Chapter Two

I

In the mid-1920s, the British colonial officer Hugh Hignell was charged with the task of establishing a 'tribal' authority amongst the Gogo of central Tanganyika, part of the wider British effort to bring indirect rule to their recently acquired territory. After investigation, however, Hignell was forced to report on the parochial nature of political community in this area. He doubted, he wrote, that 'any outline of the composition of the Gogo tribe or any exposition of its original constitution' could be found or given.[1] Modern scholars, indeed, would generally endorse his observation as being broadly characteristic of the region in the period immediately prior to European colonisation. And yet, a generation later the fate of ethnic and indeed racial communities was the central topic of public argument across East Africa. This chapter outlines the processes by which this came to be in the period between the early 1940s and the mid-1950s. It traces how in a double move, against the background of a deep sense of crisis and disruption that characterised the 'time of strangers', thinkers across East Africa, creatively engaging the structures of the colonial state, first imagined historically novel communities and developed historically novel forms of consciousness, as they sought to impose order on the world that confronted them, and then sought to defend these communities from the dangers of the disruption against which they were brought into being. And it outlines how, as the 1940s progressed, from this common starting point, a

[1] Peterson, 'Morality Plays', pp.988-9.

divergence in the imagination of community in Kenya and Tanganyika developed, shaped by African thinkers against the background of the two territories' differing geographical patterns of colonialism.

II

While excavating pre-colonial imaginations of community is an extremely difficult task, sources extremely scarce, research (carried out unevenly across the region) suggests that a few generalisations can be made.[2] In central Kenya, investigation has shown that in the nineteenth century community was built primarily upon localities and neighbourhoods. According to Charles Ambler, these communities were underpinned by ideals of 'self-reliance' and 'self-sufficiency', and the world beyond their limited confines was regarded with suspicion, fear and often ignorance.[3] Imagination of connection was not limited to these groups, however. In Embu, but not in other areas of what was to become central Kenya, a relatively high density of population facilitated the emergence of a more developed sense of collective identity when compared to neighbouring areas.[4] More generally, cultures tied to occupation or economic specialisation, the basis of moral economies, were acknowledged and felt, and farmers, pastoralists and hunters, valorising their mode of production, differentiated themselves from each other.[5] There is some evidence, moreover, that a degree of significance was attached to broad linguistic divisions.[6] But, while many of the labels which marked the colonial period – Kikuyu, Embu and Meru – existed in the nineteenth century, often as a way of speaking about outsiders, these groups and their membership were fuzzy and imprecise, and networks of mutual support stretched across cultural zones (in the process spreading cultural forms), an insurance against ecological disaster.[7]

The story elsewhere was similar. To the south-east in the Taita Hills, waves of migrants between the late seventeenth and nineteenth centuries established lineage groups within

[2] On the decline of pre-colonial research, see R. Reid, 'Past and Presentism: The 'Precolonial' and the Foreshortening of African History', *Journal of African History*, Vol.52, No.2, (2011), pp.135-55.
[3] Ambler, *Kenyan Communities*, p.31. See also Lonsdale, 'Moral Economy', p.347.
[4] Ambler, *Kenyan Communities*, p.44.
[5] T. Spear, 'Introduction' in T. Spear and R. Waller, (eds.), *Being Masai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (London, 1993), p.2. Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', p.137. Waller, 'Pastoral Poverty', p.25.
[6] Ambler, *Kenyan Communities*, pp.33-5.
[7] Ambler, *Kenyan Communities*, pp.33-4. Berman, 'Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State', pp.310-11. Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', pp.136-7. Kershaw, *Mau Mau*, p.21.

somewhat bigger neighbourhoods, part of an effort to maximise their access to the area's diverse ecology, and so minimise their exposure to crop failure, across the hills. While these groups came to speak mutually recognisable dialects, and over time developed cultural links, 'felt' community, nonetheless, did not extend beyond these parochial groups, which were, indeed, often 'hostile' to each other.[8] And similarly, further south on Kilimanjaro, cultural similarities existed across the mountain, and the term 'Chagga', or variations of it, was used in the nineteenth century by visitors to describe the place and to a lesser extent the population, but politics, this time organised under chiefs, was much smaller than this area, and these cultural similarities do not seem to have been invested with any particular significance.[9] Overall, there is little in this picture to suggest that while cultural and linguistic similarities existed and were acknowledged to exist, that these cultures were politicised.[10] What is missing from this picture is the sense of the collective destiny that came to characterise thinking about community in the colonial period.[11]

Profound changes took place in the imagination of community in the face of the significant sense of social crisis generated by the intrusions of colonialism, a sense which, as we have seen, developed across the inter-war period, but which gained a great deal of momentum in the 1940s. Confronted by a world which often seemed wild, African thinkers sought to first understand and then to shape it, to call forth order from chaos, to conjure an image of social harmony in a time of social conflict.[12] It was in this effort that new visions of community were developed - an almost complete reversal of the fears of colonial officials and the expectations of modernisation theorists that economic change would destroy African 'tribal' communities.[13] As we shall see, these

[8] Bravman, *Making Ethnic Ways*, Ch.1.
[9] F. Mkenda, 'Building National Unity in Sub-Saharan Africa', (Oxford Univ. DPhil Thesis, 2010), pp.82-110. Hunter, 'Languages', Ch.1.
[10] Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', p.131.
[11] See e.g. A. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1997), p.158.
[12] As others have done in other places and at other times, on which see R. Williams, *Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church* (London, 2005), pp.5-6.
[13] See Lonsdale, 'KAU's Cultures', p.115. Contrast with, e.g., Nottingham and Rosberg, *Myth*, p.217.

communities took a number of forms. In the first instance, however, they were imagined to be ethnic.

The British belief that the Africa they entered was populated by self-contained tribes was wrong: their policy of indirect rule did not reflect the lived reality of pre-colonial African lives. It did, however, influence the development of the imagination of a world consisting of distinct and discrete ethnic groups. Colonial state-building did not simply create 'identities' or identity 'boxes' to be filled by African intellectual effort, however. It, rather, is best understood as acting as a stimulus to imagination, directing attention to a particular level, marking the beginning of a *process* of the ethnicization of African society, and the spread of the image of a world consisting of tightly bonded communities with a shared historical destiny, moving through historical time.[14]

This imagination, and the particular understanding of the world it entailed, was further stimulated by three planes of mutually reinforcing comparison. The first was biblical. The nineteenth and twentieth century Protestant missionary was, 'above all, a Bible man', intent on spreading the Word, and across the continent the Bible was typically the first printed book. [15] In East Africa, biblical translations were produced first in Swahili, which remained the most common medium of translation in Tanganyika across the colonial period, and then, in Kenya in particular, in the vernacular.[16] In the Old Testament, the key global primer to 'nationhood', African intellectuals found (as others had before them) a model of 'God's people', the nation of Israel, a template of divine order.[17]

The direct example of God's chosen people was supplemented by the complementary imaginations of sub-imperial actors. British Protestant evangelicals had themselves 'mined the Old Testament', and had long imagined the British as a 'covenant people', a modern Israel, an image

[14] I take this formula from Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp.25-6.
[15] Hastings, *Nationhood*, pp.151-2. Iliffe, *Africans*, p.224.
[16] Lonsdale, 'Moral Economy', p.369. Illiffe, *Modern History*, p.361.
[17] Hastings, *Nationhood*, especially Ch.1. Lonsdale, 'Anti-Colonial Nationalism', p.320.

they nurtured in their mission schools.[18] For African thinkers, who contrasted their felt sense of social crisis and what they widely referred to as their 'backwardness' with the apparent success of their rulers, this understanding of the British in particular came to stand as a further model.[19] A Kikuyu writer, for example, demanded that 'Africans cultivate good examples from Europeans and Indians', and in particular develop the sense of unity and common destiny that was marked by their caring for the physically disabled members of their community.[20] Another gave 'the example of the English people who all work together for the common cause' as being worthy of imitation.[21] And a correspondent asked in the Luo-language *Ramogi* that people take the example of 'the Whites' as both a group who were conscious of their common destiny and who acted upon this consciousness. While African thinkers were far from uncritical about the absent-minded imitation of 'western' ideas, the image of a world consisting of bonded and bounded communities was, nonetheless, given further impetus by the example of their ruler's apparent success.

These processes, and this image, were, finally, and most importantly, reinforced in a peculiarly ethnic way by comparison between African communities, both within and, importantly, across colonially defined territories, a process in which, the model of the nation, became unmoored from its biblical origin. Faced by a sense of disorder, African thinkers' imagination of proper social order was influenced by the example of other African groups, spiced in certain localities, for example in the Gusii hills or parts of the Rift Valley, by competition with self-defining others for access to material resources.[22] The men of the Haya Union, for example, confronting the intensifying social crisis of the 1940s, made efforts to study the example of the Luo Union and Luo ethnicity as they

[18] R. Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act: Preaching Against Reform, 1831-2', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.53, No.2, (2014), p.382, p.394. Vail, 'Introduction', p.12.
[19] On 'backwardness' see e.g. *East African Standard*, Letter Booker. W. Okenno, 26th September 1947, p.12. KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 16th May 1947. KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Gikuyu*, 24th February 1948. BNA, FCO 141/6515, (Kenya: Ukamba Members Association and Akamba Union; Activities and Membership, 1939-54), Director of Intelligence and Security to the Chief Native Commissioner, 3rd October 1952. On 'pirating', see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
[20] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 1st November 1948.
[21] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 31st January 1949.
[22] On comparison see Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*. On local competition, see Maxon, *Conflict and Accommodation*, pp.142-5 and Lynch, *I Say to You*, pp.54-6.

sought to establish social harmony.[23] The Luyia, asserted a letter writer in *Omuluyia*, must 'work together for the common good like people of other nations', in this case a reference to the region's other ethnic groups as much as the nations of more distant parts.[24] And the Gusii people, likewise, were urged by a writer in *Baraza* to unite 'like other tribes'.[25]

Under the influence of these models, and in this comparative context, African thinkers were encouraged to imagine a world populated by self-contained 'tribal' groups, groups which were not confined by colonial boundaries, but came, in places, to step across them - notably in the cases of the Mijikenda, the Kalenjin and the Luyia, but also in arguments in Kenya's Central Province about the relationship between the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru, and an on-going series of debates in the Tanganyikan press over the proper relationship between the 'descendants of Seuta', the Wazigua, Wasambaa and Wakilindi - as African and European (often missionary) 'cultural entrepreneurs' worked over (and then re-worked) precolonial links and forms, defining particular groups and in the process calling them into existence.[26]

Visions of ethnic community developed slowly and unevenly across the region. Generally, the pattern of these developments (while warranting a good deal more research) owed much to the economic geography of colonialism. In Kenya's Central Province, where disruption was felt early, new readers outlined the image of a tribe in the 1920s.[27]An emphasis on ethnically defined community similarly developed amongst the Chagga in the same decade as coffee spread with attendant disruption.[28] In other areas, where disruption came later, so too did assertions of ethnic belonging. At the beginning of the 1930s, for example, the people of Kenya's most westerly province had been called 'Kavirondo' by their colonial masters; a decade and a half later, a number of self-

[23] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p.25, p.153.
[24] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Omuluyia*, 1st January 1947.
[25] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 15th February 1947.
[26] See Lynch, *I Say to You*, Ch.1. MacArthur, 'Making and Unmaking of African Languages'. Willis and Gona, 'Tradition, Tribe and State'. Lonsdale, 'Moral Economy', p.348. KNA, PC/Cent/2/1/13, (Kiambu Local Native Council, 9th February 1944-27th July 1950), Minutes of a Meeting of the Kiambu Local Native Council, 22nd-24th October 1947, pp.7-8. E.g. *Mambo Leo*, February 1945, p.22, March 1946, p.25, September 1946, p.97, October 1946, p.109, October 1947, p.119.
[27] Lonsdale, 'Moral Economy', p.371.
[28] Hunter, 'Languages', Ch.1.

conscious communities were noisily making their existence known. In the northern district, African politicians, shocked by discovery of gold around Kakamega in 1930 and the resulting prospect of the invasion of white prospectors, made the novel claim to be a single, although as yet unnamed, ethnic group.[29] In the 1940s, as the pulse of colonialism quickened, cultural entrepreneurs gave the group a name and made efforts to define it.[30] Similarly, amongst their southern neighbours, as East Africa's towns began to boom and migration increased with the impact of the Second World War, cultural entrepreneurs, in an area where welfare organisations had not previously been organised on ethnic lines, named themselves 'Luo' and brought the Luo Union to prominence.[31] Against a background of disruption and comparison – the material and the discursive - the 1940s were characterised across the region by the emergence of myriad ethnic associations - the Sukuma Union, the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union (KCCU), and the Kisii Union amongst others - inviting 'their' people to think of themselves as a single group, and, perhaps most strikingly, in the emergence of previously unheard names and assertions of common destiny, notably the Kalenjin and Mijikenda (along with supportive ethnic unions) which first made their appearance in that decade.[32]

Drawing on the models set out above, thinkers held that these ethnic communities were natural, indeed divine, historical groups, bound to particular territories, to which people were involuntarily tied, and involuntarily obligated, by virtue of descent. Outlining this vision, Jomo Kenyatta, future president of Kenya, told in *Facing Mount Kenya* (a story unheard before the 1930s) how Mogai, 'the divider of the universe' had bestowed upon the man Gikuyu a territory which he was tasked with peopling.[33] The divinely created group was imagined to precede the individual: before there were men and women to be called Kikuyu, the group had been called into existence

[29] MacArthur, 'Making and Unmaking of African Languages', p.161.
[30] MacArthur, 'Making and Unmaking of African Languages', pp.162-72.
[31] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, pp.133-4. Carotenuto, 'Riwruok E Teko', pp.56-7.
[32] Davidson, *Black Man's Burden*, pp.101-2. White, *Comforts*, pp.190-3. Iliffe, *Modern History*, pp.457-8. Hunter, 'Languages', p.148. R. Maxon, 'A Kenyan Petit Bourgeoisie Enters Local Politics: The Kisii Union, 1945-1949', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol.19, No.3, (1986), pp.451-462. Lynch, *I Say to You*, Ch.1. Willis and Gona, 'Tradition, Tribe and State', pp.452-3.
[33] J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (New York, 1965), p.10. J. Lonsdale, 'Contests of Time: Kikuyu Historiography Old and New', in A. Harneir-Sievers, (ed.), *A Place in the World: New Local Historiographies from Africa and South-Asia* (Leiden, 2002), pp.201-54.

and a country allocated to them. Man, it followed, was everywhere born chained, and the community held to be prior to the individual, a sense conveyed by the Luo Union which asked its members to declare that 'our country will mean more to me than all the wealth which I may get during my lifetime.'[34] To love one's country was, in Henry Muoria's words, therefore merely to 'fulfil God's law'.[35]

H.M. Mtengeti worked from the same assumption when he complained in *Mambo Leo* about a fellow Chagga who (while later acknowledging his error) denied in conversation with the writer his true ethnic origin. Scandalised by the denial, Mtengeti insisted that ethnic groups had to be honoured and acknowledged, whatever their particular characteristics: they could not simply be abandoned in favour of an apparently more appealing or more prestigious identity. 'Yours is yours even if it is bad', he admonished his readers. 'Almighty God' had given every man his 'tribe', which he was obliged to respect whether or not it had a 'good reputation'.[36] Men and women, as we shall see, had to work to improve the reputation of the group, not abandon it because ethnic others held it in low esteem. Simeon Muya likewise castigated those people 'who hide their tribe' for having no 'thoughts on their life, except to eat and put on clothes', the desire merely to selfishly satisfy their own base appetites. Man was born into obligations which he had to meet whether or not it was immediately convenient. 'Obliterating tribe' he warned, meant 'obliterating the tribal bonds which were given by our Creator', an act of blasphemous presumption.[37]

Born in dangerous times, the new communities themselves became the central object of public debate. From the confusion of social crisis, patriots wanted to see the emergence of civil, reputable and prosperous communities. Public debate, it followed, was structured around their efforts to first defend their communities and their honourable histories, and then to further them; to wrestle from the jaws of the modern world a good collective life. 'The work of our generation', wrote Henry Muoria, giving voice to this ambition, 'is to try to show the path forward, and the staff

[34] BNA, FCO 141/6712, Application for Membership, p.1.
[35] H. Muoria, *I, the Gikuyu and the White Fury* (Nairobi, 1994), p.126, p.131.
[36] *Mambo Leo*, Letter H.M. Mtengeti, August 1946, p.85.
[37] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Simeon Muya, August 1946, pp.85-6.

with which to work', a task embraced enthusiastically by ethnic unions, the writers of histories, journalists and correspondents in the local press. Argument, in turn, hardened identity.[38]

