonism between the branch's leadership and youth wing. As independence was approaching there was less tolerance towards the excesses of the youth wingers. At the end of 1963, KANU's national assistant general secretary warned that "we will not at any time support any youth, who, for whatever reason, acts contrary to the spirit of Harabee /jhall together/."²

Approaching the 1963 general election KANU's Nakuru branch was in much better shape than it had been on the eve of the 1961 General Election. Its leadership worked more harmoniously and its organizational structure functioned much better.

KANU's Nakuru branch between the two General Elections

The history of KANU's Nakuru branch is more difficult to reconstruct for the simple reason that branch records have not survived. Its development in the period between the two general elections of 1961 and 1963 was certainly neither as eventful nor as exciting as that of its local rival. It remained basically a strong and stable alliance between the Abaluhya and Kalenjin tribesmen. Since the party's support in Nakuru came predominantly from the Abaluhya side, the Kalenjin never disputed the Abaluhya's almost total control of the branch. The branch's

¹KNF, officials meeting, 5.2.1962. (Minutes)

²NAS, 19.12.1963, p.5.

main task was to maintain and tighten the party's hold over its tribesmen residing in Nakuru. They continued to do it by appealing to tribal solidarity and through the network of tribal associations. To some extent it is probable that the branch in Nakuru resorted to internal violence to ensure support. One source states that whereas the people of Isukha Location in the Abaluhya reserve supported KANU, those of them who lived in Nakuru supported KADU because they were afraid of being beaten up.¹ As seen earlier, the people from Lamia Location, who supported Ochwada in the 1961 general election rejoined KADU as soon as the election was over. The Maragoli, however, remained divided and the Maragoli Association in the town refused to declare itself officially on KADU's side. KADU's branch was supported by the local branch of Musa Amalemba's tribal party, the Baluhya Political Union.²

After the 1961 general election, the branch expanded its activity to the surrounding District. The support they could mobilize there was, however, very limited, since there were relatively few Abaluhya working on European farms or living in the District's townships. The immediate hinterland of Nakuru was, on the whole, hostile to KADU. The town's branch, therefore, relied for its rural support mainly on the Kalenjin belt bordering Nakuru District. When party national leaders addressed rallies in Nakuru, contingents from these areas were always present to boost the morale of the party's urban supporters and to provide a more impressive backing for the leaders' statements. Party leaders from the reserve regularly came to Nakuru to encourage the local leadership. Youth wings from the Kalenjin reserve could always

¹ Interview: M.S. Muji.

² Interview: E. Muleri, M.S. Muji.

be called in to reinforce the local youth wing in the struggle against their KANU counterparts.

The unrealistic victory in 1961 general election, when KADU won the Nakuru seat, gave the local branch a sense of confidence and strength, unwarranted by the real balance of power on the ground. KADU's position in general was further enhanced when they decided, in April 1961, to join the Government with their leader Ngala as Leader of Government Business, leaving the opposition to KANU, the bigger party.¹ The taste of power was again unrealistic, because, as in the case of the Nakuru election, it did not reflect the relative strength of the party.

The local KADU youth wing also boosted the confidence of the party. Although the local KADU had difficulty in controlling their youth wingers, they seem to have coped with the problem better than KANU. The KADU youth wing was numerically strong and dedicated to the party and its policy. In fact, they were mobilized by the party rallies all over the District and beyond. Since the clashes between the two parties in Nakuru were mainly at the level of the youth wings KADU once again enjoyed the illusion of strength.²

In comparison with KANU, KADU's branch also had the advantage of possessing a stable and united leadership. After the 1961 general election the branch's leadership was reinforced by E. Imbisi. Imbisi, disenchanted after having failed to secure his re-election as KANU officer in January 1961, responded to KADU's courting and joined its executive committee. It seems as though Imbisi was responsible for

¹G. Bennett, op. cit., p. 155.

²Interview: M. S. Muji, E. Maleri, E. Imbisi.

the only defection of a KADU leader in Nakuru. The defector was, as mentioned earlier, M. Mbatia, the branch secretary. Addressing a KADU rally in January 1962 soon after his resignation from KADU Mbatia said: "I have come with a hoe to show you KADU members that there is no KADU in Nakuru any longer and I, as the KADU branch founder in Nakuru, have resigned from it because of the underground movements it goes with." He went on to attribute his move to ideological motives and to the need for Kenyatta's leadership.¹ Early in 1961, while still KADU branch secretary, Mbatia went beyond the party's line stating that Kenyatta should be released but he denied the leadership and remain an ordinary citizen.² It appears that he resigned because Mbatia spread rumours that he was mishandling party funds.³

In December 1962 a European farmer from Subukia, G.R. Slaughter, joined the KADU branch committee as treasurer. His motives in joining the party can be better understood by quoting from a letter he had sent to fellow farmers in January 1962 asking for financial support for KADU: "For those of us who wish to stay, a form of regionalism seems to offer the best hope for the future and for those who have decided to go, the same kind of constitution is most likely to produce conditions where there is a reasonable market for their land and property."⁴

The nature and role of KADU's Nakuru branch is better understood in the context of KADU-KANU relations at the national and local levels in the period of 1961-3.

¹ KNF, press release, 23.1.1962.

² KAS, 18.1.1961, p.7.

³ Interview: E. Maleri.

⁴ KNF, G.R. Slaughter, circular letter, 5.1.1962. Regionalism was the constitutional solution advocated by KADU, see below.

The Struggle between KANU and KAU, 1961-3

As long as Kenyatta was in detention the gap between the two parties seemed bridgeable. Kenyatta's supreme leadership of Kenya's nationalist movement was above the mundane division between KANU and KAU. It seemed possible that his release from detention would end the deadlock and bring about unity between the rival parties. The main reason for the formation of KAU was the fear on the part of some minority tribes of domination by the larger tribe, and the Kikuyu in particular. The party had not as yet had a distinct ideological platform, and in terms of political orientation there were few divisions between KAU and KANU which did not exist within KANU itself. The slogan Uhuru na Kenyatta (independence and Kenyatta) was acceptable to both parties. In fact, by August 1961, KAU's leaders agreed that Kenyatta would be the first Chief Minister of an African government.¹ After the 1961 general election both KAU in the Government and KANU in opposition fought for Kenyatta's release. Repeated attempts were made by Kenyatta, while still in detention, to bring about a measure of unity between the parties. The failure of such efforts could be attributed to the physical absence of Kenyatta. It is true, however, that KAU's decision, in April 1961, to join Government, leaving KANU in opposition, caused bitterness and resentment on the KANU side and inflated KAU's opinion of its own strength. In this period, prior to Kenyatta's release in August 1961, inter-party relations in Nakuru were relatively relaxed, and no violent clashes between the two parties were reported.

