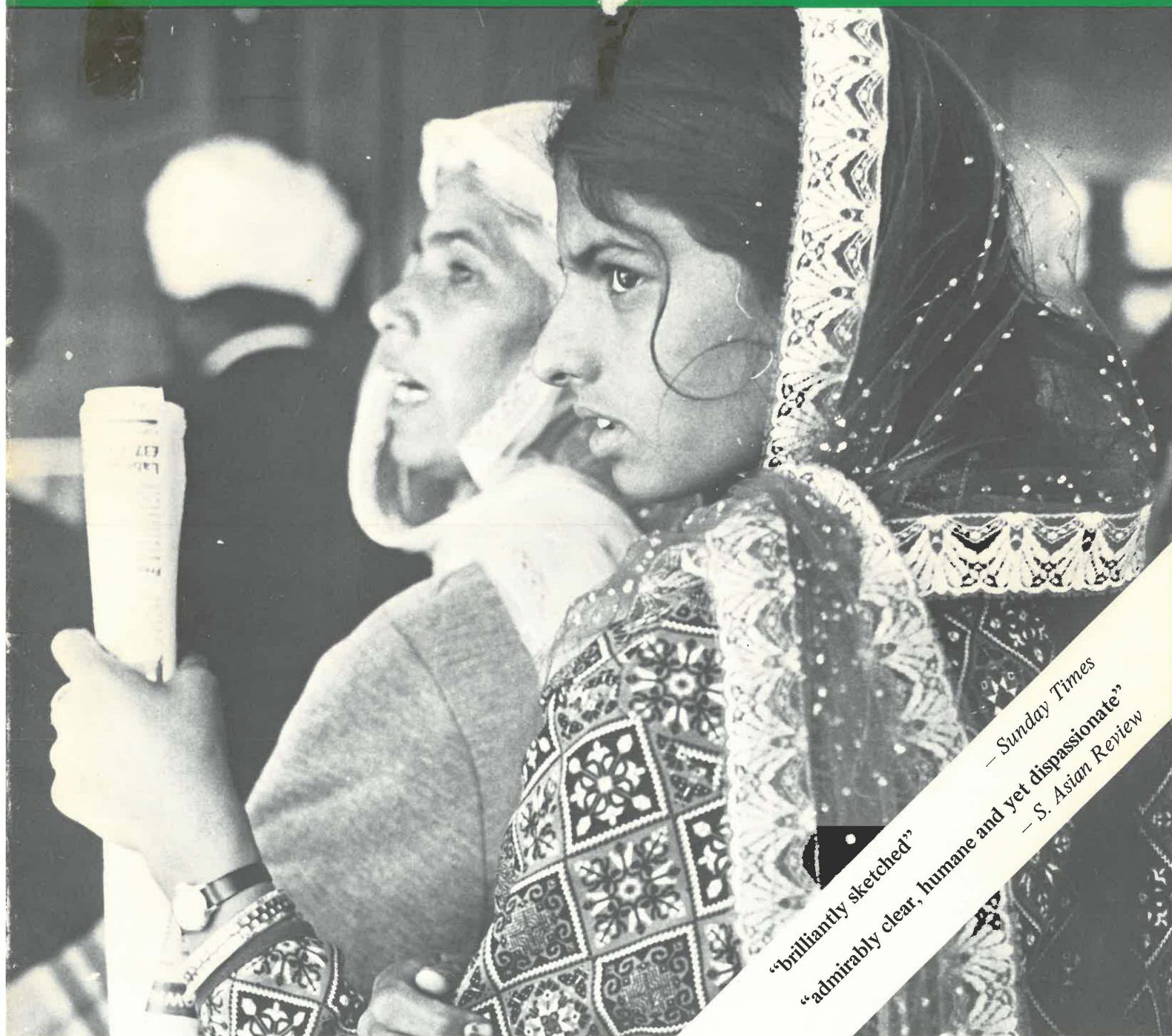


# THE ASIAN MINORITIES OF EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (up to 1971)



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- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
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# THE ASIAN MINORITIES OF EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (up to 1971)

by Yash Ghai and Dharam Ghai

From the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10th December 1948:

## *Article 1*

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

## *Article 2*

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth of other status . . .

The U.N. Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness proclaims that "a state shall not deprive a person of his nationality if such deprivation would render him stateless".

The fourth Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights states that "no one shall be deprived of the right to enter the state of which he is a national".

The United Kingdom is a signatory of both these conventions.