Across the region, ethnic patriots identified external obstacles which they held impeded these communities. Amongst the Kalenjin in the Rift Valley, for example, there was by the 1940s an important fear of collective marginalisation in the face of incoming, land hungry, and determinedly self-identifying Kikuyu.[39] On the Kenyan coast, petitioners complained to the East African Royal Commission that 'treacheries [sic] were utilised', implicitly by 'Arab' incomers, 'to deceive those poor inhabitants by unscrupolus [sic] land speculators to drive thme [sic] out of their birthright', depriving the indigenous people of the resource which underpinned their material and cultural life.[40] More often, it was the inequities of British colonialism which were held to place barriers to the achievement of progress, as in the case of a Kamba writer who in 1947 criticised the 'Government for the lack of help given to the Kamba who had always been a loyal tribe.' This neglect, he argued, had stunted their progress. He asked, therefore, that the government rectify this, and give 'the settled areas of Machakos' to the Kamba, as well as 'grazing rights on the other side of the railway.'[41] And faced by such difficulties, the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union recognised the need to engage the colonial power in order to ensure that the needs of the Chagga were met. The organisation's 'main desire', therefore, 'was to procure a "speaker" for the Chagga nation and to represent the wishes of the common people to the higher authority.'[42]

External competition and the inequities of colonialism were not, however, regarded in the 1940s to be the central threat to ethnic community. Rather, thinkers across the region imaginatively cast the intimate tensions that marked relationships of gender, generation and class as the greatest

[38] Lonsdale, 'Moral Economy', pp.349-50.
[39] Lynch, *I Say to You*, Chs.1&2.
[40] BNA, CO 892/5/4, (East Africa Royal Commission: Correspondence and Papers. Kenya. Memoranda from the public: general African submissions), Memorandum from the Coast African Association to the East African Royal Commission, 21st October 1953, p.1.
[41] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 14th June 1947.
[42] BNA, CO 892/10/1, (East Africa Royal Commission: Memoranda from the Public: Societies of all Races), Memorandum from the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union to the East African Royal Commission, 28th June 1953, p.4.

danger to their collective futures. While, therefore, occasional expressions of concern were made for the souls of individual prostitutes, the frustrated life chances of unemployed urban youths, or the advantages of education to the lives of women, these tensions were generally subsumed within a patriotic framework and discussed as they were imagined to impact on the group as a whole. Patriots saw the disorder which they held to characterise their world as a moral issue, the product of a loosening of social obligation, underpinned by a growing selfish individualism which led men and women to abandon the involuntary obligations into which they were born, and which, in turn, obstructed their quest for civil, reputable and prosperous communities. It was, as Henry Muoria wrote, 'the evil things inside people' which 'cause our country not to develop and cause unhappiness'.[43] The liberal ideal of 'self-realisation' was on this understanding a threat rather than a goal.[44] Across East Africa thinkers, as we shall see, debated whose actions were selfish and whose patriotic, but all agreed that 'intimate unease'[45] was a public issue. The principle task of ethnic patriots, it followed, was to right distorted relationships and in doing so to rescue a public interest abandoned to private ambition. 'A true patriot', Muoria wrote elsewhere, 'is one who loves his fellow beings and his country instead of being a traitor whose main interest is to enrich himself.'[46] At the heart of a broadly shared vision of a good life, a rebuke to imagined disorder, stood the image of the disciplined and productive rural household, the widely-assumed basis of civilisation.

The gendered urban figures of *wahuni* and *malaya*, yobs and prostitutes, figures which stalked imaginations across the region and which were rarely absent from the region's press, were universally held to epitomise this modern indiscipline and selfish individualism.[47] They were routinely charged with (quite literally) abandoning their natal community and the involuntary obligations into which they were born for the hedonism of urban life. Abedi M. Fonga, for example,

[43] H. Muoria, 'What Should We Do, Our People', in W. Muoria-Sal, B.F. Frederiksen, J. Lonsdale, and D. Peterson, (eds.), *Writing for Kenya: The Life and Works of Henry Muoria* (Brill, 2009), p.155.
[44] Muoria, *Gikuyu*, p.133.
[45] Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence', p.51.
[46] Muoria, *Gikuyu*, p.133.
[47] Similar observations have been made about colonial India. See J. Chatterji, 'Nationalisms in India, 1857-1947, in J. Breuilly, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford, 2013), pp.247-8.

lamented in late 1945 that Haya women 'have spread out in every place far and near', with the aim of seeking individual enrichment, 'clothes… gowns and money' without a thought for what they left behind.[48] '[T]hieves and other undesirables' did 'no good for their tribe and live a parasitic life', wrote a Kikuyu correspondent with disgust, highlighting their dereliction of duty. Criminals and prostitutes, added another to the same end, were 'no good to any society and a menace to the whole tribe and country', and as such should 'be stamped out completely'.[49]

As these writers made clear, the undisciplined behaviour of these individual figures damaged the group as a whole.[50] John Paul Olola, for example, told the 1954 annual meeting of the Luo Union that 'drunkenness and prostitution were the two great disgraces to the tribe.'[51] Prostitutes, claimed Abedi M. Fonga, likewise, hurt the group reputation, causing their fellow Haya great 'distress' and 'shame'.[52] Preventing women from becoming prostitutes would, according to the Chagga Association, therefore secure the 'good name' of the Chagga, a point reiterated by Jomo Kenyatta, who told a small audience of his fellow tribesmen that the existence of Kikuyu prostitutes in towns led others to 'say that the Kikuyu nation is useless because their women have no self-respect in their hearts.' He was emphatic in his assertion that a 'nation is respected through the good behaviour and pride of its women'.[53] Those oathed into Mau Mau clearly shared the same idea.[54]

This moral decay not only damaged the group's reputation, but threatened to allow anarchy, the antithesis of an ordered collective life, to overrun valuable groups, to allow *ustaarabu*, or the prospect of *ustaarabu*, to be washed away on a rising tide of degeneracy. Prostitution was not the habit of a good society. While the 'children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly and

[48] *Mambo Leo*, Letter T/77616 CMS Abedi M. Fonga, November 1945, p.129.
[49] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 19th July 1948.
[50] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p.21.
[51] BNA, FCO 141/6712, Luo Union East Africa Annual Meeting, 30th June 1954, p.1.
[52] *Mambo Leo*, Letter T/77616 CMS Abedi M. Fonga, November 1945, p.129. See Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, Ch.7.
[53] Cited in Hunter, 'Languages of Politics', p.131. H. Muoria, 'The Home Coming of Our Great Hero Jomo Kenyatta', in W. Muoria-Sal, B.F. Frederiksen, J. Lonsdale, and D. Peterson, (eds.), *Writing for Kenya: The Life and Works of Henry Muoria* (Brill, 2009), p283.
[54] Peterson, 'Writing Revolution', pp.85-6.

multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty'[55], contemporary female delinquency was held to obstruct both the formation of disciplined rural households, the basis of civilisation, and the bearing of children, as women turned their back on honourable and productive motherhood.[56] In the end, the very existence of the community was threatened by the depravity of *malaya*. As a correspondent in *Baraza* put it: 'the Nandi tribe will be completely lost within a few years unless the girls stopped going to towns as prostitutes.'[57]

In light of these threats, questions were raised about the actions which could be taken to put a stop to this damaging behaviour, to reassert control. For some, responsibility lay solely in the hands of parents: for any wider authority to take control of this matter was to usurp the prerogatives and responsibilities of household heads whose freedom of action was itself an important marker of a good society.[58] More commonly, writers in newspapers held that the behaviour of these miscreants could be legitimately and forcefully dealt with by wider authorities, typically ethnic unions. While in the past, it was argued, parents were solely responsible for their children, in changed times new sorts of authority were required to regulate society. The actions of such people were not merely individual, and could, therefore, properly be regulated in the interests of the community as a whole.

To this end, demands were repeatedly made in newspapers that ethnic unions (often run by male urban migrants, keen to repudiate accusations of their being cut off from their community) take action to rid the towns of these morally reprehensible characters. According to a correspondent writing in *Mumenyereri* in early 1948, the number of Kikuyu 'loafers' was high enough to merit the formation of a committee, the proposed 'Kiambu Kikuyu Tribe Supervising Committee', to deal with them.[59] The same intention led Abedi M. Fonga, among many others, to insist that the movement of

[55] Exodus i.5.
[56] E.g. KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, East African Standard, 29th July 1947, *Gikuyu*, 27th January 1947.
[57] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 12th June 1948.
[58] E.g. KNA, PC/CENT/2/1/13, (Kiambu Local Native Council, 9th February 1944-27th July 1950), Minutes of a Meeting of the Kiambu Local Native Council, 12th-15th March 1945, p.9. Lonsdale, 'Moral and Political Argument', pp.86-7.
[59] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 22nd February 1948.

Haya women was controlled, a demand which was fulfilled when the Haya Union, with official permission, succeeded between 1950 and 1951 in setting up checkpoints at the docks on Lake Victoria to ensure that all women travelling had permission to do so from the chief of her location.[60] The Mombasa branch of the Luo Union, similarly, made a proposal in the mid-1950s to bar all unmarried women from towns if they did not have the explicit permission of the Union to be there.[61] And, indeed, the Union was praised in *Ramogi* precisely 'for the work of repatriating these undesired men and women to their homes.' It was right, the correspondent added, that 'A tribe should be in charge of its people's welfare'.[62]

Wahuni and *malaya* were roundly condemned. But, their indiscipline and the damage they subsequently did to the reputation and character of the group were not held to exist in a vacuum. Rather, they were regarded as merely the end point of the wider rise of selfish individualism. Prostitutes and *wahuni*, as the Luo writer Ramond W. Obhuro implied, were a symptom of decline, as much the product as the cause of social decay and the destruction of community. As he complained in *Ramogi*: 'Nowadays we have stopped following our rules. This', he made clear, 'means losing that society.'[63]

The effort to defend community from the threats this lack of patriotism posed, and to ensure that valuable communities were decent, was intrinsic to debates over bridewealth, a rising cost across the region in the 1940s, a source of tension between fathers and sons, and an issue of concern not merely to the parties contracting the marriage but to the community in general. Marriage, Kenyatta argued, 'results in the strengthening of the tribe as a whole'.[64] All agreed that disciplined rural households underpinned civilisation, the antithesis of, and a counterweight to, urban immorality. People differed, however, on how to promote these goals and who stood in their way.

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[60] *Mambo Leo*, Letter T/77616 CMS Abedi M. Fonga, November 1945, p.129. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, pp.162-3.
[61] Carotenuto, '*Riwruok E Teko'*, p.62.
[62] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th March 1948.
[63] Cited in Carotenuto, '*Riwruok E Teko'*, p.64.
[64] Kenyatta, *Facing*, p.157.

The evidence of Kenya's abundant vernacular press is clearest on this point. For many, the payment of this fee nourished the virtues that underpinned a good collective life. If young men were 'given wives for nothing', argued one Kikuyu correspondent, then 'they will be lazy as a snail.'[65] Those youths who called for bridewealth's abolition were 'the type of people who want everything for nothing instead of sweating for it', added another.[66] In insisting on payment, elders were acting as the guardians of public morality, the patriotic defenders of community. In response, therefore, to claims that the level of bridewealth was too high, a Kikuyu writer haughtily retorted that it was the 'extravagant lives' of the youth which impaired their ability to pay. Forcing young men to gather this money encouraged the disciplines so markedly absent in the delinquent urban loafer, cultivated the moral fibre of the community, and thereby prevented society's degeneration.[67]

The payment of bridewealth, its proponents argued, would, furthermore, encourage the development of stable households. 'Many wives would be divorced if husbands did not pay Bride Price because they would have as many wives as they like', one correspondent claimed.[68] Likewise, a Luo writer asserted that it was because 'she is proud of the large number of cattle her husband paid for her' that a wife 'would not think of leaving her husband'.[69] In turn, this stability was a defence against the drifting of women into towns and, ultimately, prostitution, the shame of all ethnic groups.[70] Bridewealth, on this argument, was the bulwark of civilisation.

To their critics, on the other hand, bridewealth was precisely destructive of virtuous community, an example of selfish individualism trumping patriotism. The practice, according to a Luyia writer, needed to be ended 'as soon as possible for the system as it stands today will ruin their sons and daughters'.[71] A Luo correspondent agreed, complaining that the high cost of bridewealth

[65] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 15th August 1949.
[66] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 25th July 1949.
[67] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mucemanio*, 1st January 1949.
[68] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mucemanio*, 8th March 1948.
[69] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th March 1949.
[70] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 22nd August 1949.
[71] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Omluyia*, February 1947.

caused large numbers of people to remain unmarried.[72] In doing so, it led in the direction of moral decay, preventing household formation and leading directly to the disgrace of prostitution.[73] The greedy actions of parents in 'selling girls' put in danger a civil and reputable society, and, therefore, ought, they held, to be 'exterminated'.[74]

The rich and powerful more generally, were accused of being possessed by a destructive greed, especially in those areas where commercial farming and trading was most advanced, and above all in Kenya's Central Province. In the context of the nascent soil erosion campaign, a correspondent complained in a missive to *Mumenyereri* that chiefs and the wealthy were 'the only people who never take heed of their country and its people', serving instead their own selfish interests.[75] Another lamented 'the meanness of many Kikuyu directors of companies' asserting that they 'are avaricious and cannot do anything for the public good.'[76] And a third told of how the wealthy had 'become so avaricious that they would rather break unity for the sake of self-gain'. They exploited, rather than aided, the group. '[P]atriotism in every countryman', he noted, 'is the most important factor in the development of any country', something the rich would do well to remember.[77]

Like the rich, the educated were accused of abandoning the public good. Oginga Odinga, founder in the 1940s of the Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation, and future president of the Luo Union, Vice-President of Kenya and leader of the Kenya People's Union, for example, was extremely critical of what he called the 'docile hangers-on, who deferred without murmur to the moral superiority of all things White and Christian, [and who] were enlisted to serve the White government'. They failed to defend their group against European accusations of cultural inferiority and, worse, becoming ashamed of their heritage, failed to meet the patriot's expectation that they seek to further the group interest, abandoning this duty with an embarrassed shrug. Being

[72] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 1st December 1948.
[73] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mucemanio*, 20th November 1948. *Gikuyu Times*, 6th January 1949.
[74] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 5th March 1949.
[75] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 1st April 1947.
[76] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 4th October 1948.
[77] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 28th June 1948.

'separated by a great gulf from the mass of the people' they divided the group against itself.[78] As a writer in the *Embu District Gazette* put it, 'blam[ing] the so-called civilised Africans' for the current disorder, 'Civilisation', was 'more than ordinary education, it requires respect, trustworthiness, co-operation, tolerance and mutual help. Educated Africans' precisely failed to demonstrate these virtues, 'look[ing] down on those things'.[79] '[T]he educated African was', a Kikuyu writer complained pointedly, 'developing individualism instead of patriotism which calls for everyone's service for the common good', perpetuating the divisions which prevented the group from fulfilling its collective destiny.[80] These cleavages were only widened by denominational differences, the product of mission diversity and competition, as the Chagga Council, noted, resulting, they claimed, in 'a society divided into mutually exclusive and intolerant religious parties, with the possibility of religious wars such as were fought in Buganda', and incapable of working together for their collective advancement.[81]

The issue of western education was, moreover, bound up with a wider set of arguments concerning the regulation of the cultural impact of colonialism, the place of custom and innovation in the building or maintenance of a civil, reputable and prosperous community. In the eyes of many, to abandon custom in favour of white knowledge was not only to divide the group against itself, but to forfeit one part of the essential basis of a good reputation. For Jomo Kenyatta, attachment to custom demonstrated the self-respect that was the necessary ground for external recognition. He held up the Masai as an example, telling a small Kikuyu audience that while 'educationally, the Masai are backwards… in their traditional pride and self-respect, which makes any nation respected, the Masai are ahead of others.'[82] Paul Mboya, the author of the first written Luo history, similarly argued that it was 'a nation that is mindful of its good customs and practices grows strong, and earns the respect of foreigners.'[83] Who, after all, would respect a people who did not respect themselves?

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[78] Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru*, pp.63-4.
[79] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Embu District Gazette*, 15th February 1949.
[80] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 9th May 1949.
[81] BNA, CO/691/202/5, (Tanganyika: Original Correspondence. Petitions to the Trusteeship from the Chagga Council), Petition to the Trusteeship Council from the Chagga Council, 1948, p.10.
[82] Muoria, 'Home Coming', p.283.
[83] Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p.134.