As it turned out, Kenyatta's release only intensified the division between the two parties. Formal talks between the two sides failed to produce unity and even Kenyatta's threat to form a third party failed

¹ J. H. Crowley, op. cit., pp. 217-8.

to do the trick. The apprehensions of KADU and the tribes it represented were as strong as ever, and they concluded that Kenyatta's personality alone was not a sufficient guarantee. On 30 September 1961 KADU rejected Kenyatta's leadership, claiming that he had always been a Kikuyu tribalist. At the same time they introduced regionalism as their ideological alternative. They concluded that only a federal constitution which would give independent authority to the various regions can safeguard the interests of minority tribes. Antagonisms already fanned by strong tribal and personal feelings were reinforced by the hot issue of centralism versus regionalism. The circle was closed when at the end of October 1961 Kenyatta accepted the presidency of KANU.¹

On 8 October 1961, two days before the final breakdown of the constitutional talks between KANU and KADU,² Kenyatta, still not officially in KANU, came to Nakuru as the main speaker at a public rally sponsored by both parties. Scuffles broke out about an hour before Kenyatta arrived, following the hoisting of a KADU flag on one side of the speakers' rostrum. On leaving his car, Kenyatta was "greeted" by KADU supporters with the slogan Uhuru na Ngala. Kenyatta in his speech condemned regionalism as a colonialist trap which could cause another Congo. The police had to intervene at the end of Kenyatta's speech after W. Murgor, a Kalenjin leader, remarked: "Kenyatta spoke in Kikuyu, did we come here to be taught a language?" Police moved in again when KANU's president, Oichuru, was shouted down. KADU's supporters at this meeting were on the offensive.³ For them the final split between their party

¹G. Bennett, op. cit., p. 156.

²Ibid., pp. 155-6.

³EAS, 9.10.196, p. 5.

and KANU was a foregone conclusion.

An official report referring to Nakuru mentioned the deterioration of KANU-KADU relations following the breakdown of the constitutional talks in October 1961. There were numerous minor clashes between youth wingers from both parties. KADU's youth wingers, on the whole, took the offensive. The situation had not improved by the end of 1961.¹

A major clash occurred on 11 November 1961 when about a hundred and eighty youth wingers from both parties armed with pangas and sticks were involved in a fierce battle.²

At the end of 1961 KADU's Nakuru branch made its position clear regarding the constitutional issue: "We would lastly feel to warn the public at large that KADU members and their supporters have firmly stood on their regionalism policy which they cannot abandon at all."³ From the closing months of 1961 and until the eve of Kenya's independence, Majimbo (regionalism) was at the centre of the political controversy between the two parties. Majimbo became the battle cry of KADU. Early in 1962 W. Murgor issued a clear warning - "Regionalism or civil war." He called upon his Kalenjin tribesmen to sharpen their spears and wait for the sound of the whistle signalling the beginning of the civil war.⁴

Against this background, the second Lancaster House Conference opened in February 1962 with the aim of working out a constitution acceptable to both parties. After fifty-one days of hard negotiation an agreement was reached on a "framework constitution" which was considered by KADU as a victory.⁵ KADU's Nakuru branch became one of the

¹ KNA, NDAR 1961, pp. 1, 18.

² EAB, 9.12.1961, p.7.

³ KNA/D.C./Nku/dep.2/173, KADU Nakuru branch press statement, 11.12.1961.

⁴ C. Ranger and J. Nottingham, "The Kenya General Election of 1963", Journal of Modern African History, 2, I (1964), p.12.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 12-13. J.M. Crowley, op.cit., pp. 163-8.

pillars supporting the Majimbo policy. At the height of the second Lancaster House Conference Nakuru branch sent a cable to Ngala urging him to press for more control for the regional governments. "Otherwise," they added, "all our youth wings are ready for KADU's master plan."¹ The militancy of KADU's Nakuru branch with regard to regionalism must be seen in the context of the RVP with Nakuru at its centre. The RVP was a prospective region in which the two poles of the political situation rubbed shoulders. On the one hand there lived the most militant Kikuyu, associated with the KLFAs and hungry for land. On the other hand, there lived the Kalenjin tribesmen, in their reserves, who formed the backbone of KADU and who, more than any other tribe, feared Kikuyu expansion into their tribal territory. Besides, they also had claims on land in the White Highlands. A frontier situation often stimulates the growth of political and ideological extremism. The position of KADU within Nakuru and the District was even more conducive to the development of such militancy. Whereas in the town, and even more so in the District, KADU was overwhelmingly outnumbered by KANU, within the broader framework of a future region KADU was bound to have the upper hand. It was only within a regionalist solution that KADU's Nakuru branch and its leaders could hope to have any significance.

The results of the second Lancaster House Conference seem to have boosted the confidence of KADU leaders in Nakuru considerably. On 18 April 1962, KADU's branch secretary said that although the Kikuyu supported Kenyatta, no revenge had been taken on them in the "KADU areas" of Elgon and North Nyanza and the RVP. But, he added, "if they do not leave within a month we will boycott their shops and any of their

¹EAS, 23.3.1962, p.3.

activities."¹

The prospect of living in a region governed by KALU nourished the militancy in KANU's ranks. Partly against this background KLF activities of that time must be seen. In September 1962, a KLF suspect who was brought to court confessed: "we intended to keep it [The army] for the Kalenjin war."²

KANU regarded the concessions they had made at the Conference as a tactical retreat and had no intention of implementing any form of federalism. They had their own interpretation of the "framework constitution" which Kenyatta spelled out in no uncertain terms while addressing a KANU rally in Nakuru on 20 May 1962. According to a Special Branch report, Kenyatta said, while talking about regionalism, that "KALU bought a donkey thinking that it was a cow... The outcome is that KANU wanted provinces and KALU wanted regions, we both have what we wanted because they both amount to the same thing."³ He certainly had a receptive audience on that point. At the same meeting, W. Iijoyo, the KANU branch's chairman, addressed himself to Murgor's call for the Kalenjin to sharpen their spears: "He [Iijoyo] said that the Akamba knew how to make bows ... The Kikuyu have known for some time how to make guns ... The Luo know how to make shields..."⁴

In May 1962 Kenyatta's visit to Nakuru sparked off a fresh wave of violence in Nakuru. On Saturday, 19 May 1962, a day before the Kenyatta rally, about six thousand Africans from the outlying district poured into Nakuru to celebrate the occasion. KALU's youth wing seems to have taken the offensive and some four hundred youth wingers from

¹ EAS, 19.4.1962, p.5.

² EAS, 27.9.1962, p.5.

³ KMA/D.C./Rku/dsp.2/175, Special Branch Nakuru, Information Report No. 740/62, 21.5.1962.

⁴ Ibid.

both sides were engaged in a street battle in the African location. Significantly, most of the injured were from the KNU tribes and most of the arrested from KADU tribes. The police intervened with its riot squad using tear gas to disperse the belligerent crowd. The police also sent in reinforced patrols to prevent further riots on the day of the rally.¹

For KADU the period following the second Lancaster House Conference was a mixture of hope and anxiety. At the national level KADU and KNU entered a coalition, on 11 April 1961, in which each had an equal number of ministries with Kenyatta and Ngala sharing the leadership of the government. It was a frustrating experience considering that the two sides were constantly at loggerheads on most issues. In particular there was continuous controversy about the real meaning of the Majimbo constitution.² There was a real fear in KADU quarters that an eventual KNU majority would not honour the constitution.