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## Introduction

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One of the most striking problems following in the wake of decolonization in East and Central Africa has been the situation and fate of its minorities. Of these minorities, the Asians<sup>1</sup>, for reasons of colour and economic position, are the most clearly visible.

The problem of Asian and other minorities did not, of course, arise only after independence. Most European colonies were plural societies, composed of various tribes and races, and the colonial period was by no means free from rivalries and tensions between these groups. European overrule, however, tended to contain these tensions within tolerable limits. This is not to say that conditions were ideal, and certainly the European colonial authority was seldom a passive and impartial umpire, particularly where immigrant minorities were involved. These were usually more favoured than the indigenous people, though not all immigrant groups were equally favoured.

The coming of independence changed the situation of the minorities in significant ways. There is always struggle for the control of the new state. The forces involved draw their support from tribal or regional bases and the goal for which they contend is the establishment of a state with highly centralized powers. There is little of the 'federal' sharing of power, and though alliances may be struck between groups to participate in the government, there is a strong flavour of winner-takes-all about the spoils system that characterizes these new states. To be a politically weak minority is therefore an unfortunate circumstance.

In many respects, the consequences are similar whether the minority is indigenous or immigrant. But there are also several important distinctions. First, an immigrant minority is regarded as alien — a view which is reinforced after independence when it is seen that large numbers of them are not and do not become citizens of the new state. Second, they tend to be more prosperous and privileged than the rest. These two factors often combine to mark them out for hostility and resentment. Indeed, many of the indigenous people wish to be rid of them altogether.

Unlike even small indigenous minorities, they have little political power. On the other hand, they have greater support from the outside. Their countries of origin may take a special interest in their welfare, and the former colonial power may be ascribed certain residual obligations in regard to them. Instances of racial discrimination attract more world attention than tribal forms, and to some extent the problems of immigrant minorities tend to get 'internationalized'.

Immigrant minorities are assumed to have the option of emigration and so their future is not regarded as irrevocably tied to the host country, as indigenous minorities might be, though with the latter, examples are not lacking of emigration, if only across the border. Hence the refugee problem in Africa.

Nowhere yet in independent Africa has there been enough time to make it possible to suggest any ultimate solution to the problem of immigrant minorities. But in recent years, certain trends have become apparent which have fairly clear implications for the future. This paper seeks to examine the situation of the Asian communities in East and Central Africa, which cover the countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi.

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## Part One:

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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For all practical purposes, the main immigration of the Asian communities is a recent phenomenon. At no time have they been significant numerically, although their economic importance has been quite out of proportion to their numbers. On the other hand, they have seldom exercised much political influence.

Never a dominant power in East or Central Africa, their capacity to determine historical factors has been limited. They have had no strong support from the governments of their countries of origin. They have had no ambitions of aggression and annexation. At the same time they have displayed a poor sense of history and limited vision. It is therefore not surprising if they are seen as merely responding to the forces around them rather than as influencing them. Though they have not lacked initiative and have sometimes resisted pressures, the history of the Asian communities is largely one of accommodation to the prevailing historical situation.

Asian contacts with Eastern Africa in fact go back many centuries. There is impressive documentary and archaeological evidence that trade between India and the coast of Africa flourished centuries before the advent of the Europeans. For over a thousand years, people from India were at the centre of the economic activity which brought the influences of a wider world to the east coast of Africa, not only as merchants and sailors, but also as financiers and administrators. Some Asian settlements were already established in the early 19th century, and by the middle of that century, the Asian population in Zanzibar alone was estimated at five or six thousand. Coastal settlements were also found at Kilwa Baganoyo, Pangani, Malindi and Mombasa.

There was less inland penetration in pre-colonial times, although one Musa Mzuri went as far inland as Tabora in 1825 and Allidina Visram was in Uganda in 1896, before the Uganda Railway was built. In Kenya, in 1895, there were already over thirteen thousand Asians, most of them labourers recruited for the work of railway construction then just beginning.

The colonization process gave an impetus to Asian immigration, both the immigration promoted by the European powers, and private immigration designed to exploit the opportunities opened up by colonization. The former was relatively unimportant in East and Central Africa<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For all practical purposes, the designation Asian refers to people of Indian or Pakistani origin, and indeed until the partition of the Indian subcontinent, the usual designation was Indian.

<sup>2</sup> The Germans, who had controlled Tanganyika until the First World War, had tried to recruit labourers, clerks and other personnel from India, but their overtures met with resolute resistance from the British who then controlled India.