Mboya's emphasis was not only on the relationship between self-respect and the respect of outsiders, however. Like many others, he held that the social indiscipline which marked their world was a product of the corrosive cultural impact of colonialism. Simeon Muya, writing in *Mambo Leo*, similarly, argued that that 'a civilised person tends to have his origins, and his tribe, and the *boma* of his home', roots demonstrated by attachment to tradition. Those who forgot these ties were 'pirates and prostitutes and others with rotten lives'. 'Many tribes get great rottenness', he complained, because of those people 'who do not know their place'.[84] This loss of custom was seen to be marked most clearly in the neglect of vernacular languages. As one writer complained, the 'Kikuyu people have neglected the teaching of their language and customs with the result that the majority of the present generation have been totally misled in pursuit of modern languages'. As a consequence, he argued, making obvious the connection between language and social order, 'their own vocabulary has run short and discipline is lacking through abuse of tribal customs'.[85] A correspondent in *Ramogi* more generally worried that 'the Luo community… had adopted foreign deeds which are likely to lead them astray.' Reasserting the connection between descent and involuntary obligation, he urged his co-ethnics against this, insisting that they remember that 'Your Mother is your Mother, though she may be ugly'.[86]

Expanding on the theme, Taita arap Towett told the East African Royal Commission of the 'clash of cultures' that characterised European colonisation. The arrogant Europeans, he claimed, were keen to get Africans to 'copy them', and in pursuing this aim, sought to 'obliterate the African cultures', a plural. The effect was profound. While the African, as a member of an ethnic group, had 'already established his manners and habits', under colonial rule these had been 'alienated' with the consequence that 'the individual's outlook is thus deformed. No morale, no definite outlook to life is left for him to be proud of', he wrote. Ultimately, this alienation produced 'a man without social

[84] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Simeon Muya, August 1946, pp.85-6.
[85] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Gikuyu*, 15th January 1947.
[86] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th June 1948.

value': divorced from his culture, the taproot of morality, 'He attaches no significance to humanity and its welfare. Then havoc follows', he warned darkly.[87]

To lose culture was to be enfeebled, it was argued, and thereby rendered incapable of fighting for good of the country. Man's inherited culture was the source of his, and her, freedom and moral agency, their capacity to act creatively in the world, rather than merely destructively. As Kenyatta explained in *Facing Mount Kenya*, 'it is the culture which he inherits that gives man his human dignity as well as his material prosperity', and which taught him 'his mental and moral values and makes him feel it worthwhile to work and fight for liberty.'[88] The attachment of people to custom and culture was not, therefore, merely backward looking: it provided the only responsible basis for the future. As Brother Francis Semakula, the Ugandan who accompanied Kenyatta on his long journey from England to Kenya in 1946, told his audience: 'wise people stand by their customs, because in these lies their maturity'.[89]

The abandonment of custom, indeed, was held to threaten not only collective enfeeblement, but the ultimate destruction of the group, the existence of which was understood to be inseparable from a particular set of ideas and practices. Maziku son of Malongo hinted at this when he begged his 'Brother Wasukuma and Wanyamwezi' who were resident in 'big towns' not to drop their language in favour of Swahili. This was 'not *ustaarabu*', he argued. '[P]eople who have those habits[,] even [those] of another tribe', he implored, 'should stop it completely.'[90] More directly, a correspondent warned Luo in Kampala that they risked a 'change of nationality' if they continued to imitate the 'habits' of others when in 'beer places'. He worried that 'Luo people have been particularly found [sic] of imitations of other tribes and should be careful, otherwise they [would] lose their tribe by such imitations.' He recommended as the antidote attendance at the

[87] BNA, CO 892/5/4, Memorandum from Taita arap Towett to the East African Royal Commission, 14th April 1953, p.1.
[88] Kenyatta, *Facing*, p.304. Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence', p.49. Lonsdale, 'Moral and Political Argument', p.89.
[89] Muoria, 'Home Coming' p.305.
[90] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Maziku s/o Malongo, January 1946, p.2.

meetings of the local Luo Union branch.[91] Culture was an impersonal good which required defence. Without it community died.

Others, however, saw opportunity, and not merely threat, in change. They insisted that if ethnic groups were to flourish, greater thought had to be given to the value of the practices and ideas associated with colonial rule.[92] A Luo writer, for example, criticising the educated, told 'the Luo people that they should not forget their old customs.' He, nonetheless, made clear that 'Some customs can be dropped', so long as 'the most important' were 'taught to children', hinting at the possibility of adaptation for survival in the modern world.[93] This theme was especially prominent in the work of the Kikuyu journalist Henry Muoria, who while critical of any unthinking, or slavish, imitation of their rulers, was clear that there was much to learn from Europeans.[94] Strikingly, while his hero Kenyatta emphasised custom as the basis of a moral community, Muoria emphasised instead the religion brought by the missionaries as the fundament of a civil, reputable and prosperous society. The Christian God gave man good thoughts, he explained, which allowed him to overcome the hatred and jealousy which divided the tribe, to push aside selfish individualism, and put his knowledge and skills to work for the common good.[95]

Muoria was clear, however, that faith alone would not bring a good collective life. Emphasising the need for a wider cultural audit, conscious of the differences in power and wealth that marked the relationship between the colonised and the colonisers, he argued that the Kikuyu must not unthinkingly worship the past, following 'one narrow way of thought and action'. 'There is no education for blacks and [another] for whites' he insisted. Rather, 'Knowledge for blacks can only be found by first learning white men's knowledge'. In particular, he argued, his people must embrace western education (which modern Europeans had themselves learnt from the ancient Greeks), which had elevated whites to their status as rulers. Such knowledge might, in turn, be used

[91] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th May 1948.
[92] See Lonsdale, 'Contests of Time', p.240.
[93] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th October 1948.
[94] Muoria, *Gikuyu*, pp.163-4. J. Lonsdale, 'Henry Muoria. Public Moralist', in W. Muoria-Sal, B.F. Frederiksen, J. Lonsdale, and D. Peterson, (eds.), *Writing for Kenya: The Life and Works of Henry Muoria* (Brill, 2009), pp.44-5.
[95] Muoria, 'Our People', p.147, p.167. Muoria, *Gikuyu*, p.168.

to 'help the country'.[96] Without making this move, ethnic communities would, as a correspondent in *Mambo Leo* put it, remain in 'darkness', in a disreputable poverty, overwhelmed and left behind by the modern world.[97] Like their contemporary George Orwell, such writers understood that in the midst of ordeal they 'must add to our heritage or lose it… must grow greater or grow less… must go forward or backward', that 'By revolution we become more ourselves, not less.'[98] Change would guarantee continuity.

While, therefore, many agreed that the educated (and especially educated women) had so far failed to fulfil their patriotic duties, preferring instead to pursue their own selfish interests, they were equally clear that the ascension of the educated to positions of leadership was essential to their collective future.[99] Ways of life were 'rapidly changing' in Ukambani, argued a correspondent in the Swahili-language *Habari*, articulating this sense, but, nonetheless, the same old men continued to hold leadership positions. This was wrong. What was needed instead, he argued, were 'educated men who can read and understand laws; who are able to understand the affairs of the modern world, who can consider questions and answers, who will not fear to deny what is not right, and who will work for the good of their district.'[100]

This emphasis was especially prominent in Usambara in north-east Tanganyika, where chiefs were drawn from only a single 'traditional' ruling group, the Kilindi.[101] Attacking this arrangement, H.K. Salim argued in *Mambo Leo* that '*maendeleo*' or development would not come unless chiefs were educated. In the interests of the development of the country, he wanted to abolish the rule of the Kilindi, and to elect chiefs from among those who had a sufficient level of education, regardless of their background.[102] H.M. Mtengeti agreed, explaining that 'If a chief lacks education he is a heavy

[96] Muoria, 'Our People', p.151, p.219.
[97] *Mambo Leo*, Letter L. Th. Kimwaga Mpenda, February 1947, p.13.
[98] G. Orwell, *Essays* (London, 2000), p.188.
[99] E.g. KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 1st August 1947, *Gikuyu* 17th February 1948, *Ramogi*, 15th June 1948.
[100] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Habari*, 5th December 1946.
[101] On division over education, see Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, pp.139-41.
[102] *Mambo Leo*, Letter N/42663 Sigmn H.K. Salim, October 1946, p.110.

burden on the *raia* he governs, instead of being a help to them'.[103] It was 'traditional' rulers who were selfish and gave no thought to their people and the progress of their country, not the educated, he argued. While the educated Shambaa wanted 'to magnify their country with sufficient progress', a Kilindi ruler 'work[ed] for himself and his children' only, and gave no thought to 'raising up the *raia*'. They held on to power merely to serve themselves, depriving the country of a reputable prosperity.[104] The educated could not simply be dismissed as the harbingers of division and the destroyers of honourable histories. Rather, they were essential to bringing a reputable prosperity in a new world. Education was, then, a patriotic endeavour.

While people across the region debated the extent to which colonial innovations helped or hindered their quest for a good collective life, in the context of what was understood to be damaging disorder and division, all insisted that the key to their future was 'unity', the very antithesis of the current selfish individualism, recognition of the involuntary obligations into which they were born, the manifestation of the self-respect on which external recognition must be built, and the expression of their patriotism.[105] Disorder and disunity divided the group against itself and held it back. Order and co-operation, embodied in ethnic unity, were the essential conditions of a reputable prosperity, or 'progress', a word which, according to the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union, 'calls up to mind [sic] better schools, better hospitals and health services, better house [sic], better food and so on this that and other [sic] ad infinitum.'[106]

The 'good characteristic' of the Wamanyema, wrote S. Sefu Buramo in *Mambo Leo,* was, therefore, 'to be a people with unity'.[107] A correspondent in *Omuluyia* likewise claimed that 'unless and until Luyia are united, nothing will be achieved.' 'Unity, hard work, and good understanding amongst all' was similarly 'urged' in a *Ramogi* editorial. 'Without such cooperation, and obedience to authority and administrative leaders' it noted, making obvious the connection between 'unity'

[103] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Hamisi M. Mtengeti, January 1947, p.1.
[104] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Mr N.A. Nyello, March 1947, p.25.
[105] On 'unity', see also Hunter, *Political Thought*, pp.46-8.
[106] BNA, CO 892/10/1, A Full Report on Recent Tour of the Mountain by President Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union, p.1.
[107] *Mambo Leo*, Letter S.Sefu Buramo, July 1945, p.81.

and social hierarchy, 'nothing will be accomplished'.[108] It was precisely to overcome the 'rottenness and weakness' of the people of the coast, who found themselves divided into 'small groups', and to 'advance our nation' that the Mijikenda Union wanted to bring 'back the KINSHIP which existed in the time of our forefathers.'[109] The Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union, similarly, hoped that 'The election of the *Mangi Mkuu*', or Paramount Chief, 'of the Chagga' in 1951, a move which had 'revived the best foundation of the Chagga nation', would help the Chagga people to 'unite, love one another, be faithful to one another and to co-operate in their work and thoughts in every work for the development and progress of this country'.[110] And, likewise, the author of an article entitled 'What Will Better the Kamba', argued that 'All Kamba know that we are the most backward people in the country and this is because of lack of co-operation', a principle which 'was not [however] foreign to the Kamba[,] as women make use of it to work the *shambas*.'[111] As Henry Muoria told the Kikuyu: 'Unity is the most important factor', because 'a group of people', as opposed to individuals acting on their own, 'are able to uplift a heavy object', and to 'accomplish a heavy task in a short time'.[112] 'When we see a group of people who have achieved something good', he wrote, 'we know immediately what first entered their heart was love and unity.'[113]

Prosperity, it was widely held, required not only unity, but a willingness to work hard. In developing this argument, a few, such as Henry Muoria, gave consideration to the role of migrant labourers.[114] Most correspondents in the press, however, associated migration with urban indiscipline, asserting, instead, a clear link between hard work and the disciplined production of rural householders. Nowhere was this made more obvious than in the repeated demand of Luo writers (a group famous as migrant labourers) that their absent tribesmen return to their rural homeland. It

[108] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 1st April 1949.
[109] Cited in Willis and Gona, 'Tradition, Tribe and State in Kenya', p.432. Original emphasis.
[110] BNA, CO 892/10/1, Memorandum from the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union to the East African Royal Commission, 28th June 1953, p.4.
[111] BNA, FCO 141/6515, Director of Intelligence and Security to the Chief Native Commissioner, 3rd October 1952.
[112] Muoria, *Gikuyu*, p.161.
[113] Muoria, 'What Should We Do, Our People?', p.155.
[114] Lonsdale, 'Henry Muoria', p.50.

was ‘a pity’ a correspondent wrote sorrowfully in *Ramogi* in August 1946, that Luo people should leave their homes in that fashion, and asked that they return to their lands.[115] Rather than enriching others by working on European farms, argued another, the Luo should enrich their own community by working their own *shambas*.[116] The group, warned *Ramogi*’*s* editor, putting the issue bluntly, would die out if they continued to leave their own lands to labour for others.[117] Husbands and wives working their *shamba* together, it was widely assumed, would claw from nature a civilised prosperity.

These assumptions were ubiquitous. A correspondent to the Swahili-language *Mwalimu*, for example, called on his fellow Embu to work hard ‘so as to ensure the future’.[118] The Akamba Union sought both ‘to teach the lesson of Unity’ and ‘to teach the Kamba to help and do things for themselves.’[119] Petro Njau told the East African Royal Commission that ‘it really is time for people to work harder.’ He explained that ‘To work hard has been a problem on my part as I have been thinking for a long time, of calling all the people together and teaching them how to work and ask[ing] them to start working hard’. Understanding the value of unity and coming to love one another would make it ‘easy for us to work together towards sharing thoughts and work for all the people and the country.’[120] A Kikuyu correspondent similarly expressed disappointment ‘that far too many idle men in the reserves have become parasites rather than work with their own hands’, and asked the Kikuyu to realise that ‘progress is the fruit of sweat.’[121] It was no good, it was widely asserted, asking God or the colonial government for the ‘progress’ people wanted. This, rather, must be brought by the people themselves. It was, a correspondent in *Mumenyereri* told his audience, ‘ridiculous to cry for help unless one is prepared to help oneself’. He reminded them that ‘God helps those who help themselves’, that they themselves ‘should work hard and in return God, who is

[115] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 1st August 1946.
[116] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th August 1946.
[117] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th October 1946.
[118] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mwalimu*, 3rd July 1946.
[119] BNA, FCO 141/6515, Extract from Rules and Regulations of the Akamba Union, p.1.
[120] BNA, CO 892/13/4, (East African Royal Commission: Oral Evidence Tanganyika, Part Two), Memorandum from Petro Njau to the East African Royal Commission, 11th November 1953, p.2.
[121] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 13th September 1948.

Justice, will reward their sweat.'[122] Oginga Odinga was equally clear in his address to the Kisumu Branch of the Luo Union in July 1953 that progress would not come from petitions to the government. He told those assembled that 'it was no use people going to the Government for help if they themselves cannot do it'. If the Luo wanted to be like the 'Ismailia community' who were 'very influential and had built their own hospitals, clubs and schools etc.,' and who were 'living very happily', he continued, then they must unite and seek to develop their future by their own endeavour.[123]

This virtuous labour, a marked contrast to the indiscipline and grasping materialism of the prostitute, or the pitiful pleas of the petition to the government, would develop a collective moral fibre and a strong community. '[W]hat has been given free', asserted a writer in *Ramogi*, making the general point, 'will never be better than that which has to be fought for.'[124] Self-reliance was the only durable basis for a prosperous community, a bulwark against weakness and decadence. '[T]he Romans' (to whom the British often likened themselves, and who featured regularly in African thinking about their world[125]) 'became lazy after gaining a vast empire', a Kikuyu writer explained, with the consequence that 'other nations who had been ruled over by the Romans and at the same time learned from them became stronger and defeated the Romans.'[126] At the same time, self-help would enhance the reputation of the group. It was, according to Odinga, for the Luo to 'prove our mettle to the government, to the Whites', by 'show[ing] what we could do by our own effort'.[127] Their place in the world depended on their own disciplined sweat.

In the context of a profound sense of disruption, journalists and letter writers sought, then, to use their pens to persuade their readers to place themselves in the context of the story and destiny of the group, to accept the obligations into which they were born, and of the righteousness of a particular vision of the future. Writers of histories and ethnographies sought to provide a guide

[122] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 29th March 1948.
[123] BNA, FCO 141/6712, Director of Intelligence and Security to the Chief Secretary, 20th July 1953, p.1.
[124] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th June 1948.
[125] W.M. Macmillan, *Africa Emergent* (2nd edition, Edinburgh, 1949), p.9.
[126] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 17th May 1948.
[127] Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru*, pp.76-7.

to man and woman's place in the world, a moral standard against which the present could be judged, a guide to better future conduct, and therefore a better communal future. And ethnic unions sought to discipline those who damaged the community's standing, 'To cultivate and develop a civic sense of pride in our country and responsibilities of citizenship', as the authors of the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens' Union's constitution put it, both at home and in East Africa's urban centres, and to put in place rules and authority capable of controlling the modern world.[128] As Ramond W. Obhuro noted of the Luo, in the world as they found it, his people were 'in a problem and a big problem which everyone will not be able to solve by himself unless they put hands together [sic].' They lacked 'schools… cleaver [sic] people…big business etc. and the rules to take care of our lives like our ancestors did.'[129] In these changed times, therefore, the Luo Union, like other ethnic patriots, set out to 'find out the best way by which the Luo can increase happiness and progress in their Country, in education, trade and wealth'; to 'select the good old Luo customs, which are suitable for the present civilisation that they may remain and should encourage them'; and to 'select the custom of strangers which are unsuitable that they may be banned for the Luo', to shape a good collective future against the backdrop of the ordeal of modernity.[130] As we shall see in the next section, tribe was not, however, the only community of concern to East Africa's people.