With its precarious position at the centre, KADU made concerted efforts to strengthen its claim for a federal solution on the ground. As part of this campaign Nakuru was made, at a special ceremony, the capital of KADU's Rift Valley Region. On 29 July 1962 about five thousand KADU supporters attended the Majimbo stone-laying ceremony at Nakuru. Ngala cemented eight stones together and then jumped on them shouting "Majimbo for ever". He claimed that KANU leaders agreed to regionalism and declared that "by this constitution we avoid dictatorship and domination by a few people."³ The police took special precautions to prevent violent outbreaks during the ceremony and only one minor incident was reported.

¹ EAS, 21.5.1962, p.1; 22.5.1962, p.5; 26.6.1962, p.5.

² J.N. Crowley, op.cit., pp. 168-9.

³ EAS, 30.7.1962, p.1.

The state of anxiety accompanied by an increasing sense of insecurity intensified the animosity of the KADU tribes towards KANU and the Kikuyu in particular. This was clearly expressed by the branch chairman of the Baluhya Political Union while addressing a meeting in Nakuru: "They are going to cause trouble in North and Elgon Nyanza. Some Kikuyu have been paid to kill Muihiro and Wabuge. We as a tribe have been ignored too long and must occupy seniorposts. We are prepared to resort to physical violence to achieve our rights." The meeting demanded the expulsion of all Kikuyu traders from North and Elgon Nyanza.¹ In September 1962 Murgor again threatened, on behalf of the Kalenjin, to fight in the forest. He demanded the clearance of the Kikuyu from the Rift Valley forests giving them a month's notice. If they did not clear out themselves, he warned the Kalenjin would do it.² An official report for October 1962 stated that "tribal tension continues to be a matter for concern in the District especially in the areas bordering the Kalenjin reserve."³

Strong tribal feelings were aroused in the latter part of 1962 by the presence in Kenya of the Regional Boundaries Commission whose task was to draw the boundaries of the proposed six regions. The mere working presence of the Commission gave KADU some reassurance regarding the future of regionalism. More importantly, the Commission let loose all the potential tribal chauvinism inherent in Kenya's complex tribal geography. Almost every fraction of a tribal group was invited, or took upon itself, to submit a memorandum and give evidence to the Commission. It seemed that Pandora's box had been opened. The result

¹ EAS, 10.9.1962, p.5.

² EAS, 25.9.1962, p.5.

³ KNA, NDMR October 1962, p.1.

was a verbal orgy in which many tribal groups demanded the fulfilment of their wildest expansionist dreams and explained why they did not want to live under the same roof as their neighbouring tribal group. Attempts were made to settle old scores and old rivalries were revived.¹ The RVP being the meeting place of so many tribal groups was subject to more than its fair share of tribal chauvinism.

The Nakuru branch of the Abaluhya Association, whilst not indulging in drawing maps, took the opportunity to settle their scores with the Kikuyu and the Luo. "Having looked around from evolving political manoeuvres in Kenya the Abaluhya reject the motives of some other tribes towards their aims and objectives, who have the intention of dominating the other tribes and establish such dominated tribes as their colonies or empires after the British rule."² The Kikuyu Union, on the other hand, was more specific in putting forward the case of the Kikuyu in the District who regarded themselves as an integral part of the area which their sweat had helped to develop.³

The Commission revealed that tribal tensions existed not only across the line dividing KANU and KADU. Ironically, KADU suffered from internal tensions more than KANU. In a way KADU, which was formed under the banner of protection of the minority tribes, was now paying the penalty for bringing parochialism to the foreground of national politics.

The Abaluhya Political Union sought to have a predominantly Abaluhya region which would also include some important parts of the RVP and other tribal areas.⁴ The Abaluhya also wanted Kitale, the central

¹ Sanger and J. Nottingham, op. cit., pp. 15-18, 21-3.

² R.A. Kaboka F.P., Memorandum to the Regional Boundaries Commission, Nakuru, by the Abaluhya Association Nakuru District, 29.8.1962.

³ KNU/Government House 3/73, Memorandum to the Regional Boundaries Commission by the Kikuyu Union, Nakuru, 24.8.1962.

⁴ KNU/Government House 3/73, Memorandum to the Regional Boundaries Commission by the Abaluhya Political Union, 30.8.1962.

town of Trans-Nzoia District, to be the capital of their region. The West Kalenjin strongly opposed this plan. Their rejection was made in very strong terms: "Behind our feelings lie deep grief of dispossession, oppression, persecution and even rejection from both the Europeans and the Bukusu.¹ ... These peoples have 'ganged up' against us and they would swallow up our land, - the Trans Nzoia - and would chew up the identity of our tribe." They rejected the plan to make Kitale the capital of the Abaluhya region evoking their historical rights to the area: "We, the Sataot, West Pokot and Marakwet have not forgotten our homeland."² Their position was contrary to that adopted by the Kalenjin Political Alliance with which the West Kalenjin Congress was associated.³ One wonders against whom were the West Kalenjin tribesmen sharpening their spears.

This is only one example of what ensued. It will be recalled that in August 1962 the LUM was formed in protest against "Kikuyu domination" and that in November that year Paul Ngei led the Kamba out of KANU. Kenya seemed to be on the verge of complete disintegration on the eve of its independence.

This process of apparent disintegration did not affect the political situation in Nakuru to any significant degree. Neither LUM nor APP had any effect on KANU. For KANU in Nakuru 1962, as seen earlier, was a year of recovery and increased unity. KANU's Nakuru branch similarly did not suffer from the tensions which began to shatter the party's united front. The Abaluhya and the Kalenjin were still firmly united. Most of the Kalenjin in Nakuru did not come from the groups which had territorial disputes with the Abaluhya. In general, in the

¹ An Abaluhya sub-tribe whose leader was M. Maliro, WLU's vice president.

² KNM, Government House 3/73, Memorandum to the Regional Boundaries Commission by the West Kalenjin Congress, undated.

³ KNM/Government House 3/73, Memorandum to the Regional Boundaries Commission by the Kalenjin Political Alliance, undated.

more militant atmosphere of urban politics, the parochialism which threatened KAU's unity was much less relevant. The main confrontation was still between KAU and KNU. KAU in Nakuru had acquired a momentum of its own, independent of its original source of inspiration, the rural reserves of the minority tribes. It had transcended the party's inherent parochialism to become primarily a political and ideological alternative to the centralism of KNU. It is in this light that one must see the claim that Nakuru was the backbone of the national KAU,¹ although most of the party's national leaders had their political base in the rural areas.