The main recruitment of people from India was connected with the building of the Uganda railway. They were recruited on terms of indenture not only as construction workers, but also as clerks, surveyors and accountants. Contrary to popular belief, however, the present Asian population cannot be regarded as descendants of these workers. Of the 32,000 indentured, 16,312 returned to India at the expiry of their contract, 2,493 died, 6,454 were invalided home, and only 6,724 stayed on.

There was no indentured labour in Central Africa. Some 500 labourers were imported to construct the railway from Beira to Southern Rhodesia, but hardly any survived the depredations of heat, animals and insects. Railway workers were also imported in Nyasaland (later to become Malawi), where railway construction began in 1908. While some of them returned to India at the end of their contract, others stayed on. But even they constitute only a small proportion of the present Asian population.

As in East Africa, troops from India were relied on to establish 'law and order' but, here again, these Indian units were withdrawn as soon as African troops had been trained.

The majority of Asians, therefore, were those who came on their own initiative. In many ways they were different from those who came on indenture and who tended to be extremely poor, of very limited education and with little subsequent mobility. The 'free' immigrant had more ambition and enterprise. The majority came for the purposes of trade — typically, early on, in the form of the small general store known to this day as the *duka*, from the Indian word, *dukan*, meaning a shop. These store-keepers, known as *dukawalla*, were instrumental in opening shops even in remote parts of the country, buying local African produce, creating a demand for imported goods and helping to spread the use of money.

Many came as shop assistants, to work for their kinsmen but with hopes of starting their own shops. Others came as clerks and artisans, also harbouring ambitions of moving into commerce.

The great majority of the immigrants into East Africa came from Gujarat and the Punjab, with a substantial sprinkling of Goans. Most were of peasant background. In the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, on the other hand, the great majority came from Gujarat. There is thus greater cultural and linguistic homogeneity among the Asians in Central Africa than is the case in East Africa.

These forms of immigration did not depend on official efforts. In East Africa and Nyasaland clerks and artisans were indeed encouraged to come. But the situation when Asian technicians and artisans were sought by the early administrators, quickly changed as the prospects of the region for white settlement became clear. The European settlers soon perceived the threat to their interest from the Asians, both economically and politically.

Even in Nyasaland, where no serious consideration was given to white settlement in the early days, there was opposition to Asian immigration. Commerce was then controlled by a large Scottish company, the African Lake Corporation, which complained of competition from the Asian shopkeeper. And in Kenya, too, where the

Europeans have never been interested in small-scale trading, the settlers opposed Asian commercial activity. It was essentially the colony of aristocrats and big land-owners, but experience in Central Africa showed that in the absence of the Asian trader and clerk, additional opportunities were provided for Europeans. In the Rhodesias, hostility to the Asian traders was even more pronounced, and on occasion took the form of victimization and beating up.

The political factor was even more important. From the earliest times the settlers had hoped to gain control and looked to the big white dominions as models for their own future. The presence of Asians complicated matters; they claimed rights, occasionally on the basis of equality with the settlers; but worse, it was feared they might contaminate the Africans with political ideas. The activities of the nationalists in India, the experience of the Indian agitation in South Africa, as well as the initial militancy of the people of Indian origin in Kenya, made the Europeans wary.

The European settlers sought to express their opposition to Asian immigration through legal enactments. An essential part of the settler political platform in Kenya as well as the Rhodesias has always been the banning of Asian immigration. Presented at first as a move to ensure the supremacy of the white settlers, it was later pressed as a necessary protection of the Africans. It was alleged that the Asians exploited the illiterate Africans and prevented their progress by occupying all the jobs to which Africans aspired. It was also said that the social and religious influence of Asians was undesirable; that their culture and religion were backward, obscurantist and unwholesome.

The settlers, however, came up against the imperial principle of common citizenship and therefore free immigration, and for a long time the political power to enact legislation restricting immigration eluded them. The exception was Southern Rhodesia, where as early as 1904 an ordinance was passed directing that no person should be admitted who was unable 'by reason of deficient education to write out and sign within his own hand in the character of any European language an application to the satisfaction of the Administrator'. This excluded all but a few of the Asians. A complete ban was imposed in 1924 as one of the first measures taken by the settlers on the attainment of self-government.