[128] BNA, CO 892/10/1, The Constitution of the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens' Union, p.1.
[129] Cited in Carotenuto, '*Riwruok E Teko*', p.64.
[130] BNA, FCO 141/6712, Rules of the Luo Union, p.4.

III

Imagination of community was not confined to visions of ethnic groups. Rather, as people, including thinkers such as Simeon Muya, Taita arap Towett and Jomo Kenyatta, all of whom we met in the previous section, attempted to come to terms with the apparently disturbed world in which they lived, they also took hold of the racial divides which marked the colonial state, in politics, in education, in housing and town planning, and, drawing on the 'piratable' model of Israel and the particular image of the British outlined above, invigorated them, imagining the existence of a conceptually similar racially defined community, often understood to be bound by divine hand to the continent of Africa as part of a world divided into racially-specific continents.[131]

Like tribe, this imagination had its roots in the earlier colonial period. It was encouraged in the 1920s by the thirty or forty speeches given in each of Kenya and Tanganyika by the Ghanaian James Aggrey, who toured the two territories in 1924 as a member of the second Phelps-Stokes Commission, asserting the need for both co-operation with the colonial authorities and continental unity, and whose influence was reflected in the establishment of the African Association in Tanganyika in 1929.[132] It was in the 1940s, however, in the face of intensifying social crisis across the region, that this vision hardened, a hardening which, in both territories, was reflected in a linguistic move, the act of naming, which heard the demand made by African intellectuals that their group should be referred to not as 'natives', but as 'Africans', terms which had previously been used interchangeably.[133] Nganga Kibatta, for example, in a June 1947 letter to the *East African Standard,* explained to his readers that the correct term was 'Africans', not 'Natives'.[134] Likewise, Joss O. Adem, defending the reputation of his racial group against the defamations of a settler, explained to his

[131] See also K.A. Appiah, *In My Father's House*, p.16.
[132] K. King, 'James E.K. Aggrey: Collaborator, Nationalist, Pan-African', in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol.3, No.3, (1969), p.521. Brennan, *Taifa*, p.123. E. Sanders, 'Remaking the Origins of Political Thought in Colonial East Africa', African History and Politics Seminar, Oxford University, 7th February 2011. See also Glassman, *War of Words*, pp.108-9.
[133] Brennan, *Taifa*, pp.124-5. On naming, see above, and MacArthur, 'When did the Luyia', pp.351-63.
[134] *East African Standard*, Letter Nganga Kibatta, 20th June 1947, p. supplement 'a'.

readers that 'Mr Mathu', the first African member of the Kenyan Legislative Council, 'is an African, not a native, for the word "Native" includes all who were born in this country', of whatever race.[135] While these efforts were not wholly successful, and 'native' continued to be used by African writers and politicians, the attempt was, nonetheless, significant. It marked not only a rejection of the idea of primitiveness associated with the term 'native', a term which seemed to *confine* Africans to backwardness, but, as importantly, a shaper consciousness of racial belonging than had previously been evident, and an effort to clearly define the boundaries of an African racial group.[136]

In a fashion reminiscent of tribe, this African group was imagined to be a community tied (often by God's hand) to the continent of Africa, bound together by the involuntary obligations bred by descent, as Eliud Mathu explained, emphasising the divine nature of race and its attachment to land, to an audience in July 1947. 'When God made man', he told them, 'he gave the people of each colour their own place to live, and we Africans were put here in Africa. It has been ours right from the word "go"'.[137] In the same vein, the Mbeya Native Authority told the East African Royal Commission that 'God made Africa for the Africans, Europe for the Europeans and Asia for the Asians'.[138] '[J]ust as German, Indian [and] Norwegian soils are for the German, Indian and Norse, so is African soil for the black African', wrote the authors of another memorandum from the same district.[139] On this formulation, community preceded the individual who, in turn, was obligated to work for its betterment. The group could not reasonably be abandoned, but must be served. As Joel Bakama wrote in *Kwetu* in 1940, the *taifa* (nation) of the African was 'the country of East Africa, South Africa, West Africa etc.', or in other words the continent as a whole, and the people of Africa 'should be proud of your black colour' and act accordingly.[140]

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[135] *East African Standard*, Letter Joss O. Adem, 11th July 1947, p. supplement 'b'.
[136] Brennan, *Taifa*, pp.124-5.
[137] *East African Standard*, 18th July 1947, p.6.
[138] BNA, CO 892/10/1, Memorandum from the Mbeya Native Authorities to the East African Royal Commission, p.2.
[139] BNA, CO 892/10/1, Memorandum of the Mbeya African Community to the East African Royal Commission, 19th May 1953, p.1.
[140] Cited in Brennan, *Taifa*, pp.124-5.

According to Taita arap Towett, this connection was manifest in an inherent understanding, prior to any worldly experience, which linked African people together.[141] Each race, he told the East African Royal Commission, had a special 'attraction' for its own members:

Every family, tribe, race or nation has a kind of attraction. When a European says "hallo" his fellow European would understand the implications of this "hallo" more than an African or an Asian for that matter. When an African says "hallo" his fellow African would understand it better than either a European or an Asian. This mysterious way of being able to understand one another and the ability to read one another's face at a glance is responsible for employers' preference to employ those of their like and those whose social heritage they understand better.

For Towett, indeed, this sense was so strong that it needed to be watered down if the various races which had come, under the colonial umbrella, to inhabit East Africa were to live harmoniously.[142]

More generally, this connection was held to be evident in a broadly shared culture, not an inert fact, but the product of intellectual work, even, as we shall see, as questions were asked about the future of this supposed way of life.[143] Under colonial rule, argued Martin Kayamba, aristocrat, black civil servant, founder of the African Civil Service Association, and recipient of an MBE[144], giving expression to this idea, Africans had 'To their surprise' found that 'there is very little uncommon to their customs and habits, and much that is analogous.' 'Their aims are not dissimilar', he went on:

Their culture is fundamentally one. Their beliefs are characteristically alike in root and origin although they branch off at this point or that. They share a reliance upon their ancestors' continuing concern for them. Their marriage methods admit of polygamous families based on equivalent exchange. [And] Their indigenous form of government is not so much patriarchal or aristocratic as a wise union of both.'[145]

Writers made clear that this racial order had to be respected. While God had given man 'one spirit and body', wrote F.K. Karatta in *Mambo Leo*, stressing man's ultimate equality, he had distributed 'different talents' on a racial basis. Divine will could not be ignored: 'God is not a fool', Karatta asserted, and his divisions had to be maintained.[146] This sanctity was most forcefully

[141] See also Glassman, *War of Words*, p.57.
[142] BNA, CO 892/5/4, Memorandum of Taita arap Towett to the East African Royal Commission, 14th April 1953, p.2.
[143] On intellectual work, see Glassman, *War of Words*, p.13.
[144] J. Iliffe, 'The Spokesman: Martin Kayamba', in J. Iliffe, (ed.), *Modern Tanzanians: A Volume of Biographies* (Dar es Salaam, 1973), pp.66-94.
[145] Kayamba, *African Problems*, pp.89-90.
[146] *Mambo Leo*, Letter F.K. Karatta, September 1946, p.97.

articulated in the widespread assertion of the unnaturalness of mixed-race children.[147] A writer in *Baraza*, for example, worried that 'Arabs' were marrying 'African women with the result that a generation of half-breeds is created.'[148] Another set out that he was 'very sad to see how Africans at the Coast are mixing their blood with Asians', and pointed out that the 'children of these unions have no share in the social life of the district, particularly the dances.'[149] Mixed race children were not welcome, according to S.M. Mtengeti, amongst 'black humanity', nor in *Uzungu* or *Uhindi* or *Uaarabu* – the areas of the Whites, Indians or Arabs - a sure sign of their unnaturalness and immorality, the ultimate mark of failure to serve one's community of descent.[150]

As was the case with 'tribe', the changes which brought the idea of a racial community into being in turn became a challenge to community itself. In this context, African intellectuals sought to make this racial group civil, reputable and prosperous. In this effort, aspects of colonialism were attacked as imposing obstacles, in particular, to the prosperity and the dignity of Africans, depriving them of progress and recognition. James Gichuru, a prominent member of the KAU, for example, complained to an African audience that the mature humanity of Africans was being routinely denied by their rulers. 'Africans were making progress in various aspects of their lives', he argued, but 'white people still say we are not yet adult, that we're like children.'[151] Joss O. Adem argued similarly in the *East African Standard*, that while 'the African's skin has grown blacker in the half century of contact with the white man, his outlook and reasoning have changed' and, therefore, 'he has the right to claim his place among the other nations of the world.'[152] Both writers implied, echoing the paternalist rhetoric of the civilising mission, that by the 1940s, Africans had made progress under colonial tutelage that their colonial masters failed to recognise.

[147] See also Glassman, *War of Words*, pp.137-42 and Brennan, *Taifa*, pp.132-6.
[148] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 30th October 1948.
[149] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 27th November 1948.
[150] *Mambo Leo*, Letter S.M. Mtengeti, August 1946, p.86.
[151] H. Muoria, 'Kenyatta is Our Reconciler', in W. Muoria-Sal, B.F. Frederiksen, J. Lonsdale, and D. Peterson, (eds.), *Writing for Kenya: The Life and Works of Henry Muoria* (Brill, 2009), p.339.
[152] *East African Standard*, Letter Joss O. Adem, 11th July 1947, p. supplement 'b'.

In the 1940s, African writers vigorously rejected what they argued was the unjustifiable racism which stood behind this failure of recognition, a racism which, they claimed, stopped Europeans from seeing what was in front of their very eyes. A.K. Kato spoke in the *Tanganyika Standard* of the British as in the past having 'devoted their lives to uplifting Africans', and hoped that such efforts, especially in education, could be speeded up. If, on the other hand, he argued, 'these races [European and Asian] refuse to be in one school with Africans, eat with us, play with us and teach us civilisation', to fulfil their own civilising mission, he concluded, 'then they have nothing to do with Africa – let them go back and leave Africa to go to the abyss again.'[153] Along similar lines, B.S. Ngaira insisted, defending Africans against the suggestion of a settler that they had an inferior 'type of mentality', that it should be obvious that 'among every nation [there] can be found a wide variety of characters; heroes and villains', and that the bad were not concentrated amongst Africans and the good amongst Europeans. Drawing on the work of William Shakespeare (whose plays 'captured [the] soul' of the young B.A. Ogot during his time at Maseno School in the late 1940s[154] and were later translated into Swahili by Julius Nyerere[155]), he pointed out that that 'Britain had [both] her Richard IIIs and Henry Vs', one bad the other good, and that 'Germany now lies prostrate for allowing the wrong type of mentality to lead the nation'. He suggested, therefore, that 'your correspondent would do well to think again', to reconsider his understanding of the world and the place of Africans within it.[156]

In Kenya, the *kipande* was regarded as a particularly controversial expression of this base racism. Joss O. Adem, for example, drawing attention to the inclusion of African finger prints on the pass, asked: 'do they take the finger prints of all adults if there is no trace of criminality?' Were 'all Africans virtual criminals?' he demanded to know.[157] The 'Africans of Kenya demand their birth-right', wrote J.C. Kimithi in the same paper, 'that is, instead of being treated like potential criminals

[153] *Tanganyika Standard*, Letter A.K. Kato, 18th May 1946, p.14.
[154] Ogot, *Footprints*, pp.39-40.
[155] J.R. Brennan, 'Julius *Rex*: Nyerere through the Eyes of his Critics, 1953-2013', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol.8, No.3, (2014), p.460.
[156] *East African Standard*, Letter B.S. Ngaira, 27th September 1946, p. supplement 'a'.
[157] *East African Standard*, Letter Joss O. Adem, 11th July 1947, p. supplement 'b'.

to be treated like other races.'[158] And H.Z.E. Ramgoo, picking up on the same insidious implication in a letter written by a white settler to the *East African* Standard, asserted that 'Criminals are everywhere', and were not only found amongst Africans, 'as we read in books and newspapers, and the *kipande* can never be a remedy to' criminality. 'How many times', he asked, 'have I read of criminals in England being unfound', which is to say escaping capture having committed a crime? He concluded that colonial arguments in favour of the pass were 'discriminatory' and did 'not hold water… Our bell keeps ringing on for the word "equality" and we shall fight for this to the very end' he finished.[159]

For many, indeed, the *kipande* marked not merely an instance of the failure of Europeans to recognise the humanity of Africans, but a deliberate ploy to exploit them. James Gichuru, therefore, expressed dismay in a 1946 missive to the *East African Standard* at reports that the Governor had taken to carrying an equivalent pass as a means to deflect African demands for its abolition. 'Africans', he wrote, 'have been alarmed by this gesture, for they believe that it is bound to influence the decisions of the Committee that is making investigations on the *Kipande* [sic].' He went on to explain that 'Africans deplore the *Kipande* [sic] because of the many inconveniences into which it puts them', in particular controlling – which is to say limiting - their salaries.[160] As Joss O. Adem asked rhetorically, who could deny 'that the *kipande* is there solely for the benefit of the labour employer?'[161] African prosperity was blocked by white greed.

In the 1940s, this was a recurring theme, as a range of colonial policies were interpreted by African thinkers as marking an abandonment of the civilising mission in favour of the instinct to dominate and profit from the continent. K. Kea, amongst others, complained, for example, that the racialized system of rationing instituted in Dar es Salaam in the course of the Second World War amounted to an effort on the part of Europeans 'to come to Africa and to dominate the Africans and

[158] *East African Standard*, Letter J.C. Kimithi, 24th October 1947, p.11.
[159] *East African Standard*, Letter H.Z.E. Ramgoo, 27th June 1947, p. supplement 'a'.
[160] *East African Standard*, Letter J.S. Gichuru, 22nd November 1946.
[161] *East African Standard*, Letter Joss O. Adem, 11th July 1947, p. supplement 'b'. On this issue see Anderson, 'Master and Servant', p.464.

their food'. The rulers of the territory in the present day, he argued, had forgotten the example of 'Dr. David Livingstone and other noble Europeans [who] sacrificed their lives for the sake of the people of this continent of Africa' and were instead 'gnawing away the health of Africans'.[162]

The post-war insistence of the Tanganyikan government, moreover, that 'development' required a basis in an expanding white agriculture, along with the associated alienation of further land and increasing white population, was the cause of great consternation. Rejecting colonial arguments about the benefits such a move might bring, the Tanganyika African Association argued that the Africans of Tanganyika's experience of 'the few [settlers] we have' (not to mention the 'serious situation' they observed in 'neighbouring colonies') suggested that white settlers were 'selfish', and that increasing 'their number will be making preparations for a "Boston-tea-party"', or the creation of a new independent white state. What was needed, they argued, was not more settlers, but 'equal opportunity in all works [sic] of life with such reservation as will encourage the African to progress'. This, they concluded, 'cannot be attained by increasing White-settlement and consequently [the] colour-bar.'[163] The African, claimed the writers of a memorandum to the East African Royal Commission, summing up this sense, 'means to have no interference of Europeans and Asians', who were repeatedly attacked in the African press for their alleged avarice, 'who are unfairly monopolising his wealth by occupying his property without his consent'. Autochthony gave Africans special rights in Africa: while some people said 'that all the natural resources in African were put for all the human beings', they wrote, 'civilized people… understand that you cannot go to pinch others [sic] money because of your pocket being empty.' [164] African political organisations in both territories

[162] *Tanganyika Standard*, Letter K. Kea, 27th April 1946, p.17.
[163] BNA, CO 691/208/12, (Tanganyika: Original Correspondence), Letter from the African Association (Territorial Headquarters), Dar es Salaam, 30th August 1950, pp.4-5.
[164] BNA, CO 892/10/3, Memorandum from the Central Native Treasury, Rwamishenye to the East African Royal Commission, 27th April 1953, p.2. On anti-Asian sentiment, see e.g. *Tanganyika Standard*, Letter 'Observers', 20th April 1946, p.17, *Tanganyika Standard*, Letter 'African Observer', 4th May 1946, p.17, *Tanganyika Standard*, Letter 'Dumb (Pure African), 15thJunes 1946, p.13.

sought, however ineffectively, to defend this peculiar interest.[165] Empire, it was held, must recognise and promote the paramountcy of African interest, a theme returned to in the following chapter.