1963 opened with a violent inter-party clash. On 6 and 7 January 1963 supporters of the two parties clashed in the African Location and the police had to intervene to restore order. Three Ataluhya were taken to hospital and thirty people were arrested. The police again considerably increased their patrols to prevent further disturbances. Branch leaders of both parties were invited by the police and asked to co-operate in preventing flare-ups of political violence.² This was a prelude to the 1963 general election campaign.

The 1963 general election which was to be held in May was of great importance to the future of Kenya and to the parties concerned. The party to win the election was to lead the country into independence, with the principle of Ujijiko being disputed, it became increasingly clear that the interpretation of the winning party would prevail. On the whole, KNU looked the stronger contestant. The desertion of the Kamba had a sobering effect on the party. Kenyatta's authority within the party had at least been firmly established and the different factions

¹ Interview: E. Muleri, E. Imbiai, N. S. Muji.

² EAS, 8.1.1963, p.1; 9.1.1963, p.1.

within the party decided to declare a truce in order to stand up to the occasion. KAU, on the other hand, suffered from increasing strains and looked rather the less effective.¹ In Nakuru, KAU's electoral victory in 1961 was a direct result of KANU's disunity. It could not rely on this in 1963. Early in 1963 Kenyatta announced that there would be no independent KANU candidates in the forthcoming general election.²

On 10 February 1963 representatives of KANU divisions in Nakuru District met to choose the candidates for the three District constituencies. R. A. Oesko, a Luo, was chosen to stand for Nakuru Town seat, Fred Kabai, a Kikuyu, for Nakuru East and J. Oumu, a Maluhya, for Nakuru West. W. Njoro, Nakuru branch chairman, was chosen as the candidate for the Upper House.³

In the background of these nominations there was an interesting case of a tribal association's involvement in the political process. J. Cair Odera, the chairman of the Luo Union, indicated his desire to stand for the Nakuru Town seat. At the same time it was already known that R. A. Oesko would be put forward as the party's official candidate. A meeting of the Luo Union was convened to sort out the problem. Knowing that supporting J. Cair Odera would be a blatant anti-KANU act, and not wanting to jeopardize the chances of Oesko, the Luo, the meeting resolved to support the latter. The meeting also discussed the case of H. Oduor, another Luo, who wanted to contest the Nakuru West seat. It was decided that it would be unfair for Luos to contest two of the three District seats. Both Cair Odera and Oduor accepted the Luo

¹W.anger and J. Nottingham, op. cit., pp. 4-9.

²EA, 10.4.1963, p.1.

³EA, 11.12.1963, p.5.

Union's ruling.¹

The choice of Onoko was an astute political manoeuvre. For the Luo with their strong sense of tribal solidarity he was a tribesman. This kept the dissatisfied Luo in Nakuru in line. For the Kikuyu he was closely associated with Kenyatta whose private secretary he was. Lastly for the militant Kikuyu he was associated with Mau Mau and had served a long term in detention. The involvement of F. Kubai in Nakuru District politics was also a move to contain the Kikuyu militants. With independence approaching, it became clear that at least on the question of the European lands the Rift Valley militants were a potentially strong opposition. Kubai, who had been closely linked with Mau Mau, seemed an effective trouble-shooter.

When towards the end of 1962 KADU's leaders learnt of KANU's proposed candidates they showed no signs of discouragement. The branch secretary said: "We are not afraid of anybody, we believe that Nakuru gives support to KADU." KADU's confidence found expression when he continued: "We shall also decide whether or not people like Kenyatta will be allowed into the Rift Valley Region."² Later when no cracks were visible in KANU's front they realised that a firm Kikuyu-Luo alliance was probably invincible.³ At one stage a proposal was brought to KADU's committee to physically incapacitate Onoko close to the election day so that KANU would not be able to put forward a fresh candidate; it was rejected.⁴ KADU's obvious choice was the incumbent, W. Wabuge. At one stage Wabuge declined and a local delegation urged the national leadership to persuade him to stand again.⁵ KADU's position

¹ Interview: A.A.A. Macarding.

² EAS, 27.12.1962, p.5.

³ Interview: E. Muleri.

⁴ Interview: Z. Imbisi.

⁵ EAS, 4.4.1963, p.5.

in Nakuru seemed to improve when on 6 May 1963 R. A. Kubeka, now the APP candidate, responded to the election pact between KANU and APP by stepping down and calling on his supporters to vote for Wabuge. Wabuge declared, somewhat over-optimistically, that this would guarantee KADU's victory.¹ In reality, however, APP had a very small following in Nakuru. Even this support was far from guaranteed when about a week before the election the APP branch secretary resigned from the party calling on P. Ngei to lead the Kamba tribe back to KANU. With a good sense of political realism he added: "All people of Kenya should have a stable Government and the biggest tribes of Kenya should take part in the Government. The APP is depriving the Wakamba of this right."²

The election campaign was, on the whole, a peaceful one, partly due to police strictness. In order to ease the tension no processions, no party uniforms, or party dances were allowed in the town.³

The election results were as follows: R. A. Onoko - 7,536; W. Wabuge - 4,905; R. A. Kubeka - 20.⁴ KANU's victory was hardly surprising taking into consideration that the Kikuyu and Luo alone formed about two-thirds of Nakuru's African population. Compared with the 1961 general election, however, KADU's achievement was also very impressive. Not only did they more than double their total vote, but they also increased their proportion from about 30% to about 40%. This was remarkable considering that in the Abaluhya reserve KANU achieved considerable successes.⁵ This was another proof that the Abaluhya tribesmen in Nakuru did not model their political behaviour on the reserve.

¹ EAS, 7.5.1963, p.5.

² EAS, 22.5.1963, p.5.

³ EAS, 20.4.1963, p.1. KNU/D.O/Nku/dep.2/175, D.O. to KANU, Nakuru, 7.5.1963.

⁴ EAS, 28.5.1963, p.1.

⁵ Sanger and J. Nottingham, op.cit., p.9.

More than two hundred Kikuyu and Luo celebrated KANU's victory and the achievement of Kenya's internal self-government on 1 June 1963 by storming the African Location's streets shouting "we want the Aluhya". Doors of houses belonging to KADU supporters were smashed open and several occupants were injured. The police had again to call in the riot-squad.¹ Later in June Kenyatta made his first official visit to Nakuru. His message was conciliatory: "Every one in Kenya must forget the differences of the past and work together to build a nation."²

The political developments of the months following the election have to be seen in relation to the third Lancaster House Conference which was to be held in September 1963. There the last battle regarding the constitution of independent Kenya was to be fought out between KANU and KADU.

Less than a fortnight had elapsed after election day when Mboya declared that "Regionalism is buried".³ Such statements caused alarm and intensified the apprehensions in KADU quarters. At a rally held in Nakuru on 20 July 1963 to celebrate Majimbo Day B.T. rep Moi, the president of the Rift Valley Regional Assembly, said that if KANU ignored Majimbo, KADU would demand complete autonomy for the region. Ngala warned Kenyatta that if he allowed himself to be swayed by Mboya's views he would find himself in "serious trouble".⁴ The apprehensions of KADU and the Kalenjin in particular further grew as a result of a fresh influx of Kikuyu into the Rift Valley which began soon after Kenyatta's government took office. The threat of Kikuyu expansion into

¹ EAS, 3.6.1963, p.1; 7.6.1963, p.1.