In Northern Rhodesia (later to become Zambia) the 1904 principle of literacy testing in a European language was introduced administratively. At first this had the effect of reducing immigration, but after 1939 the test requirements ceased to operate as any real obstacle. In 1954, with the formation of the Federation, the 1924 legislation of Southern Rhodesia was extended to the other two territories also.

In East Africa the white settlers had to wait till the pressure of the war brought them into important positions in the executive before they could introduce the restrictions — under war regulations. Subsequently they were reintroduced and enacted as ordinances in all of the East African countries. Thereafter immigration was small and dependent on capital or special skills.

Turning to the pattern of Asian immigration, we find there was steady but slow growth from the turn of the century until the early 1930s. After that there was almost a cessation of immigration, partly due to economic depression and the Second World War. Immigration picked up dramatically after the war and continued at a rapid rate until the legislative bans just discussed.

In Central Africa there were relatively few Asians in the pre-war period. Most came after the war, in contrast to the experience in East Africa where a considerable Asian settlement had already taken place prior to the 1939-45 war.

The following table shows the growth of Asian population in the five countries:

Year	Kenya	Uganda	Tanganyika	N.Rhodesia	Nyasaland
1917	11,787	—	—	39	481
1921	25,253	5,604	—	56	563
1931	43,623	14,150	—	176	1,591
1945	—	—	—	1,117	2,804
1948	97,687	35,215	46,254	—	—
1956	149,000	62,900	74,300	5,450	8,504
1961/2	176,613	77,400	88,700	7,790	10,630

The latest available figures are:

Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	Zambia	Malawi
182,000*	80,000*	130,000*	10,705	11,299
(1969)	(1968)	(1967)	(1970)	(1966)

\* Estimates (Unfortunately statistical sources tend to be inadequate and estimates can vary widely).

### Some characteristics of colonial society

Many of the problems with which the newly independent African governments were concerned were a legacy of colonial times. This is true also of the problems and dilemmas of the Asians. It would, of course, be misleading to say that the present predicament of the Asians is entirely due to the colonialists. They have themselves contributed to it in an important way. But the fundamental characteristics of colonial society and their administrations were determined by the colonial rulers. What we single out here are the characteristics which have a bearing on the Asian situation.

The key feature was the form of race relations, colonial society being organized on the basis of racial communities and de facto, if not always de jure, on the principles of segregation and discrimination. Racial tensions and communal rivalries were therefore stimulated at an early stage, although it is only fair to point out that the Asians too had a tendency towards social exclusiveness.

The categorization of people on racial lines strengthened prejudice, resulting not only in segregation and exclusiveness but also helping to produce stereotypes, some deliberately cultivated, so that the behaviour of a few offending members served to condemn the entire community. Hence the Asian was thought of as a dukawalla who cheated and insulted his African customers and was mean and secretive. The African was viewed as dull, unintelligent, lazy and dishonest. The European was seen as tough and aggressive, but as someone who has done

much for the country. Racial attitudes in East and Central Africa have been strongly influenced by these stereotypes, and it is noteworthy that some of the anti-Asian speeches made today by African politicians in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia employ phrases identical with those which the early European settlers used in their anti-Asian harangues.

British policy did little to promote racial co-operation. When members of the different races were forced to go to different schools and live in different localities, unable to share social and cultural amenities, it is not surprising that they remained ignorant of one another's customs, needs and aspirations. The legacy of British imperialism was thus one of racial suspicion and misunderstandings, of antagonism rather than co-operation.

More specifically, the Asians were affected by official policy in their social and political activities, and in the economic role they played. The colonial authorities not only supplied separate facilities for the different races, but did so on a discriminatory basis so that the facilities for Asians and Africans were not only grossly inferior to those provided for the Europeans, but were also completely inadequate.

The response of the Asians was to supplement these facilities for themselves when they were able to do so. The Asian communities in Zambia and Nyasaland felt themselves to be the most deprived. There was no Asian secondary school in Nyasaland until 1959, for example. Unfortunately, it was also in these two territories that the Asians were least able to help themselves, being few in number and rather widely dispersed. Furthermore, there were greater restrictions on their economic activities than in the north, and their financial means correspondingly smaller.

The nature of politics in these countries likewise did little to break down communal barriers. Till the last phase of colonial rule, there was explicit Asian political representation in the legislative institutions at the national and local levels only in East Africa. And in Kenya Asians were allowed the franchise only on their own communal roll. This meant that, except for East Africa, the Asians were seldom drawn into national politics on a regular basis and even there they were more preoccupied by communal points of views. It was only towards the end of colonial rule that Asian politicians were induced to take stands on crucial national issues.