Again, however, it was widely held that the central threat to community did not come from outside the group, but in the shape of the rise of the selfish individualism that was held to be the cause of widespread social disorder. Echoing the language and ideas associated with ethnic community, a correspondent in *Baraza* criticised African politicians who, he claimed, isolated themselves from 'real African life' by living in towns. Removed from the day to day experience of their fellow Africans in the reserves, he argued, 'These politicians talk of the mal-treatment of the Africans in matters of salary, colour-bar and privilege and they ask for freedom not knowing that it already exists.' Rather than focussing on these external obstacles to the emergence of a good collective life, he insisted, 'they should plan ways of bettering human relationships and of how to stop the things which rob the Africans of power like bribery, jealousy, tribalism, lies and theft. They should suggest ways of improving the Africans' home life and they should encourage, above all, hard work.' This, he forcefully asserted, was 'the living principle that carries men and nations onwards.'[166]

Followers of the KAU might have considered this charge unfair: the party's most consistent 'doctrine' was that people help themselves, a demand that was made so forcefully in late 1948 - when the organisation's president, Kenyatta, condemned young men in towns as 'thugs, thieves, drunkards, idlers, loafers, cheats and grafters' - that an editorial in the *East African Standard* considered that 'had a European used some of their expressions[,] the Attorney General might be expected to be considering charges of sedition'.[167] *Mvunja nchi ni mwana nchi* ran the Swahili

[165] BNA, CO 533/537/21, (Kenya Original Correspondence: Memorandum by the Kenya African Union), Memorandum by the Kenya African Union, 1946. J. Kenyatta, *Kenya: The Land of Conflict* (Manchester, 1944). BNA, CO 691/208/12, Letter from the African Association (Territorial Headquarters), Dar es Salaam, 30th August 1950, pp.1-5.
[166] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 12th July 1947.
[167] Lonsdale, 'KAU's Cultures', p.116. KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *East African Standard*, 7th October 1948.

proverb, 'the destroyer of the country is a child of the country'.[168] Or, as Kenyatta put it, 'That which eats you up is inside your clothes'.[169]

As with tribe, a moral decay associated with town life was represented as a threat principally to the character and reputation of the African group. Charles Sangali, for example, wrote on the common theme of the 'crimes' committed by 'loitering youth' who '[i]n drifting into the towns' broke off 'sometimes permanently from the social group into which he was born'.[170] Prostitution, moreover, led 'Africans to social destruction and possibly non-existence through sterility from venereal disease and young maidens refusing to become mothers so that they may be prostitutes', destroying in the process the household, the basis of civilisation, claimed one writer in the *East African Standard*.[171] Another similarly concerned himself with 'the African women who persist in wandering about the town in the lost and barbarous manner.' He feared that 'Unless severe action is taken about [sic] these degrading people the forthcoming generations of Africans will lose all respect and prestige.' [172]

In Tanganyika, public comment focussed especially on male condemnation of African women establishing sexual relations with non-African men, unions shadowed by the implication of prostitution.[173] It was, according to Samwil D. Kiama, an 'embarrassment' to hear of such relationships. African women should avoid them, he argued, as it was better to be married to a man of your own *taifa*.[174] Writers in the press made clear that such relationships threatened not only the reputation of Africans, but the very possibility of a civil society. Inter-racial relationships, asserted Aaron M. Mzoo, 'cause us shame and are destroying our [African] nation'.[175] Behind this 'shame', stood the selfish individualism and greedy materialism of women who sought out easy personal

[168] E.g. *Mambo Leo*, Unsigned Letter, February 1945, pp.21-2, *Mambo Leo*, Letter *Mwalimu* Amando Mrope bin Michael, May 1945, p.58, *Mambo Leo*, Letter M.2975 Cp. Bartholomew Mwizalubi, June 1946, pp.61-2.
[169] Muoria, 'Home Coming', p.279.
[170] BNA, CO 892/10/3, Memorandum from Mr C.A. Sangali, Native Authority Office, Lushoto to the East African Royal Commission, n.d., pp.2-4.
[171] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *East African Standard*, 29th July 1948.
[172] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 16th October 1948.
[173] A central theme in Brennan, *Taifa*, Ch.4.
[174] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Samwil D. Kiama, April 1945, p.46.
[175] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Aaron M. Mzoo, January 1946, p.2.

'wealth'.[176] '*Ustaarabu* and happiness', on the contrary, Mzoo reminded his readers, 'are not brought by lust of money', which was, rather, 'the enemy of good people and all *ustaarabu*'. 'What profit ', after all, 'will a person get to get all the world and lose her soul?'[177] The salience of the topic, and the worries which stood behind it, was demonstrated, above all, as James Brennan has recently shown, in the vitriolic response, of which Mzoo's missive was one example, to a letter sent by Flowarose Salama binti Arubati to *Mambo Leo* in November 1945, in which she controversially lay the existence of relationships between African women and men of other races at the feet of African men. Such relationships were the product, she suggested, of the failure of African men to abide by the rules and obligations of marriage, and, moreover, defensible in Islam which knew not white and black but only Muslim, a denial of the ethical significance of race. So incendiary was her intervention in this longer-standing debate, that it provoked 'a flurry of angry responses' (in Brennan's words), lasting almost two years, from *Mambo Leo*'s largely male readership, keen to explain Flowarose's mistake and the dangers it posed.[178]

This disgrace was compounded by the absence of reciprocity at two levels, an absence which further undermined the effort to achieve a good collective reputation. African men, firstly, were not able under colonial law to make equivalent relationships with non-African women, a prohibition which highlighted their inferior status. African women, in conducting such relationships, therefore, tacitly endorsed this inequality.[179] And secondly, there was a lack of reciprocity within the relationships. A. Ramsay Mwamanda, for example, told the story of how the Indian husband of an African woman, afraid that visiting family would give 'him trouble', sent her away during the course of the visit. While the lady 'does not believe herself to be like a house servant', he argued, considering 'herself the wife of the Indian', in 'truth' the 'house servant is better than her', as unlike the wife he was not sent away by his master, but took care of the guests over the course of their

[176] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Reader A. Ramsay Mwamanda, September 1945, p.106.
[177] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Aaron M. Mzoo, January 1946, p.2.
[178] Brennan, *Taifa*, pp.130-6.
[179] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Dvr. G.E. Naftal, December 1945, p.142.

stay.[180] A woman who engaged such a relationship therefore lived, in an evocative phrase, 'in slavery without knowing herself', the servant of another race.[181] In willingly pursuing such relationships, African women became complicit in the degradation of the African community and their low standing in the eyes of other racial groups.

Again, the moral decay represented by *wahuni* and *malaya* was seen to be merely the end point of the wider explosion of selfish individualism in the conditions of the modern world, a sense articulated by George King Omolo, who emphasised the gains made by the individual in these circumstances at the expense of the racial community, and noted the alarming consequences. '[T]his pernicious moral degeneration among certain Africans', he lamented, was the product of 'the new and sudden idea of individualism among the young and inexperienced African community', brought by colonialism, which 'had done grave havoc morally'. An insidious liberalism, the rise of the 'lamentable yet popular gospel among the bewildered African community' of 'Don't interfere with individual or personal way [sic] of living', he argued, meant that 'our future is undoubtedly in danger'.[182] Anarchy threatened to overrun community as people detached themselves from the storied groups and associated obligations into which they were born.

Education and the educated were widely seen as being central to this context. For some, the attitude of the educated was marked precisely by this new selfish individualism. One writer in *Baraza*, for example, asserted that 'Africans will never reach a high degree of civilization as long as they look down on those who are more backwards', and by extension the traditions, the way of life of their group. Education, he implied, caused its beneficiaries to turn away from others in their natural community, like St Peter to deny what they were and who they knew. 'The old ways should not be despised', he went on, and he added, tellingly, 'it should be remembered that home life is the basis of all good citizenship'.[183] Another warned 'the educated class of Africans' in February 1948, 'telling them that education is not responsible for poverty or riches.' He was clear that 'True

[180] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Reader A. Ramsay Mwamanda, September 1945, p.106.
[181] *Mambo Leo*, Letter K.S.J. Mbalaminwe, July 1945, p.81.
[182] *East African Standard*, 4th April 1947, supplement 'b'.
[183] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 5th February 1949.

education should make people work harder; should produce active and reliable citizens,' and not, by implication, either men on the make, concerned only with themselves, or embarrassed shedders of involuntary obligation.[184] The people should not be misled in the pursuit of education away from the proper basis of both prosperity and moral development. 'Discipline', beginning within the household, and not the knowledge of whites, was, it was popularly believed, the basis of civilisation.[185]

New ideas and practices posed further difficulties. The 'African' culture described by Martin Kayamba was seen by many as intrinsically valuable, and in need of defence in the face of potential alternatives. In this vein, *Mzee* Waziri wrote in *Mambo Leo* that 'It is not right for an African to imitate all that a *Mzungu* accomplishes.' While he 'recognise[d] that *Wazungu* are our teachers', it was, he insisted, essential that Africans should 'be ourselves'.[186] Every community had its own nature and traditions, handed down generation to generation. Respected and vigorous communities adhered to these. Without them, community died.

For others, in contrast, education and the educated were essential to the development of a good collective life. For Martin Kayamba, as for many others, the question faced by Africans as they sought to rescue civil, reputable and prosperous communities from the jaws of the modern world, was how to borrow from the best of European ideas while remaining African.[187] '[U]nless the present civilisation' of Europeans 'is destroyed', he wrote, 'which I think almost impossible[,] the African will shape his African civilisation according to the model before him; like a painter who paints a landscape'. 'How', he went on to ask, 'in this much involved world is an African to produce entirely his own civilisation, unaffected by his environment unless he were confined to a world of his own – a zoological garden or a riveted water-tight compartment?' It was clear to him that 'the African will shape his own destiny, assisted by outside influences from which he will select what he should

[184] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 7th February 1948.
[185] *Mambo Leo*, Letter S.S. Mhuza, February 1945, p.22.
[186] *Mambo Leo*, Letter *Mzee* Waziri, May 1945, p.58.
[187] See also Brennan, *Taifa*, pp.126-7.

permanently or temporarily retain.'[188] New practices and ideas had to be engaged, not merely ignored in a misguided worshipping of the past.

In the same spirit, the Dodoma Branch of the African Association asked the Tanganyika government, in July 1944, for information on 'how other countries are ruled, how independent countries rule themselves, and how people of other countries are striving for social, economical [sic], cultural and political progress'. They requested 'Biographies of great men of all nations ancient and modern, and of famous American Negroes, South Africans and West Africans… Historical books telling how various nations made their way to advancement, freedom and greatness', books 'giving information about conditions and progress about Africans and about African Leaders in Africa, Europe and America', books on the 'conditions, development and progress in various parts of the African continent', and books which would encourage the development in people and nations of 'good and noble qualities'.[189] They sought, in short, material which would help them to reflect on and understand the world in which they lived, and which would provoke thought on how a good collective life could be built in the conditions of the mid-twentieth century, how their community could be made to flourish.[190]

Man, according to J.F. Kanyua, had to adapt himself 'to changing conditions of living, changes' which were 'very often drastic indeed'. The adoption of Western education was a key part of this. While 'the Aborigines of Australia' had shown no capacity for adaptation, and as a consequence had been wiped out, 'the native African had displayed a great capacity', he argued, and 'that great desire for ever improving his condition', for which 'proper and liberal facilities for education' were necessary, the provision of which would allow 'in a few centuries' (although there is no reason to assume this timeframe was more widely accepted) 'the African… to play his part as a

[188] Kayamba, *African Problems*, p.87, p.92.
[189] Cited in Hunter, 'Languages of Politics', pp.142-3.
[190] J. Lonsdale, 'Writing Competitive Patriotisms in Eastern Africa', in *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* (Athens, 2009), p.257.

citizen of the world'.[191] Africans must, as a correspondent in *Baraza* wrote, 'extract from their [i.e. a European] way of life what is best suited to the African.'[192]

For many, moreover, if the group was to advance the educated must to be promoted to positions of power. A correspondent in *Baraza*, for example, did 'not agree that we', Africans, 'should have illiterate Chiefs even though they have the gift of ruling', because 'they cannot understand the changes in the present development of the Colony. A Chief should educate his people so an illiterate will be no good', he explained.[193] It was equally clear to a correspondent in the *Colonial Times* that while 'some illiterate Chiefs and Elders have ruled in the past with a measure of popular support[,] conditions are changing and such rulers are becoming increasingly at a disadvantage.'[194] It was obvious to Kanyua, wading into a debate over who should properly represent Africans in the Legislative Council, 'that what the African of this country wants at this critical stage of his development, are men with brains, courage and initiative, to lead him out of the lull, poverty and ignorance he is engrossed in at present.' He was adamant that if the group was to leave behind their disreputable poverty, then young men could not 'be disqualified from holding positions of trust merely because they have no grey hairs'.[195]

Education might provide not only (some of) the skills needed to flourish in the modern world, but (in an argument which is worth lingering over, because it shows precisely how much and how little was at stake in these debates) might also help to secure the very foundations of a good collective life, particularly when given to women. '[A]s all know', wrote Daniel M. Wako, 'a family is the unit of a country or a nation and family life must largely determine the quality of any people's civilisation. It follows, therefore', he went on 'that among a people so young in civilisation as Africans are, anything calculated to uplift us must, among other things, focus on the betterment of our (African) families or we are sure to develop a morbid civilisation.' To leave wives (the key agents

[191] *East African Standard*, Letter J.F. Kanyua, 29th December 1944, p.7.
[192] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 5th February 1949.
[193] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 21st June 1947.
[194] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Colonial Times*, 5th July 1947.
[195] *East African Standard*, Letter J.F.G. Kanyua, 13th June 1947, p.12.

of socialisation) uneducated, he argued, focussing his aim (and echoing an argument widely stated by missionaries[196]), could 'upset' the 'healthful influence of civilisation' learnt by some men 'when working with good Christian Europeans, or in normal schools.' He was insistent that 'The families that are bringing up the African leaders of tomorrow must be straightened today', and that, therefore, educational courses must be made available to women. 'Children from such homes', he wrote, 'would have habits of work and manners which would be a definite improvement compared with the present wrongly brought up youths who despise labour, with no love for their homes and families, strutting along our towns' highways obsessed with a mania for political power.' Wako, like the critics of education, understood the household to be the essential basis of civilisation, and was haunted by an image of a new, and urban, delinquency. He was clear, however, that custom had failed to provide a responsible basis for the future. Given that 'African civilisation will not begin from the towns and cities but from the reserves in rural occupations and healthful family life', he argued, a 'real foundation that will help produce real African citizens' was necessary and this demanded a foundation for all in the Christian religion and, therefore, female education.[197] As a correspondent in *Baraza* wrote, education for women would help 'them to become good citizens' and so benefit their children, the future of the community.[198]

Again, it was typically argued, that a key part of the emergence from this crisis of civil, reputable and prosperous communities was an acceptance that Africans had to work hard on their own behalf, rather than waiting for external aid. As Kenyatta put it to an African audience on his return from the UK in 1946, 'The most important thing we Africans ought to know is this: That we should attain maturity, that we should be honest in our hearts.' This did 'not mean putting on a nice tie', the item of clothing which gave its name to the educated African elite, the oft-scorned *taitai*, the symbol of their cultural cringe, but rather 'having the desire to work hard with our hands'.[199] In

[196] Koponen, *Exploitation*, pp.524-5.
[197] *East African Standard*, Letter Daniel M. Wako, 9th April 1948, p.11.
[198] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 12th February 1949.
[199] Muoria, 'Home Coming', p.277. On *taitai* see Lonsdale, 'KAU's Cultures', p.118, and Anderson, *Histories*, p.190.

doing so, they would develop a collective moral fibre, enhance the reputation of the community and bring a desperately desired material progress.

An editorial in the Swahili-language *Radio Posta*, therefore, warned people against relying on the government to provide them with everything they wanted, such as shops, funding for scholarships, hospitals and so on. The author was clear that 'if Africans want all these things to run smoothly they must work for themselves'. Drawing the biblical analogy that Kenyatta would make famous in the early 1960s, he was adamant that '*manna* from heaven will never descend', and pulled no punches in arguing that 'if that is what they [Africans] have been waiting for then they are a group of idiots, a group of self-satisfied, irresponsible, unimaginative, carefree, stupid beings with the brains of a donkey and the minds of little children.'[200]

Progress was not to be found in begging from the Government, wrote Simeon Muya (who we met earlier on) in *Mambo Leo*, which was a 'shallow hope' without 'any foundation at all'. If the people of Europe, he went on using a familiar analogy, had simply begged that their 'needs' were fulfilled 'by their teachers the Romans', then 'they would [still] be at the bottom'. The implication was that even were the colonial government to provide the development which Africans desired, this would still not offer a basis for a sustainable prosperity. African progress had to be built upon the efforts they made on their own behalf. 'Therefore gentlemen and ladies of our continent of Africa', he grandly concluded, 'know that the foundation of our *ustaarabu* is offering ourselves with vigour to do things'. This, he made clear, would be not only the basis for material progress, but of a decent and reputable community. Hard work would ensure that famine and hunger were kept at bay, that debts 'to Indians and Arabs' did not bring bankruptcy, and at the same time develop the moral fibre of the group, the proper basis for external recognition, ensuring that 'Many people of our country' would not 'be bandits and thieves', and that prostitution would not 'increase more than

[200] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Radio Posta*, 29th September 1948.

it is now'. Self-help was the antidote to immorality, the basis of a strong society and good reputation, and the springboard to prosperity. It would, in short, 'bring us true *ustaarabu*'.[201]

In 1940s Kenya and Tanganyika, then, African thinkers developed conceptually similar visions of ethnic and racial communities as they attempted to impose order on a world which appeared to be dangerously shaken up, and public argument centred on the disputed effort to make these groups civil, reputable and prosperous. As these visions developed, however, thinkers in the two territories began to think about the relationship between these communities in somewhat different ways. The emergence of these differences is the subject of the following two sections.