² EAS, 24.6.1963, p.1.

³ C. Sanger and J. Nottingham, op. cit., p.18.

⁴ EAS, 22.7.1963, p.5.

areas claimed by the Kalenjin seemed imminent and the intention to abolish the Majimbo constitution was seen as just a preliminary measure to that end. The land and the constitutional issues became interrelated partly because KADU leaders saw it as an effective means for securing the Kalenjin's support. KADU leaders seemed determined to resort to any means in their attempt to salvage Majimbo. Many wild speeches and statements were made in the months preceding the constitutional conference. There was constant reference to an approaching civil war, to the blocking of the Rift Valley roads to stop the Kikuyu influx, and to the expulsion of the Kikuyu and Luo from the Rift Valley Region. Some actions were also taken. Kalenjin tribesmen came down from their reserve establishing themselves as illegal squatters in the settled areas of the Rift Valley. One of these areas was the Menengai Hill bordering Nakuru. Their efforts were concentrated on Nakuru District. KADU officials were involved in these operations.¹

A disagreement between KADU's Nakuru branch and the party's national leadership, as well as subsequent developments suggest, however, that KADU leaders did not really mean business. Early in July 1963 some of KADU's national leaders stated that the party's youth wing should be run down. This plan was strongly opposed by Nakuru branch officials who threatened to close down the party offices in the District if it went through. They put forward a counter plan to increase the size of the branch's youth wing making it "as big a force as possible". The branch's statement explained: "We need as big a force as possible to serve our people in the District and the Region as well." D.T. Arap Moi representing the national headquarters was forced to concede.² The weakening of the party's most effective striking force at a time when they were launching their "warlike" campaign, seemed strange to

¹ KMA/PO 1/327, Review of the security situation in the Rift Valley Region, 17.9.1963, pp. 1-6; 11.9.1963, pp. 1-6.

² East, 3.7.1963, p.5.

to say the least. KADU's national leaders were probably already planning their retreat and they did not want their hands to be forced by party militants who might take their exhortations seriously. Nakuru branch leaders were not part of the party national leadership and did not have their national political careers to consider. For them the political future was in the Rift Valley Region and it depended wholly on the implementation of the regional constitution. In the light of this one can assess the evidence that KADU Nakuru branch remained faithful to the party and its declared policies to the end.¹

After the third Lancaster House Conference, when it became clear that the future was with KANU, and that Majimbo was a lost case, KADU national leaders started to cross the floor. Ironically, one of the first was W. Murgor who had threatened to blow his whistle. M.J. Kerony from Mandi followed suit and T. Tevet from Kipsigis declared himself independent.² Early in December 1963 KADU's Whip, E.L. Kanakhala, the Mulukya, joined KANU calling for the remaining KADU supporters to do the same. His stated reason was that he would be in a better position to help his people from within the Government.³ A pattern was set for the future internal political relations in Kenya, by which political opposition would be integrated rather than eliminated whenever it was possible. KADU was evidently in a process of disintegration. Nakuru branch, in spite of the desertions at the top, remained apparently steadfast and determined to usher the party into independent Kenya.

¹ Interview: E. Maleri, E. Irbisi.

² EAS, 23.11.1963, p.5.

³ EAS, 2.12.1963, p.1.

But even the loyal local branch seems to have lost its impetus. In the municipal elections held in October 1963 KANU won seventeen of the eighteen seats, the remaining one being independent.¹ It was not the results but the KADU branch's performance on the eve of the election which indicated at least a temporary decline. KADU had promised to put up a strong fight to win the municipal council of the Region's capital. When nominations closed, however, only one official KADU candidate had been registered. KADU asked its supporters to vote for a certain number of independent candidates, but most of these denied any party affiliation.²

It was symbolic and somewhat ironical that it was M. Mutatai, one of the founders of KADU in Makuru, now chairman of KANU's Makuru division, who declared after the municipal election that "the results show beyond doubt that Makuru is a KANU town".³ This was indeed the truth.

¹ EAS, 8.10.1963, p.1.

² EAS, 9.9.1963, p.5.

³ EAS, 8.10.1963, p.1.

Appendix IMembership in Abalukya Tribal AssociationsAbalukya Association

1957 - 35; 1958 - 79; 1960 - 69; 1962 - 95; 1963 - 390.

Locational associationsMorwa Burial Aid Society

1958 - 145; 1959 - 89; 1960 - 75; 1961 - 10; 1962 - 10.

Buteetao Progressive Union

1960 - 50; 1961 - 7; 1962 - 81.

Abemurachi Union

1958 - 15; 1959 - 45; 1960 - 20; 1961 - 50; 1962 - 41;

1963 - 30.

Idakho Progressive Society

1961 - 29; 1962 - 35.

Kisa Union

1959 - No members; 1960 - 10; 1961 - 46; 1962 - 65;

1963 - 70.

Wansa Union

1957 - 27; 1959 - 47; 1960 - 66; 1961 - 75; 1962 - 100.

Sasia Union

1957 - 183; 1959 - 193; 1960 - 126; 1961 - 40; 1962 - 15;

1963 - 23.

Tiriki Ndalo Association

1958 - 88; 1959 - 140; 1960 - 100; 1961 - 60; 1962 - 110;

1963 - 60.

Bunyula Society

1954 - 26; 1956 - 71; 1958 - 120; 1959 - 123; 1961 - 50;

1962 - 50.

Kakameza Society

1958 - 74; 1959 - 80; 1960 - 50; 1961 - 50; 1962 - 40;
1963 - 23.

Banyore Union

1954 - 150; 1956 - 150; 1957 - 275; 1959 - 350; 1960 - 420;
1962 - 400; 1963 - 150.

Clan AssociationsBanyore Union - locational associationsBushanda Society

1960 - 25; 1961 - 20; 1962 - 15; 1963 - 10.

Kakameza Mukose Union

1961 - 15; 1962 - 18; 1963 - 18. 1961 - 27; 1962 - 25

Abarundi Brotherhood Society

1961 - 30; 1962 - 50; 1963 - 40.

Abaciene Union

1961 - 20; 1962 - 84; 1963 - 96.

Abacietai Fellowship

1958 - 50; 1959 - 60; 1960 - 60; 1961 - 55; 1962 - 50;
1963 - 40.

Ng'andu Brotherhood Society

1961 - 30; 1962 - 58; 1963 - 46.

Bushanda Society

1960 - 12; 1961 - 12; 1962 - 13; 1963 - 14.

Annex IIMembership - Luo tribal associationLuo Union

1959 - 234; 1960 - 234; 1961 - 300; 1962 - 250; 1963 - 400.