The most important consequence of colonial policy was the allocation of economic roles to the various communities. There was need in the early years for artisans, clerks and traders, and the Asians were welcomed in most of the territories for these purposes. In any event they tended to go into occupations in which they could rely on their own initiative and this was just as well, since the colonial authorities sometimes effectively closed certain occupations to them. In Kenya, for example, the best agricultural land was reserved for Europeans, while the rest was set aside for Africans.

In Tanganyika and Uganda the land was deemed to be held in trust for the Africans, and whatever little alienation of land there was to immigrants, went to Europeans. Similar restrictive practices in land policy vis-à-vis Asians

were in effect pursued in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. An outlet in agriculture was therefore impossible.

However, it is not obvious that Asians would have taken to farming even if land had been available. In Zanzibar, where Asians did have some arable land, they preferred to be landlords rather than farmers. But the Zanzibar example is an early one, and it is possible that as the Asians perceived the narrowing of opportunities in commerce, some might have turned to the land.

Equally remote to Asians were the upper reaches of the civil and other public services. In the East African territories the need for skilled and educated persons early on resulted in Asians occupying most of the lower and middle grades of the public services, like the railways. Next to commerce, public employment constituted the most important sector of Asian activity. Subsequently, Asians filled similar positions in the bigger commercial and industrial enterprises, often owned by large European companies. They served as clerks, accountants, sales assistants and in various technical capacities.

In the Central African territories, however, even these avenues were closed to them. Up to the time of the Federation, there were barely ten Asians in the civil service while the European enterprises preferred to employ whites for their top as well as middle grade of personnel. Therefore, even more so than in East Africa, Asians were almost completely engaged in commercial activities.

Even in commerce there were ordinances preventing Asian traders in the East African territories from conducting business outside specified cities and townships. They therefore tended to concentrate in the urban areas, a factor responsible for the 'Indian look' of almost all the major towns and cities. Similar restrictions applied in Southern Rhodesia and to a lesser extent in Northern, but Asian trade there, as well as in Nyasaland, was restricted pretty well to African customers. Unlike East Africa, the Europeans also had trading aspirations — and their own shops.

In the absence of any government encouragement to Asians to move into other areas of activity, the way out of the straitjacket of commercial and clerical employment lay through education. By and large the colonial authorities in East Africa had accepted certain, if minimal, responsibilities in regard to education for Asians. Kenya was the first to do so, and a public school was established by the turn of the century by the railways and was taken over by the government in 1912. Elsewhere the first initiatives came from the Asian communities themselves. By 1920 a number of private Asian schools had come into existence; it was not until 1925 that the governments made small grants to these schools.

The first Asian schools in Tanganyika were also established privately by the Asians, the government having decided that non-African education was to be provided primarily by the communities concerned. However, after 1929 the government assumed some financial responsibility. Much later it took over the administration of schools also.

Over the years the contribution of the governments to Asian education increased steadily, though it never kept pace with expenditure on European education. Private, communal Asian schools continued to play a key part in education right up to and after independence, particularly in respect of the education of girls.

Secondary school education was slow to develop, but gradually the importance of higher forms of education came to be appreciated. It was seen as providing a gateway to the professions, and in the years after the war, a large number of young Asians went overseas to further their education and came back with qualifications in law, medicine, engineering, accountancy, nursing and teaching. This big investment in skills rapidly changed the character of the Asian work-force and was in large part responsible for its significant contribution to the pool of skilled manpower in East Africa.

The position of Central Africa was quite different. There the governments failed to provide anything like adequate educational facilities and the ability of the Asians to run their own schools was considerably less than in East Africa. Asian schools were first established in Southern Rhodesia, and children from the northern territories had to be sent there. Later some primary schools were set up in the north, although until 1959 there was no secondary school outside Southern Rhodesia. Even then there were but two Asian secondary schools (compared with 38 for Europeans), and the only hope of many for secondary education was in Britain or India if their parents could afford it. The Asians in Central Africa have consequently remained more dependent on commerce, with few professionally qualified people, and little economic mobility.

Thus at the time of the independence of these countries, the Asians in East Africa were dominant in commerce and shared in public employment, while those in Central Africa were almost entirely dependent on trade. The East African Asians had begun to move into industry, while those in Central Africa were still predominantly small traders, more important in the smaller than the bigger centres. It was inevitable in the East African situation that there would be a clash, for the Asians occupied most of the positions to which Africans were likely to aspire. Added to this growing economic rivalry was a long history of Asian-African relations in the social and political fields which it is necessary to understand to appreciate the situation of the Asians at independence. To this we now turn.