[201] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Simeon Mbaruku Muya, July 1946, p.74.

IV

In the period before the 1940s, nascent images of ethnic and racial communities co-existed in Kenya. According, for example, to a joint petition presented in 1939 to the Colonial Secretary by the Kikuyu Central Association and the Kavirondo Taxpayers' Welfare Association, protesting against aspects of the implementation of the findings of the Kenya Land Commission, land in the territory belonged to the 'Africans of Kenya' who were 'the children of the soil', and who had, therefore, 'first claim upon all natural resources of the Country' as members of particular 'tribes'.[202] Race and tribe went together. In the 1940s, however, people in Kenya began to articulate a more precise and deliberate relationship between the two, a relationship shaped by thinkers against the background of the colony's concentrated economic geography.

The immediate context of this development was not only the intensifying social crisis that marked the 1940s, and the hardening of the two visions of community that accompanied this, but also the efforts of the British to re-think their imperial mission and to re-establish their legitimacy in the colony, in part, by re-making their collaborative bargains. It was to this end, that provisions were made for the first time to give Africans direct, although not yet elected, representation in the Legislative Council, and which led to Eliud Mathu taking his seat in late 1944. This move, in turn, stimulated the formation of the KAU – a party with aspirations to represent the interests of the colony as a whole - with the aim of providing Mathu with an extra-Parliamentary support base.[203] These developments drew the colony together making, in an important sense, Kenya a single *African* unit for the first time, creating an obvious power structure, within which Africans were represented and exercised a limited degree of power which stretched beyond the confines of ethnic groups. And, in the context of Kenya, they added to the questions about the prospects of racial unity, its proper construction and implications, which were raised by social crisis. These questions were not

[202] BNA, CO 533/502/3, (Petitions from Natives, 1939), Memorandum Submitted by the Members of the Kikuyu Central Association and the Kavirondo Taxpayers' Welfare Association in Kenya, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the "Native Land Ordinance, 1938", p.1,2,4 & 18.
[203] Spencer, *KAU*, pp.127-8.

overwhelming at this stage, and people often simply ignored them: it was not until the final few years of colonial rule, as the desire to end colonialism and to think about the prospects of a post-British world grew, that these questions became entirely unavoidable.[204] Nonetheless, those thinkers who did approach these issues ploughed the imaginative ground upon which the later Kenyan nation was built.

Against a background of social crisis, pleas were regularly made in 1940s Kenya that Africans recognise their common belonging, abandoning the hedonism of their selfish individualism, and, moreover, setting aside 'tribalism', or a parochial ethnic outlook, that they act on this belonging to bring racial unity, although typically within a sub-section of Africa – generally the territory of Kenya or British East Africa - rather than across the continent as a whole. As a correspondent in *Mwalimu* put, it invoking a familiar slogan and giving expression to both, 'Unity is strength. If we want our country to progress', he continued, 'we', Africans, 'must respect one another regardless of tribe and education.'[205]

In the first place, this was a moral duty, the fulfilment of involuntary obligations conferred by descent, as Jomo Kenyatta frequently reminded audiences. African people were one and should, therefore, act on this oneness as, he claimed, he had done during his time in Europe, where he had worked in the interests of black people irrespective of their ethnic background.[206] Elaborating on the point, he explained that the new Githunguri teacher training college was to be open to 'the children of all tribes' precisely because 'the service I have been performing, and intend to perfom now, is concerned with my desire to uplift all Africans without discriminating as to who is this and who is that.'[207]African people shared a community of descent and incurred obligations to other Africans, irrespective of their ethnic background, as a consequence. 'We should remember that our fight is not for the Kikuyu people alone, nor for the Masai alone, nor the Kamba people alone, nor yet for the people of Mombasa alone', said Kenyatta. 'We should appreciate that we're all black people,

[204] See e.g., Maxon, *Conflict and Accommodation*, Chs.8 & 9.
[205] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mwalimu*, 7th August 1946.
[206] Muoria, 'Kenyatta is Our Reconciler', p.349.
[207] Muoria, 'Home Coming', p.255.

that everyone is our brother and sister of one mother. We ought not', he concluded, 'to shut our eyes and restrict ourselves to one place'.[208] Young people, a correspondent in *Baraza* insisted, making the same point, should therefore understand that tribe was only one part of the community. People, he urged, must come to think of themselves as 'Kenya Africans', and act in a manner which reflected this.[209]

Unity of this kind, it was argued, would enable all African people to overcome the challenges presented by the modern world; disunity would merely perpetuate their degradation, a point clearly made in an editorial in *Radio Posta* in early 1948. 'The future of this country depends on us', the writer asserted, and therefore Africans in Kenya should 'begin now to lay the foundation stone of our future', which meant joining 'one family in African nationalism'.[210]

For some, unity was the surest way to overcome external obstacles to African advancement, allowing Africans to speak to their colonial rulers with a single voice.[211] For most the benefits were broader. Nick E. Ngoye, writing in the *East African Standard*, was clear that the success and 'advancements of the African community' required that 'we should abolish tribal prejudices and assert friendship.' Unity would enable Africans to reap the benefits of acting on their own behalf, working together and doing 'everything by ourselves', and 'not sit[ting] idly waiting for the Government to do everything for us'.'[212] Taking Ngoye's letter as his starting point, Jashon O. Naya developed the idea, arguing that while the African could expect a little help from the government, there were some things 'which we can do ourselves, such as to abolish this deep-rooted obstacle – tribal prejudices – which hinders the understanding and co-operation of all Africans', dividing the group and depriving them of the co-operative effort which, he argued, was the only way 'to go

[208] Muoria, 'Kenyatta is Our Reconciler', p.363.
[209] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 2nd August 1947.
[210] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Radio Posta*, 2nd February 1948.
[211] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mwalimu*, 17th July 1946.
[212] *East African Standard*, Letter Nick E. Ngoye, 29th March 1946, p. supplement 'a'.

forward with our daily struggle'. Africans, he held, should work 'together as one nation' and think about their future 'as a national struggle'.[213]

Establishing racial unity was, then, both an act of self-help, and the basis of self-help, a necessary condition for engineering a reputable prosperity. On these lines, a writer in *Baraza* in 1946 urged Africans to cooperate, to consign division to the past, with the aim of establishing racial autarky - much, he claimed, as Indians in the region had. Wealth would be created by Africans, and would remain in African hands to be used for African benefit.[214] Kenyatta, getting to the heart of the matter, argued that the Kikuyu were a 'small tribe', unable to meet the challenges of the present century on their own. It was in their interests, therefore, to take their place in a larger effort to rescue the wider African community from that which threatened it. If Africans became 'united, and are ready to work hard', he argued, 'we shall be able to uplift this country of ours in all its aspects, Economically, Educationally, and in the health of our people and our bodies'.[215] The co-operation that underpinned unity would complement virtuous labour; in concert the two would make the racial group civil, reputable and prosperous.

These calls to racial unity, and the wider context of constitutional reform and the creation of *African* Legislative Council representatives, led people to begin to reflect on the relationship between tribe and race. For a few in Kenya, building racial unity meant accepting the possibility, and indeed necessity, of 'detribalisation'. Writing in the mid-1930s, for example, the Kikuyu Parmenas Mukiri had argued that the need for co-operation on a wider basis would require a willingness to allow ethnic groups to die their natural death. As the English had come to prosper having been detribalised under Roman rule, he argued, so too would Africans having been detribalised by the British.[216] In the 1940s, others put forward similar ideas. The people of Africa, wrote a correspondent in *Baraza*, should no longer be called by their tribal names, but rather should be called 'African',

[213] *East African Standard*, Letter Jashon O. Naya, 10th April 1946, p.11.
[214] *Baraza*, Letter R.H. Howieson, 7th September 1946, p.2.
[215] Muoria, 'Home Coming', p.279.
[216] Lonsdale, 'Contests of Time', p.240.

which was, he claimed, the equivalent of 'British, American, French etc.'[217] In becoming African, people must shed their tribal skins.

This attitude was, however, far from typical. Faced by an emphasis on the need for racial unity, many – including those most closely involved with the KAU – worried precisely that ethnic distinctiveness, tribes and their honourable histories, were under threat. Racial unity could be seen as a form of cultural amnesia, a potential threat to the very existence of the ethnic group. This worry betrayed an assumption of a difference in the nature of ethnic and racial communities, the former, with all the paraphernalia of indirect rule, chiefs, native treasuries, local native councils and so on, closer to the people than the latter, which was widely shared. Addressing this concern, the KAU supporter N. Omondy-Gandy, sought to soothe the worries he felt had disrupted a meeting of the KAU in Nyanza Province in mid-1947, and of the KAU's critics more generally, by attempting to make clear that '[T]o unite' in the KAU 'does not mean to detribalise Kenyan Africans as it is felt in Nyanza'. Any person joining the organisation, and attempting to give expression to the ideal of racial unity, he emphasised, would still belong 'to a certain tribe in Kenya.'[218] Unity, he implied, would allow for the pursuit of a good life for Africans, while at the same time recognising their diversity and their distinctiveness. Tribalism and tribe were not the same thing.

The insistence that racial unity must be constructed to respect ethnic diversity was a frequent theme in the African press. In the minds of many, this imperative placed important limits on the extent of non-ethnic authority. Where these limits stood was, at this stage, less clear than the insistence that the principle should be acknowledged: as we shall see, the question of how to draw the balance between ethnic diversity and wider unity was a key subject of argument in the early 1960s, as independence approached. Nonetheless, the direction of the argument was clear. A correspondent in *Mumenyereri*, for example, criticised the editor of the territory-wide, Swahili-language paper *Mwalimu* for what he considered to be his attempt to interfere in the internal affairs

[217] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 1st March 1947.
[218] *East African Standard*, Letter N. Omondy-Gandy, 18th July 1947, p.13.

of the Kikuyu.[219] A correspondent in *Baraza*, upholding the sentiments of an earlier letter, argued that it was not the place of the KAU to attempt to remove chiefs, which was a matter for their own people.[220] And expressing the point more generally, the writer of a letter which appeared in *Baraza* in October 1947 asserted that while 'the Meru people have now realised the importance of [the] KAU', they were equally clear that 'What is not needed is Kenyatta's booming voice among them setting the crooks straight'. The internal problems of the Meru were for the Meru themselves, and not for any outsider.[221] Respecting ethnic diversity meant accepting limits to the extent of non-ethnic power and authority.

For many, indeed, tribe not only had a right to a continued existence, but was the necessary basis of wider racial unity: 'Charity', argued Henry Muoria, 'begins at home'. The rewards of ethnic unity would provide firm evidence of the value of pulling together more generally, 'showing' other Africans, he continued, 'what we have achieved ourselves among our own people', a pattern for racial unity.[222] He was clear that 'unity starts at the home with the family, then the tribe, nation or race'.[223] His hero Kenyatta, the arch-proponent of African unity, went further, emphasising the deeper need for an ethnic foundation. Ethnicity and race, he held, were qualitatively different. Tribes were story-telling groups, the domain of the 'deep histories' which made man moral and therefore capable of wider interaction.[224] Ought then followed from is: to detribalise men and women was to lose all possibility of vigorous wider community. Rejecting any sense of belonging and standing, therefore, outside of the relationships, institutions and storied histories that constituted real community, deracinated individuals served only themselves.[225] It was only by 'respect[ing] one another', and specifically man's ethnic origin, not by destroying it, that 'we will succeed in our tasks'

[219] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 1st October 1946.
[220] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 20th July 1946.
[221] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 4th October 1947.
[222] Muoria*, Gikuyu*, pp.161-2.
[223] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mumenyereri*, 23rd February 1948.
[224] Lonsdale, 'KAU's Cultures', p.115. A. MacIntyre, 'Is Patriotism a Virtue?', in D. Matravers and J. Pike, (eds.), *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology* (London, 2003), pp.286-300.
[225] Lonsdale, 'Moral and Political Argument', pp.88-9. Lonsdale, 'Jomo Kenyatta', pp.49-51.

Kenyatta asserted.[226] The wider (if not universal) good, must be sought from a starting point that was necessarily particular. Ethnic belonging did not foreclose the possibility of wider community, but, on the contrary, opened it up, each level building upon the last. Racial unity, therefore, had not only to respect ethnic diversity, but ethnicity in all its diversity was indispensable in the construction of racial unity.

Hardening visions of racial community and constitutional reform marked only part of the context against which people considered the relationship between tribe and race. In Kenya, both the tendencies to consider the relationship between tribe and race and to organise the two into a distinctive hierarchy were reinforced by the historical coincidence of the prominence the territory's economic geography gave to one ethnic group, the Kikuyu, the black half of Kenya's economic heart, a pre-eminence that was sharply growing in the context of the ordeal of the 1940s, and which is worth recapping. Proximity to Nairobi, for example, walking distance from Kiambu, had made Kikuyu migrants highly visible in the African population of the capital from an early stage of colonial rule, where, by virtue of their access to education, they dominated the market in skilled jobs, and where by the 1930s Kikuyu landlords (male and female) owned around half of African lodgings.[227] The activities of enterprising Kikuyu female traders, who began to hawk their wares in large numbers in the same decade, added to the Kikuyu presence. And as the 1940s progressed, Nairobi's booming population became increasingly Kikuyu as both the land short from the reserves and some of those spurned by white patrons in the Rift Valley drifted into the city. While, then, in 1948, the year of the territory's first census, Kikuyu made up 56% of the 30,000 strong African workforce, by 1952, they were 75% of the city's 60,000 African workers – in other words, accounting almost single-handedly for the city's surging population.[228]

The land controversies, both at home and in the Rift Valley, which drove this growing Kikuyu migration made the group more luminous yet. It was very largely Kikuyu land issues, in the face of

[226] Muoria, 'Kenyatta is Our Reconciler', p.363. Lonsdale, 'Moral and Political Argument', p.88.
[227] Lonsdale, 'Anti-Colonial Nationalism', p.332. Lonsdale, 'Moral Economy', p.357.
[228] Anderson, *Histories*, p.189.

land alienation and, more importantly, growing commercial production, which led to the setting up of the Kenya Land Commission in the early 1930s, at which the majority of hearings, along with one third of the final report, were dedicated to Kikuyu problems.[229] In the 1940s, the growing land shortage in the Kikuyu home districts was compounded by the issues that afflicted their diaspora, both in the Rift Valley and amongst those moved to Olenguruone, as white farmers on the make repudiated black tenants. A shared city life, along with an active press, publicised these difficulties. Former squatters seeking land away from the white farms, moreover, caused a great deal of worry for the people into whose areas they moved.[230] Washington Ondicho, head of the Kericho branch of the Kisii Union, for example, asked the Provincial Commissioner in 1946 to remove around four hundred Kikuyu who were occupying Gusii land.[231] On similar grounds, a writer in *Baraza* was moved to communicate the following year on the 'uncertain future of the Masai'. He was concerned that 'nearly all the tribes surrounding the Masai Reserve are claiming land therefrom', and concluded that 'evidently these tribes are planning for a prosperous life for their future generations, notwithstanding the future of the Masai'.[232] For those seeing incomers, their movement raised questions about the obligations racial unity might bring, obligations hinted at by Benjamin M. Herman, a Kikuyu from Kiambu, when he criticised the actions of the Kisii Union in demanding the removal of Kikuyu immigrants from their reserve. Were the Kikuyu 'Whites or Indians', he asked in *Baraza*, and if not, as fellow Africans, he implied, did they not merit better treatment than they were currently receiving from the Gusii?[233] In turn, this press coverage reinforced the sense of Kikuyu prominence in the territory more generally.

Kikuyu, finally, had long been central in the politics of the colony, a product of their close involvement in the colonial economy. The territory's first African political organisation, the East African Association, led by Harry Thuku, grew up in this area in the years immediately following the

[229] Sorrenson, *Land Reform*, p.22.
[230] Parsons, 'Being Kikuyu', pp.75-7. Kanogo, *Squatters*, pp.108-9.
[231] Maxon, *Conflict and Accommodation*, pp.127-8.
[232] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 15th March 1947.
[233] *Baraza*, Letter Benjamin M. Herman, 7th September 1946, p.2.