Local associationsUgenya Union

1958 - 175; 1959 - 210; 1961 - 220; 1962 - 239; 1963 - 140.

Alago Bugar Union

1957 - 81; 1958 - 95; 1959 - 104; 1960 - 13; 1961 - 29;
1962 - 39; 1963 - 29.

East and West Kapo

1957 - 64; 1958 - 64; 1960 - 84; 1961 - 23; 1962 - 25;
1963 - 22.

Gen Rabaya Union

1957 - 85; 1958 - 374; 1959 - 412; 1960 - 422; 1961 - 310;
1962 - 330; 1963 - 300.

Karschorvo Union

1959 - 45; 1960 - 19; 1961 - 28; 1962 - 60; 1963 - 75.

Asembo Union

1959 - 124; 1960 - 80; 1961 - 23; 1962 - 25; 1963 - 25.

Uyoma Union

1958 - None; 1959 - 30; 1960 - 22; 1961 - 19; 1962 - 20;
1963 - 20.

Kafulu Union

1959 - 10; 1960 - 12; 1962 - 13; 1963 - 14.

Clan AssociationsUwanya Union - locational associationBoro and Family Association

1960 - 56; 1961 - 46; 1962 - 50; 1963 - 46.

Nyamaot Union

1963 - 20.

Rager Union

1959 - 80; 1960 - 99; 1961 - 109; 1962 - 120; 1963 - 124.

Alero Ragar Union - locational associationKato Union

1958 - 40; 1959 - 41; 1960 - 49; 1961 - 40.

Alero Ragar - Mur Branch

1958 - 24; 1959 - 31; 1961 - 41.

Alero Ragar - Izanga sub-branch

1959 - 50; 1960 - 23; 1961 - 23; 1962 - 24; 1963 - 21.

Kalkada Association

1959 - 24; 1960 - 25; 1962 - 18.

Alero Ragar - Kauragi sub-branch

1959 - 15; 1960 - 15; 1961 - 20; 1963 - 15.

Alero Ragar - Karaul sub-branch

1958 - 10; 1959 - 16; 1960 - 18; 1961 - 16; 1962 - 18.

Alero Ragar - Kaluo sub-branch

1959 - 28; 1960 - 33; 1961 - 22; 1962 - 23; 1963 - 28.

Nyakach Union - locational associationKnboho Young and Old People Association

1957 - 18; 1958 - 24; 1959 - 26; 1961 - 28.

Agoro Nyandu Association

1961 - 20; 1962 - 19; 1963 - 11.

Appendix III

East and West Kano - locational association

Kater Kogole 1947 (Tables 13 and 14); 1948 (Tables 1 and 2)

1963 - 23. Analysis of districts registered as healthy or

SI by ticket pay. Showing ratio by district

Kisumu

(Kisumu Urban) Non-agriculture (including some towns)

Kisumu Urban - (no parent locational association existing)

1960 - 20; 1961 - 20; 1962 - 20; 1963 - 12.

Year	Districts, No. Health, Hospital	Average Ticket Value
1947	2,123	1,080
1948	2,424	1,277

Foreign Labour Department Annual Report - Abstracts to
Employment - Tribal Distribution of Labor Force

within Province. Kenya Govt. 1952 - p.104 1957 -
p.104 1958 - p.104 1959 - p.104 1960 - p.104
1961 - p.104

Year	Districts		Average Ticket Value
	No.	Health, Hospital Institutions	
1947	2,123 (44.7%)		1,080 (12.7%)
1948	20,265 (69.1%)		1,281 (13.8%)
1957	8,117 (52.7%)		1,945 (24.7%)
1958	3,373 (24.5%)	3,479 (25.8%)	1,942 (15.7%)
1959	3,418 (25.5%)	3,942 (28.8%)	2,085 (19.0%)
1960	2,228 (26.7%)	3,275 (31.7%)	2,728 (16.0%)

Appendix III

Colony and Protectorate of Kenya - African Labour
Census, 1947 (tables 13 and 15); 1948 (tables 3 and
 12). Analysis of Africans Employed on Monthly or
 30 day ticket pay. Showing tribe by district
 (Makuru Town) Non-Agriculture (including men, women
 and juveniles).

Year	Lavirondo, Luo, Kimi, Marigoli	Kikuyu Embu, Meru
1947	5,165	1,685
1948	7,026	1,772

Kenya Labour Department Annual Report - Africans in
 Employment; Tribal Distribution of Adult Males
 within Provinces. Makuru Town. 1956 - p.35; 1957 -
 p.35; 1958 - p.33; 1959 - p.35; 1960 - p.34;
 1961 - p.33.

Year	Itanza tribes		
	Luo	Kimi, Marigoli Abalukya	Kikuyu Embu Meru
1954	8,408 (66.8%)		1,599 (12.7%)
1956	10,566 (64.1%)		2,281 (13.8%)
1957	9,117 (68.7%)		1,948 (14.7%)
1958	3,573 (36.3%)	3,039 (30.9%)	1,542 (15.7%)
1959	3,404 (29.5%)	3,442 (29.8%)	2,385 (20.6%)
1960	2,801 (26.7%)	3,325 (31.7%)	2,728 (26%)