First World War. In the 1930s, the Kikuyu Central Association was prominent in the campaign to overturn the decisions of the Kenya Land Commission, not only in Central Kenya, but in those other areas affected.[234] What became the Taita Hills Association, for example, began life in the late 1930s as a branch of the KCA.[235] And in the 1940s, it was Kikuyu centrality in the African life of the territory which led the colonial government to select the Kikuyu Mathu (the alternative being the equally Kikuyu Peter Mbiyu Koinange) as the first nominated African member of the Legislative Council. In turn, the KAU, similarly, grew up in the area, both reflecting and broadcasting this peculiar centrality.[236]

Accusations of the ethnic specificity of the KAU, and their rebuttal, became common in the press. A commentator in the *East African News Review* noted in 1947, for example, that Africans in Kenya, and especially the Luo, were suspicious of the KAU because it grew up in Nairobi and was controlled from there by Kikuyu.[237] In the same paper, another writer felt compelled to refute what he took to be the damaging, but routine, idea circulating that the KAU was a solely Kikuyu organisation, about which the other peoples of Kenya knew nothing.[238] Contributions in both *Sauti ya Mwafrika*, the short-lived mouthpiece of the party, and *Baraza* made a similar effort.[239] An editorial in *Ramogi* complained that 'although we have supported KAU in almost every respect, we do not feel it is too early to voice our views', which were that 'the new president', Kenyatta, 'has not made it his duty to make people in Nyanza and Coast Province realise the Union's activities'. As a consequence of this neglect, he warned his readers, the organisation should be avoided.[240] The feeling stuck, and two years later a correspondent in the same paper felt the need to make an appeal 'to the Luo to join [the] Kenya African Union which', and importantly, 'they have hitherto

[234] E.g. BNA, CO 533/502/3, Memorandum Submitted by the Members of the Kikuyu Central Association and the Kavirondo Taxpayers' Welfare Association in Kenya, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the "Native Land Ordinance, 1938".
[235] Bravman, *Making Ethnic Ways*, p.241.
[236] Spencer, *KAU*, p.128, p.136.
[237] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *East African News Review*, 3rd July 1947.
[238] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *East African News Review*, 24th July 1947.
[239] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Baraza*, 24th April 1948. KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Sauti ya Mwafrika*, 24th April 1948.
[240] Cited in Spencer, *KAU*, p.178. Gadsden, 'African Press ', p.522.

regarded as being exclusively Kikuyu.'[241] Stung by these accusations, the party took steps in July 1948 to counteract them, announcing their intention to form a new central committee, consisting of twenty members consciously drawn from across Kenya, and four vice-presidents, representing the territory's four main provinces – Central, Coast, Nyanza and Rift Valley. Nothing, however, was heard of these plans again after their initial announcement, as the structures of the KAU became moribund.[242]

The impact of Kikuyu incandescence was profound. It not only created a particular fear of the Kikuyu, but, more generally, a context in which invocations of racial unity made against a background of social crisis and, most immediately, constitutional reform, brought almost inescapably into view the image of tribe, of ethnic particularity, and led people to ask searching questions about both the right of ethnic groups to recognition, and the nature and origins of accountable power: who, people asked, did power serve? In seeking answers to these questions, thinkers shaped a vision of community which was firmly grounded, in the first instance, upon tribe.

These concerns and their implications were outlined (very often in shared English or Swahili-language forums) in the context of public discussions of planned constitutional developments, in a way, as we shall see, that was not seen in Tanganyika. Writing in the *East African Standard* in August 1947, the pseudonymous 'Coast-Man', for example, denied that the 'African representing the Coast Province' in the Legislative Council should be 'selected from either Nyanza or Central Province'. He pointed, firstly, to the problem of recognition, asserting that steps should be taken to ensure that no one other than 'an African from the Coast Province' should represent this area in the Legislative Council. He was adamant, defending both the reputation of his people and the right of 'tribes' to make decisions about their own lives, 'that there are Coast Africans who have enough education for such nomination'. He then went on to directly address the issue of power, warning that the 'leaders of the Coast African Association [should] not be misled by talks [sic] of people who are *endeavouring to raise themselves up amongst other Africans'*, by denying that the Coast was capable of

[241] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 15th June 1949.
[242] Spencer, *KAU*, p.180.

representing itself. He worried that accountable power was located within ethnic groups; that power would serve only an ethnic constituency and not all Africans equally. [243]

The same emphasis was placed by Odongo Oher in a letter written to the same newspaper. Addressing both the KAU and the issue of African representation in the Legislative Council, he argued that, despite the protestations of its leaders, 'To me the KAU is a purely Bantu organisation', which 'confines its activity to Bantu areas in Kenya', and which aimed 'to achieve political domination for Bantu'. Such 'a partial organisation' could not reasonably 'call itself a Kenya African organisation', he argued. While he acknowledged, implicitly, that 'Africans' were a community of sorts, and explicitly both the desirability of pan-ethnic unity and the possibility that the KAU could represent all Africans in Kenya by 'changing its constitution and its political dreams to suit all families in Kenya', he felt that until unambiguous steps had been taken in that direction, an organisation which represented the neglected interests of 'Nilotics and Nilotic-Hamitics', consisting of '(a) Masai and Turkana; (b) Nandi and Elgon; (c) Teso and Luo in Kenya', who were 'one family', should be created to meet the need for unity while ensuring that unaccountable power did not deprive them of their legitimate desires or threaten their very existence. This group should be given representation in the Legislative Council, so that 'if the Governor appoints or nominates two Bantus there should be two Africans of the Nile family group to represent Nile Family interests in Kenya.' The group should be 'well protected in the Kenya Legislature.'[244] Anticipating the emphasis placed by the Kenya African Democratic Union and their supporters in the early 1960s, as they argued about the construction of the regions upon which the proposed *majimbo* constitution was to be built, he argued that community had to be constructed as ever widening concentric circles, building at each level upon assumed cultural similarity, in order to protect ethnic groups against the loss of reputation and prosperity, through non-recognition and the exercise of unaccountable (and, therefore, illegitimate) power.

[243] *East African Standard*, Letter 'Coast-Man', 8th August 1947, p.12. My emphasis.
[244] *East African Standard*, Letter Odongo Oher, 5th March 1948, p. supplement 'a'.

Thinkers in Kenya, then, often invoked both racial and ethnic communities, acknowledging obligations to, and the value of, both. References to both were included, for example, in the imagery of the crest that was adopted by the Luo Union in 1952. The badge consisted of the picture of a 'dog whose body is severed in two by a knife', an image which 'reminds the members about the oath that they have taken with their people', symbolising the involuntary obligations Luo incurred by virtue of their ethnic descent. In turn, this was set within a 'map of Africa' which 'shows that we are ready to join with all other Africans in Africa for the purpose of having better progress and peaceful living in our country, and also to build a large African Nation in Africa.'[245] But, as the arrangement of these images suggests, the relationship between ethnicity and race was carefully organised, and writers (in general) adamant that ethnicity was the *essential* building block of wider unity: without it, racial unity was neither desirable nor possible.

This was reflected in the recurring image of ethnic federation as a model for African unity, a vision implicit in the insistences, noted above, of the need to respect tribe in building a wider unity, and explicit in the ideas of 'Coast-Man' and Odongo Oher. Along similar lines, a leader article in *Mwalimu* called, in early 1947, for 'one strong organisation for Africans', endorsing the effort to promote racial unity, consisting of 'all existing tribal associations and unions'.[246] Another argued 'that unity is strength' and suggested, tellingly, that to this end 'all the Chiefs in Kenya should form a Council which will be supported by small unions of different tribes.'[247] The editor of *Ramogi*, both implicitly acknowledged the importance of unity and offered an ethnic federation of sorts as the basis of African unity when he asserted that he 'disagrees with' what he took to be 'the KAU's suggestion that the African representatives in the Legislative Council should be nominated regardless of tribe or province': African representation should rather, he argued, be firmly rooted in ethnic communities.[248] And even the KAU, while never setting out in full its vision of community,

[245] BNA, FCO 141/6712, Rules of the Luo Union, p.2.
[246] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mwalimu*, 4th February 1947.
[247] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Mwalimu*, 18th February 1947.
[248] KNA, PC/NKU/2/27/34, *Ramogi*, 1st February 1947.

envisaged itself as representing 'all the various tribes of Kenya Colony' with the aim of 'bring[ing] unity and understanding among the tribes of this Colony.'[249]

For others, indeed, the insistence that the basic unit to which man was attached and obliged was the ethnic group, led to greater possibility than the KAU allowed for when it came to the area over which federation should exist. Henry Muoria, to take only one brief example, declared himself unsure whether it would be the 'Africans of Kenya or East Africa – Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika', who would 'work together in unity for the good of all of us.'[250] Ironically, the context defined by the structures of the Kenyan state encouraged visions of racial unity that were not confined to that territory. The emphasis placed upon ethnicity as man's original community allowed for a greater imaginative flexibility. Whatever the territory it covered, however, the direction of thought was clear.

What precisely an 'ethnic federation' might look like, how in practice tribe and race could be brought and held together, and what the appropriate balance between racial unity and ethnic diversity was, remained unclear in this period, indeed, they remained questions that were barely addressed. These issues would be the subject of argument both between the Kenya African National Union and the Kenyan African Democratic Union, and within those parties, in the early 1960s, as the pressures imposed by a rapidly approaching independence demanded greater clarity of thought. By the late 1940s, the grounds of a distinctively Kenyan vision had, nonetheless, been laid.

An understanding of race was not, then, made simply in the same circumstances as ethnicity, building upon the same worries, issues and intellectual currents, but its extent and limits were defined in a dialogue with tribe. The prospect of power and calls to African unity raised questions in people's minds about the relationship between ethnic and racial communities, questions which were supercharged by the prominence of the Kikuyu in the life of the colony, and against which thinkers shaped a distinctively Kenyan vision of community. In this context, race and tribe were imagined to be both conceptually similar, and qualitatively different. Thinkers deemed

[249] BNA, CO 533/537/21, Memorandum by the Kenya African Union, p.1.
[250] Muoria, *Gikuyu*, p.161. Lonsdale, 'Muoria', p.16.

ethnic community to be prior to racial community, deep story-telling groups; African *ustaarabu* could only be secured by recognising and raising up ethnic groups, even as thinkers across Kenya accepted the need to create pan-ethnic unity. Tribe and race were shaped as concentric circles of community, the latter necessarily building upon the former. The story in Tanganyika was rather different.

V

Against the background of Kenya's concentrated colonialism, African thinkers organised tribe and race into a distinct hierarchy. In Tanganyika, on the other hand, intellectual engagement with a notably different context produced notably different ideas. These visions are the subject of the following section.

An insistence on the oneness of Africa, the propriety of African unity, and its necessity in the modern world had been the message at the heart of the African Association from its founding in the late 1920s. In the 1940s, in the face of growing disorder, these calls became louder. 'It shall be the duty of each and every African to do away with all tribal, religious, sectarian, economical [sic], political, cultural, educational, territorial and other differences and to work wholeheartedly to foster and promote a sense of solid brotherhood of all Africans. Africans are first Africans', a 1945 memorandum of the association insisted, and 'It is only after that that they are or may be any other things'. All had a responsibility to work in unity for their collective advancement, ignoring their private ambitions, pushing selfish individualism aside. 'The rich shall help the poor in their fight against poverty… The educated shall not look down upon the uneducated… The politically advanced shall endeavour to teach his people what he knows and thereby help the political awakening and advancement of the whole nation.' In order to achieve this, it was necessary that people recognise and act upon the knowledge that 'Africa is one country, and Africans are one nation no matter where they live or where they were born'.[251] Echoing these sentiments, C.S.M. Hamisi bin Makobe made clear in *Mambo Leo* in 1945 that it was disorder '*fitina*, witchcraft and', therefore, 'lack of unity' which cause 'our Africa to return to the ground.'[252] The relative humbleness of Africans, what they lacked in the modern world, was a product of division, and could only be solved by bringing unity to the group, an act of, and the basis for, self-help.

[251] Cited in J. Illiffe, 'The Politicians', in J. Illiffe, (ed.), *Modern Tanzanians: A Volume of Biographies* (Nairobi, 1973), p.245.
[252] *Mambo Leo*, Letter C.S.M. Hamisi bin Makobe, April 1945, p.46.

As in Kenya, thinking on racial unity was further stimulated by the efforts of the colonial state in the 1940s to remake its collaborative bargains. In 1945, the Tanganyikan government followed Kenya in granting two African nominated seats in the Legislative Council, followed by two more in 1948. By 1947, moreover, the uncertainty over the territory's constitutional status had been resolved, its former position as a 'mandate' under the old League of Nations superseded by the status of a 'trustee' of the new United Nations Organisation. Both developments presented African bodies with the unparalleled opportunity to both think through and air their ideas on future constitutional development.

Asked for their opinions on this matter, various African bodies spoke of the need for institutionalised unity among Africans, as much an opportunity to develop a deeper sense of unity among Africans as an expression of already existing unity. Like thinkers in Kenya, tribe's greater institutional presence weighed heavily on their minds. The African Members of the Legislative Council told the Trusteeship Council in 1948, for example, that while 'At present we have Native Authorities and these confine themselves to matters affecting their respective tribes in the districts', there did not exist 'a body through which the opinion of the African people in this Territory can be voiced nor is there any other way for the natives through which matters of interest to the territory, such as education, agriculture, industry and economics, can be expressed'.[253] This, they felt should be rectified. Likewise, the Nairobi branch of the Bahaya Union told the UNO in 1948 and the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union told the East African Royal Commission five years later that, respectively, 'the native population… should… be under one and the same Native Administration with a provincial Headquarters and a Central Native Treasury to receive and represent the views of the Native population before our British Government' and that 'a scheme whereby Citizens in Tanganyika are enabled to unite together to exchange views under a Tanganyika Citizens Union'

[253] BNA, CO 691/202/5, Establishment of African District, Provincial and Territorial Councils, Memorandum from Abdiel Shangali to other African Members of the Legislative Council, 26th February 1948, p.23.

should be developed.[254] All of these petitions saw the value of an institutionalised unity amongst Africans, as the means, as the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union argued, by which to solve the 'common problems' shared by Africans, to reap the advantages of common effort, as well as to provide a single voice with which to defend the interests of Africans to their colonial masters.[255]

These bodies tended to assume that this wider racial unity would respect and build upon ethnic groups. Marking a similarity with Kenya (in part, influenced by the availability of the Kenyan English and Swahili-language press, which Philip Mitchell, as Chief Secretary in Tanganyika, noted was being read by the early 1930s, especially in the north-east of the territory, where by the 1940s *Baraza* was also 'widely read'[256]), they imagined the future as an ethnic federation. Petro Njau, the leader of the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union, for example, thought that it was important for the 'people of Tanganyika to look for a way of meeting each other and getting to know each other', but was equally clear that this should be done 'in groups, that is following tribal branches'.[257] Likewise, and marking a shift away from a long established focus on the continent as a whole towards a more immediate concern with the Africans of the territory, the renamed *Tanganyika* African Association articulated a similar position in 1951. In the response to an enquiry of the Constitutional Development Committee into its views on the direction of future political development in the territory, the organisation's spokesmen explained that it seemed most likely to them that Tanganyika would 'emerge as a *Federal State*'. It was 'therefore important', they stated, 'to build on Tribal Affiliation Units and Tribal Federations with this probability in view'.[258]

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[254] BNA, CO 691/202/2, (Tanganyika: Original Correspondence. Petitions to the Trusteeship Council: Tanganyika Bahaya Union) Memorandum of the Bahaya Union, Nairobi to the Trusteeship Council, 6th August 1948, p.5**.** BNA, CO 892/10/1, Memorandum of the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union to the East African Royal Commission, 28th June 1953, p.10.

[255] BNA, CO 892/10/1, Memorandum of the Kilimanjaro Chagga Citizens Union to the East African Royal Commission, 28th June 1953, p.10. BNA, CO 691/202/5, Establishment of African District, Provincial and Territorial Councils, Memorandum from Abdiel Shangali to other African Members of the Legislative Council, 26th February 1948, p.23.

[256] BNA, CO 691/119/9, (Closer Union in East Africa: Evidence given by Tanganyika Territory Delegates to Joint Committee on Closer Union), Memorandum by Philip Mitchel, Secretary of Native Affairs in Tanganyika on the Statement of Conclusions, 1931, p.6. Hunter, 'Languages', p.159.

[257] Cited in Hunter, 'Languages of Politics', p.149.

[258] BNA. CO 691/208/12, Memorandum of the Tanganyika African Association to the Constitutional Development Committee, 21st May 1951, p.4. My emphasis.

In part, the emphasis on ethnic federation was a practical matter. Like others, the Tanganyika African Association acknowledged a difference between the way in which ethnic and racial communities existed, and sought to build upwards towards a wider unity from the ethnic institutions - the native authorities - which were already in place. Moreover, with the aim of sustaining the 'interest' of the people in 'development', they emphasised the principle of subsidiarity. 'Decentralisation[,] by giving wide powers to local Authorities from Rural Provincial Councils', it was argued, would 'bring the present remote systems of Government control nearer to the people', which would be necessary 'if development is not to be hampered'.[259]

More generally, the ideas underpinning the emphasis on the hierarchical relationship between tribe and wider African unity closely mirrored those articulated in Kenya. In the first place, thinkers held that ethnic groups had a right to existence and a right to recognition. Recalling the argument of Odongo Oher, the Tanganyika African Association pointed in this direction when they spoke of the effort that should be made to restructure provincial boundaries in the territory to ensure that they built upon the 'natural inter-tribal affinities' which existed 'by virtue of a common language, ways of life, customs and other inclinations' between closely related ethnic groups, relationships which were ignored under existing arrangements.[260] Unity would respect and then build upon cultural distinctiveness.