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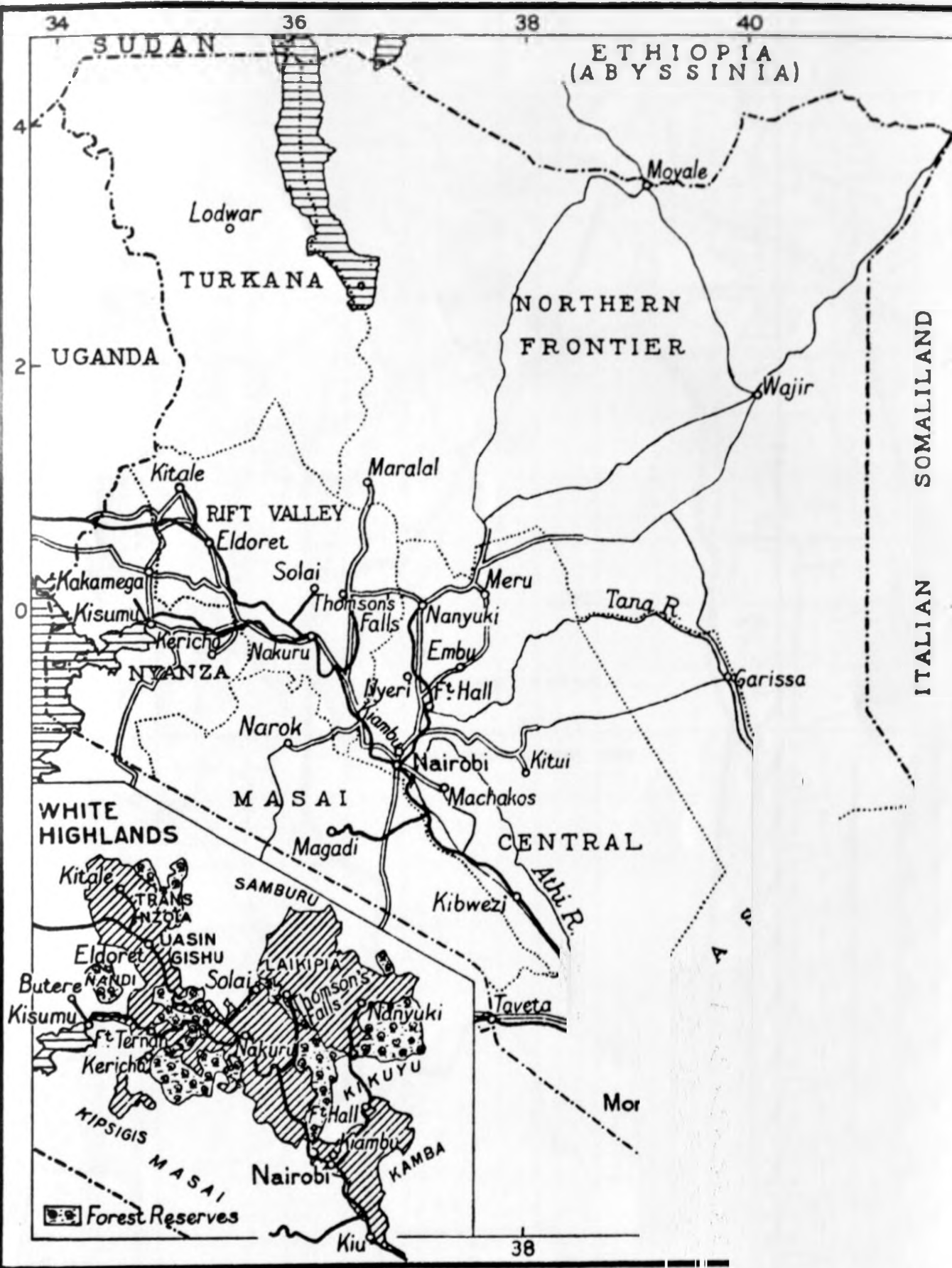
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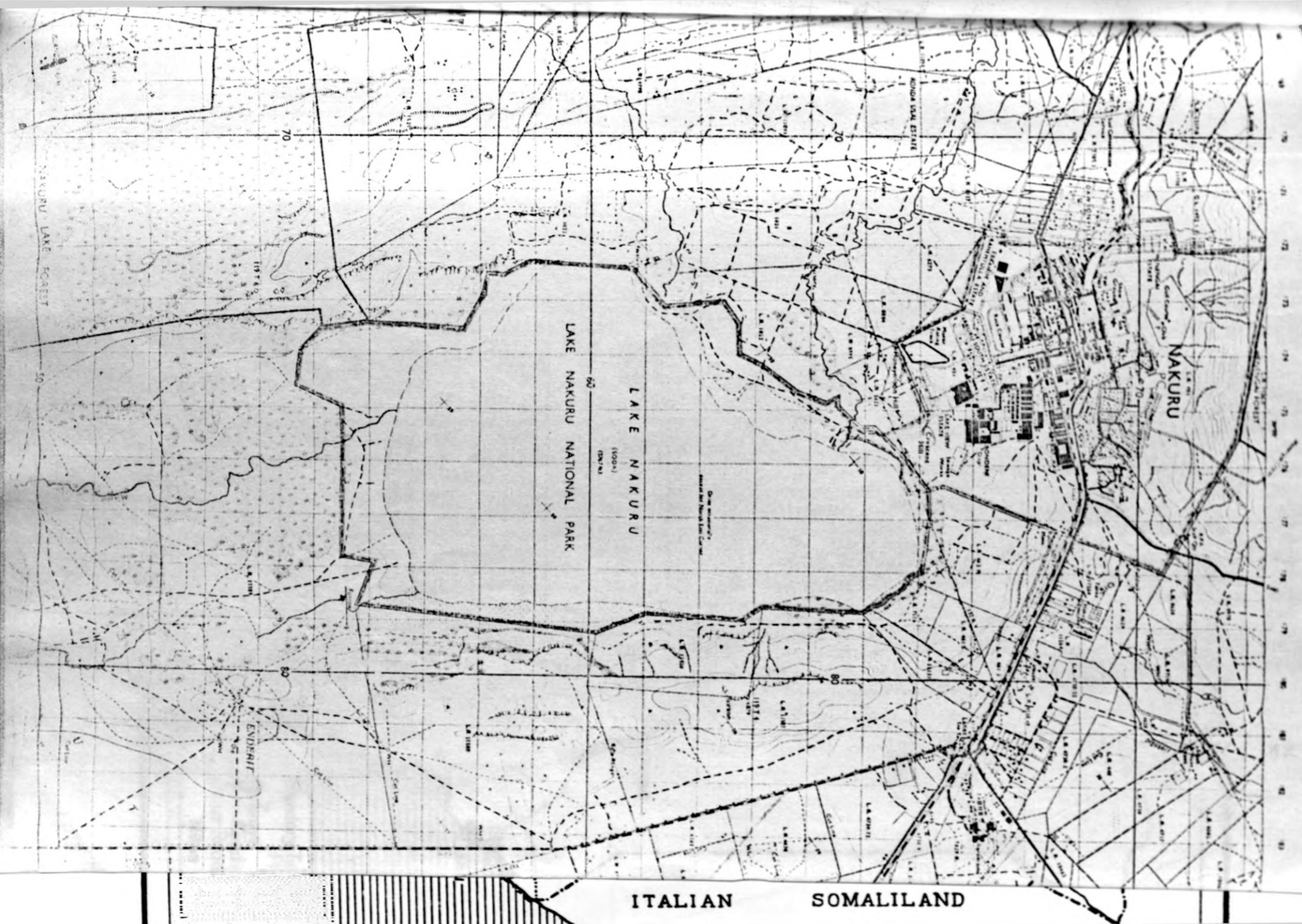
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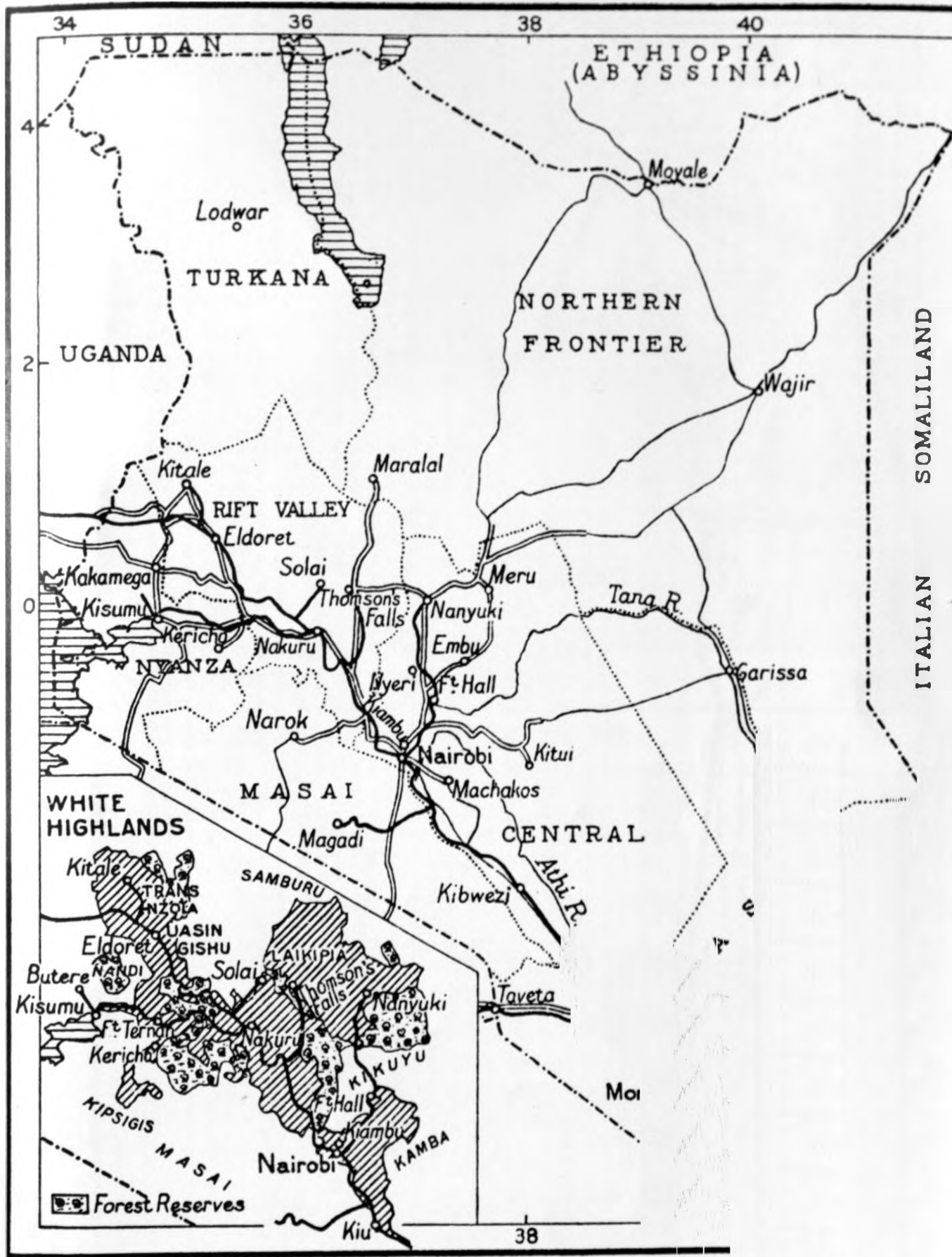
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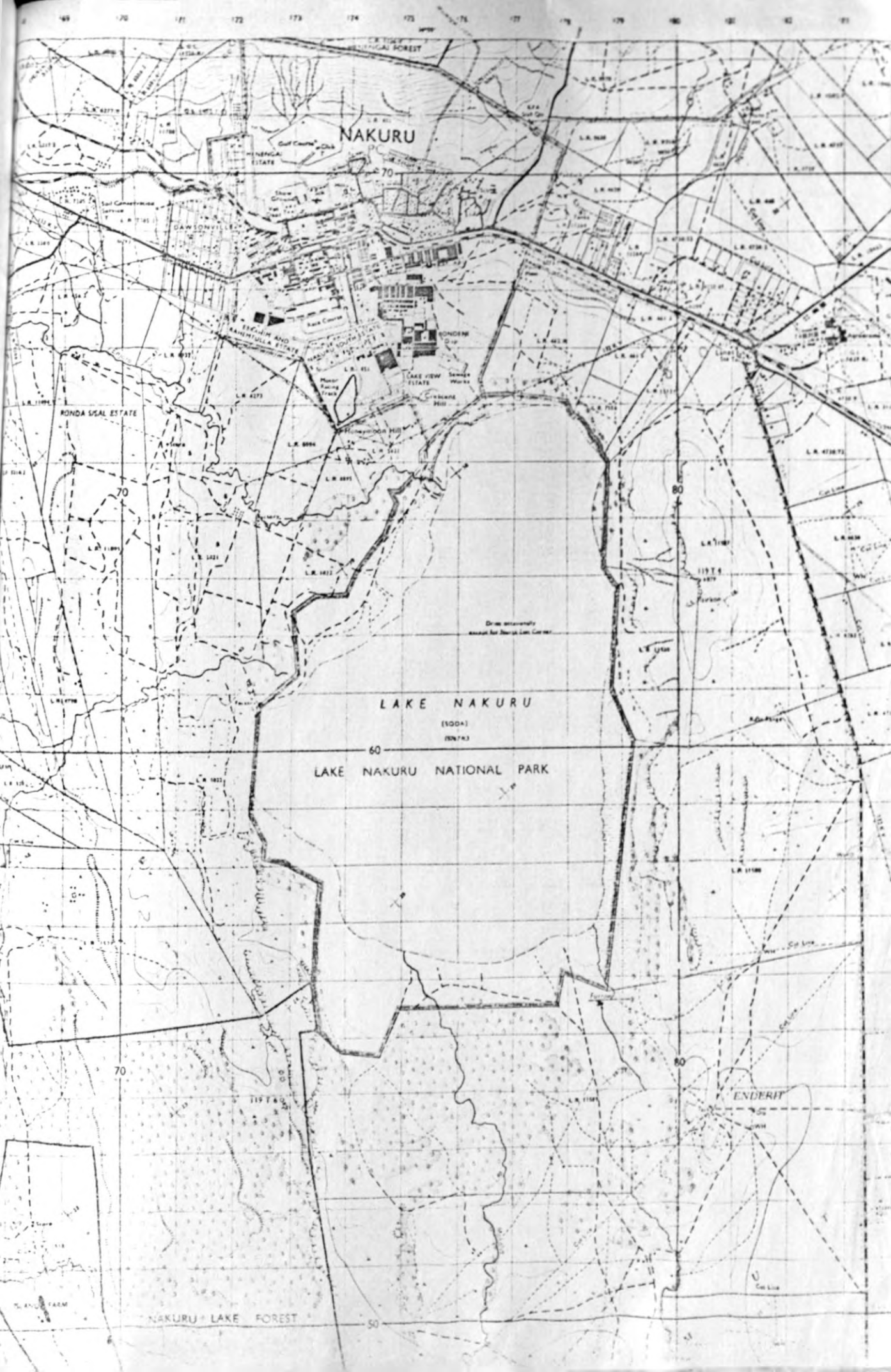
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ITALIAN SOMALILAND





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ENDERBY

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