As in Kenya, acceptance of the right to ethnic recognition demanded that limits were placed on non-ethnic power and reach. On these grounds, Petro Njau told the East African Royal Commission, that while it would be in the interests of the Chagga 'to go and ask these Masai to produce a better grade of cattle and to get the best meat' nonetheless 'it is too early… because these people are not well united yet.'[261] His assertion carried two implications. Firstly, that ethnic unity had to precede racial unity, and secondly, that it was not for ethnic others to interfere in the

[259] BNA. CO 691/208/12, Memorandum of the Tanganyika African Association to the Constitutional Development Committee, 21st May 1951, p.4.
[260] *Ibid*, p.4.
[261] BNA, CO 892/13/4, Oral evidence given by Petro Njau to the East African Royal Commission, 11th November 1953, p. 6.

affairs of their neighbours. While Njau felt that he could take the message of the importance of unity to other ethnic groups, it was the responsibility of that group to implement this, and not for outsiders to impose it. Each group had to work for itself, and only then could they come together with other groups.

And as in Kenya, ethnicity was presented by certain thinkers as the necessary cornerstone of wider unity. Tribe made man moral, belonging made man free. '[D]etribalisation', the Tanganyika African Association told the Colonial Office in 1950, in terms familiar from Kenya, was associated with 'all sorts of evils', as urban loafers in towns proved.[262] Tribe, therefore, was indispensable: to discard ethnicity was to lose all possibility of disciplined interaction at a wider level.

Nonetheless, the image of ethnic federation was noticeably less common in public discourse in Tanganyika than in Kenya. In the absence of local newspapers in Tanganyika, we must be open to the possibility that this is, to some extent, a product of the limitations of our source material, that certain ideas, amongst them wider-spread debates about Tanganyika's future as an ethnic federation, are occluded from view, present but invisible, eloquent testimony of comparison's curse. That said, and importantly, in English and Swahili-language forums, forums available in both Kenya and Tanganyika, we see a striking difference between the two territories. While north of Kilimanjaro, the image of ethnic federation appeared frequently in these newspapers, as my above examples suggest, to the south it was all but absent. Similarly, while constitutional developments in Kenya, and in particular the granting of seats in the Legislative Council to African representatives, and the associated development of the KAU, generated questions about the construction of unity, the nature of power, and the right of ethnic groups to recognition, in those newspapers, these questions were conspicuously *absent* in public debate in Tanganyika's English and Swahili-language press. While, therefore, African Legislative Council members drew criticism in letters written by Africans to the *Tanganyika Standard* in 1947 for the inadequacy of their response to the introduction of Paper 210 in the chamber, suggesting that these figures were not simply ignored, no mention was ever made of

[262] BNA. CO 691/208/12, Letter from the African Association (Territorial Headquarters), Dar es Salaam, 30th August 1950, 30th August 1950, p.4.

their ethnic background, and concerns over the nature and location of power remained unexplored.[263]

Underpinning this difference, was the differing economic geographies of the two territories. While colonialism's impact was uneven across the region, in Kenya the concentration of its associated forces generated an obvious centre in the colony, giving the Kikuyu an unmatched prominence and, in turn, creating a context in which calls to racial unity seemed inseparable from the spectre of tribe. In Tanganyika, however, the unevenness of colonial rule was more widely dispersed. No single group, therefore, faced either the contradictions of colonial rule so intimately or forcefully, nor as a consequence came to stand out so obviously, as did the Kikuyu in Kenya. In polycentric Tanganyika, therefore, Corporal Seth Mpangara could, in *Mambo Leo*, ask the '*Wazee* and youths of the whole of Tanganyika' to 'end a dispute' and inform him 'Which tribe is the biggest in the whole of Tanganyika Territory?'[264] In Kenya, by contrast, such a question was unimaginable, the answer all too obvious.

In this context, there was, then, more intellectual space. Calls to racial unity were not so intimately tied to the image of tribe, and people felt, therefore, freer to give imagination full reign. The effect of this was twofold. In the first place, there was less pressure to examine the relationship between tribe and race, which remained barely explored in popular debate in Tanganyika in the 1940s: invocations of the two communities sat alongside each other without being brought into tension. And secondly, in the freedom of this space, thinkers in Tanganyika, invigorating the territory's boundaries, imagined the existence of a distinct territorial community, a community whose members at this stage were generally referred to by letter writers in the Swahili-language press as the 'people of Tanganyika' and very occasionally as the *Watanganyika*, a people linked by nothing more than a shared national bond, a community to which tribe was *incidental*, rather than essential, a vision without counterpart in Kenya, and which was outlined in, and facilitated by, the

[263] For criticism of the reaction of African members to Paper 210, see e.g. *Tanganyikan Standard*, Letter 'Annoyed', 24th May 1947, pp.20-1.
[264] *Mambo Leo*, Letter No.378 Cpl. Seth Mpangara, June 1946, p.61.

existence of a shared English-language and Swahili-language forums - precisely the pan-ethnic forums in which thinkers in Kenya articulated their sense of difference.

As with the conceptually similar communities of tribe and race, the imagination of this community emerged as a creative response to a widespread sense of disorder and disruption, and was imagined, drawing on familiar biblical and mission models, as a bonded and bounded group, sharing a historical destiny and moving through historical time. This community was imagined to be an outgrowth of the continental community, a racially defined and territorially bounded group, tied, irrespective of tribe, to a territorial community, and which bred, as writers like Peter M. Joseph and F.K. Karata made clear, obligations to Tanganyika.[265]

Having imagined this community, patriots sought, again, to rescue it from the jaws of the modern world, and in particular from the disorder that was held to characterise it, to make this community civil, reputable and prosperous. For many writers, it was a specifically Tanganyikan community which was threatened by the selfish individualism which underpinned disorder. To return to an earlier controversy, while James Brennan understood the angry, and lengthy, response of letter writers in *Mambo Leo* to *Bibi* Flowarose's missive blaming the occurrence of inter-racial sexual relationships on the behaviour of African men to be a defence of a Tanganyikan racio-nation, the response is better seen as a defence of two overlapping, but nonetheless distinct communities, one continentally defined (discussed above) and the other specifically Tanganyikan, testimony to the range of imaginations which characterised this period. Addressing himself to this latter community, M.K.E. Baji, for example, claimed that inter-racial sexual relationships, and more particularly, arguments about these relationships in the press, hurt the reputation of the people of Tanganyika. 'Our newspaper', he argued, taking aim at Flowarose, was not the place 'to write things which do not have meaning', because 'when you carelessly write those things you cause disgrace to our newspaper', as 'foreigners and many other people will see we people of Tanganyika are still in darkness'. Rather than engaging controversy of this kind, he argued, people should focus their

[265] *Mambo Leo*, Letter Peter M. Joseph, March 1946, p.26. *Mambo Leo*, Letter F.K. Karatta, September 1946, p.97.

efforts on 'rais[ing] up our country of Tanganyika'.[266] The 'wordiness' of newspaper letter writers, he held, hurt the reputation of the community as much as the actions of the selfishly individualistic prostitutes.[267] And, as his final comment suggested, these disreputable words and actions, and the selfish individualism and greedy materialism which underlay them, were obstacles not merely to a good reputation, but to the civility which must be the foundation of *ustaarabu*.

New ideas and practices, closely linked to social hierarchy and social position were, again, understood to present both a threat to and an opportunity for the people of Tanganyika. A.O. Wage, for example, criticised the idea that Tanganyika could not make progress until education was widespread. What was needed to bring progress, he argued, was not useless lessons but disciplined agricultural labour. The educated, by implication, served themselves, neglecting the labour that would bring a collective prosperity.[268] For others, a cultural audit was needed, led by those with education and experience, as soldiers, of the world beyond Africa, people who had had the opportunity to examine 'the character and *ustaraabu* of various countries and tribes'. Their experience had endowed them with a 'DEBT WE HAVE FOREVER', the repayment of which would bring 'gratitude' from 'the *Watanganyika* of tomorrow', who would enjoy, as a result of their forebearers' efforts, 'high standards'.[269] Likewise, I. Selemani and M.A. Max, argued that the *ustaraabu* of other groups should be examined and that because the *ustaraabu* of the 'Whites' was acknowledged to be 'the best *ustaraabu*', it should be imitated, and in particular the habit of educating women as well as men should be copied. They concluded that 'By loving my country and my people of Tanganyika' and hoping for 'good development' the people of Tanganyika should 'co-operate with our wives' so as to 'eliminate darkness and fog' and bring a reputable prosperity to the community.[270]

[266] *Mambo Leo*, Letter M.K.E. Baji, August 1946, p.86.
[267] On 'wordiness', see Peterson, 'Writing in Revolution', pp.84-8.
[268] *Mambo Leo*, Letter A.O. Wage, October 1945, p.118.
[269] *Mambo Leo*, Letter M. 6749 T. Up. Simbanimoto, March 1946, p.25. Original emphasis.
[270] *Mambo Leo*, Letter I. Selemani and M.A. Max, June 1946, p.61.

In a familiar formulation, such writers agreed that a civil, reputable and prosperous community required the unity of the people of Tanganyika, a willingness to situate their lives within the story of the collective destiny of the group, to accept the involuntary obligation into which they were born, abandoning their self-seeking tendencies. 'Laughing and dancing only are not *ustaraabu* when still you don't know how to lead yourself', argued Sergeant Kheri Rashidi. 'Every person of Tanganyika', he insisted, had to take steps to bring into being what they already knew: that 'Unity is strength', and that without 'unity we will not be able to cause this country of Tanganyika to progress'.[271]

Unity was the basis of self-help, but, again, writers held that if the community was to flourish, unity had to be joined to hard work. Outlining this idea, Peter M. Joseph contrasted the moral scourge of African women making relationships with non-African men with virtuous rural labour. 'In countries of civilised people', he argued, women did not lazily seek out relationships with men of other races, but rather worked with their husbands so that 'they might get for themselves the necessities of life.' The household was the basis of civilisation; rural labour was the basis of community progress. Those who failed to engage in this virtuous household production were traitors who stood in the way of good community. Women who unthinkingly chased material comfort did so at the expense of the community into which they were born, frustrating the pursuit of a collective *ustaarabu*. Civilisation, he argued, did 'not come by sleeping and getting free wealth or from sinful ways like those which have been referred to in the newspaper'. Rather, he argued, 'God has said that: "Every Human will get the blessings of God for his labour"'. Every person had, by divine instruction, to use the 'intelligence and strength and hands' which were given them by the Creator 'in order to bring *ustaarabu* to your country of Tanganyika.' Involuntary obligation would be met, moral fibre would be cultivated, and wealth and good reputation would result from disciplined hard work.[272]

[271] *Mambo Leo*, Letter 44460 Sgt. Kheri Rashidi, July 1946, p.74.
[272] *Mambo Leo*, Letter AC/20116 RSM Peter M. Joseph, March 1946, p.26.

In the context of the region-wide sense of disorder that was held to characterise their world by the 1940s, then, thinkers across East Africa, seeking to re-establish social order, and drawing upon both colonial state-building categories and a model of order with its origins in the Bible, developed historically novel, and conceptually similar, visions of ethnic and racial community. In turn, these communities became the central object of public argument, understood to be threatened, above all, by the very disorder - widely assumed to have a moral basis, the rise of selfish individualism in the modern world - against which they were brought into being. Confronted by this challenge, patriots across the region sought to make these communities civil, reputable and prosperous. In turn, the hardening of these visions of community, alongside the efforts of the two colonial states to remake their collaborative bargains, raised a secondary set of questions about the relationship between tribe and race. In Kenya, these questions were supercharged by the prominence which the uneven impact of colonial rule gave to one ethnic group, a prominence which made calls to racial unity inseparable from the image of ethnic specificity, and which came to be widely asked, recurring in the popular press. In their efforts to provide answers, thinkers organised tribe and race into a distinctive hierarchy, insisting that tribe was the essential and unignorable building block of any wider racial community. In Tanganyika, by contrast, without a comparable heart, these questions appeared less pressing, the urge to organise much weaker, both impulses remaining largely the preserve of political parties with little popular purchase. In this greater intellectual space, thinkers developed a conceptually similar vision of a racially-defined, territorially-bound community, a vision without parallel in Kenya, which sat alongside visions of race and tribe in a context defined by a barely explored pluralism, a pluralism which only became intolerable in the next decade, a shift which is the subject of the next chapter, and which occurred in the context of a widespread recasting of the potential of colonial rule.

VI

Writing in the mid-1940s, the Kikuyu journalist Henry Muoria made clear that colonialism itself, the unequal relationship between metropole and periphery, stood as an obstacle to the advance of the colonised people. While the colonisers sought to 'justify their presence in Africa' by 'say[ing] that their work in Africa is to teach the Africans everything that will enable the African to become clever so that they can give them their freedom', he wrote, in reality they sought greedily 'to supress the black people' and 'to take the Africans' tribal lands for themselves'. Africans must understand, therefore, that 'their aim is to get their freedom'.[273] At this stage, however, Muoria's insistence was untypical. Outside of central Kenya, the quest for civil, reputable and prosperous community was typically seen to be compatible with continued colonial rule. While, therefore, as we saw above, certain *aspects* of colonialism were publicly, and vigorously, condemned as obstacles to material progress or as marking a failure to recognise the human potential of Africans, the link between metropole and periphery was not generally attacked. It remained intellectually and morally respectable to defend the imperial link, reformed in various ways. The claim to African 'paramountcy', in sum, named colonialism's purpose, it did not repudiate it. African thinkers, therefore, while being open-eyed to the destructive potential of colonialism, typically presented themselves as imperial subjects, and placed themselves, and their ethnic, racial and territorial communities, within a wider imperial community, holding that, properly organised, the imperial link, could be an aid to the efforts of the people of Tanganyika and Kenya to drag from disorder civil, reputable and prosperous community.[274]

A correspondent in the *East African Standard*, for example, looking forward to the 1946 visit of Arthur Creech Jones, the great white hope of Kenya's English-literate Africans, expressed his hope that the visit would 'open a new chapter in the *colonial history*' of Kenya, aiding the colonised

[273] Muoria, *Gikuyu*, pp.146-7.
[274] See also F. Cooper, *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State* (Cambridge, 2014), Ch.3 and Westcott, 'An East African Radical', pp.94-8.

people in their development.[275] Likewise, in 1951 the Luo Union, in the most demanding petition the organisation ever handed to their British rulers, argued for a colonial link reformed to acknowledge the humanity of Africans and to promote their material development. At the same time, they began and ended their petition by pledging their 'firm loyalty to H.M. [sic] the King as our guardian', making the imperial context of this reform clear.[276] Their loyalty, they held, should be rewarded with life-giving patronage.

A similar conception existed on the other side of Mount Kilimanjaro. There the imperial relationship and its future were cast into doubt in the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, and serious questions were asked about Tanganyika's future, following the collapse of the League of Nations. In the midst of all this uncertainty, however, African thinkers notably failed to see a quick independence as the key to the territory's future. Instead they asserted the need for a reformed imperial connection, but nonetheless reasserted that connection's value.[277] In this vein, A.K. Kato wrote, in light of a pro-British statement made by the African members of the Legislative Council, of his belief that 'all Africans and Europeans appreciated to hear that our M[embers] [of the] L[egislative] C[ouncil] are pro-British rule. We have been British nearly 30 years', he continued, 'and now that the war is over Africans [and] the British, I think, will have the pleasure of remaining in a good contact.'[278] As a 1950 letter of the Tanganyika African Association to the Colonial Secretary put it, for all their criticism of certain colonial policies, they were keen 'to express our appreciation of your efforts to study the Colonial problems', and to make clear 'the desire of the Africans that you take your people in England our sincere thanks for our development.' They concluded by asking that their 'good wishes' were conveyed 'to His Majesty's Government and assure her [sic] that we wish her [sic] to rule us under the United Nations Organisation', a body

[275] *East African Standard*, Letter Geo. Kariuki, 5th July 1946, p. supplement 'a'. My emphasis.
[276] BNA, FCO 141/6712, Memorandum from the Luo Union to The Rt. Hon. James Griffiths, P.C., M.P., 15th May 1951, pp.1-4.
[277] Schuknecht, *British Colonial Development*, pp.315-6.
[278] *Tanganyika Standard*, Letter A.K. Kato, 18th May 1946, p.14.

whose oversight would, as other writers made clear, help ensure that the British did not allow the perversion of their civilising mission.[279]

African thinkers in this period, then, held in tension what they took to be the destructive and creative potentials of imperial connection. Underpinned by the wrong attitude, or badly constructed, colonial rule could mean domination, the subordination of the interests of the indigenous people of Africa to their foreign masters. Properly cultivated, however, it had the potential to benefit the people subject to it, to provide an important part of the context in which Africans, as ethnic, racial or national patriots, could pursue a good collective life. This sense was not to last, however, as we shall see in the next chapter.

[279] BNA, CO 691/208/12, Letter from the African Association (Territorial Headquarters), Dar es Salaam, 30th August 1950, 30th August 1950, p.5. *Tanganyika Standard*, Letter 'Mwamba', 4th May 1946, pp.18-19.