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### Asian-African relations

While Asian-African relations developed in a context of the racial society which colonialism established, and while it is true that this discouraged inter-racial contacts, there were autonomous areas in which the two communities interacted.

Unfortunately relations were mostly at the shopkeeper-customer or master-servant level, neither calculated to inspire good feelings. Moreover, the Asian treatment of their African servants has been generally scandalous, with abuse and indignities often heaped on them and basic minimal rights denied. As clients of Asian traders,



Africans have long nursed a sense of being exploited. Accusations are made against shopkeepers everywhere, especially if they happen to be of a different race, but they are more liable to arise with a system of trading where there is little price control; prices are not displayed and the practice of bargaining is common.

Few incentives existed for closer social relationships between Asians and Africans. There were enormous disparities of religious and cultural background between them. Partly owing to the caste system long prevalent in India, Asians had been used to living in more or less exclusive communities in their home societies, even within the compass of a village. The practice of social exclusiveness within a framework of commercial and administrative relations thus came naturally to them.

Furthermore, the Asians' reasons for immigration were largely economic: they did not leave India for reasons of persecution or out of a missionary zeal. Once in East Africa, their behaviour was largely determined by this factor. It prevented a meaningful involvement with the indigenous people. If the newcomers had been fired with any missionary zeal, they would have endeavoured to provide education for the Africans and introduce them to their own way of living or thinking. If they had had more overt political ambitions, they would have cultivated people and leaders of the other races, particularly the Africans. Lacking these motives, Asian ways and religions remained mysterious to the Africans.

In the political field, the Asians have been accused of not having helped the cause of African nationalism or of having collaborated with the colonists in frustrating African aspirations. This overlooks some early brave efforts and does scant justice to the achievements of a small band of Asians who helped African leaders at considerable personal sacrifice.

Asian political activity was greater in East than in Central Africa, due partly to the relative numerical strength of Asians there as well as their higher standards of education.

One of the most significant contributions made by the Asians was in Kenya, but this had repercussions elsewhere. This undoubtedly helped to stem the tide towards a South African or Southern Rhodesian system. The prolonged struggle of the Asians for equality of treatment with the Europeans in Kenya in the twenties was something of a turning point in the history of that country, for it was then that the paramountcy of the interests of the indigenous population was officially accepted.

Although this was perhaps their best known political activity, the Asians had also at other times offered resistance to the unfair practices of the settlers or the Colonial Office. In one sense the progenitor of African nationalism in East Africa was the early political consciousness of the Asians. Nor was it merely by example that African political activity was stimulated. Some of the earliest African presses and pamphleteering owed their existence to Asian support while some Asian papers gave publicity and encouragement to African demands. Several African leaders were helped by Asian politicians. M.A. Desai aided and advised Harry Thuku, sometimes referred to as the father of African nationalism in Kenya. There was also a handful of radical Asian nationalists of a political

sophistication beyond that of any African politicians at the time and who significantly influenced developing African nationalism in the early days.

In the period preceding independence, when African political parties were being formed and an active programme of agitation and negotiation was under way, the Asians were once again drawn into national politics. The traditional Asian political party in Kenya, the Indian Congress, was at first ambivalent and concerned to ensure that the Asian community would retain some special privileges after independence. But it was pushed into a greater commitment to the Africans by its younger, radical members, who wanted complete support for the Africans and a form of government based on one man one vote, without any special provisions for minorities. In the crucial independence negotiations with the British government from 1960 to 1963, the Asians sided with the Africans.

In Tanzania the Asians had already adopted a similar position. The Asian Association, after an initial period of hesitation, had allied itself with TANU<sup>3</sup>, and given it what support it could. In Uganda, the Central Councils of India and Muslim Associations were driven to full support of the African nationalists under the influence of a ginger group, the Uganda Action Group.

In Malawi organized Asian politics began late, and then as a response to the debate about the proposed federation in the early fifties. The Nyasaland Asian Convention opposed federation, and thus allied itself with the African nationalists. At the Lancaster House constitutional conference all the Asian delegates came out in support of self-government, one man one vote, and no safeguards for minorities. In Malawi itself, joint meetings with the Nyasaland Congress Party were organized in support of independence.

In Zambia, while there was little organized political activity among the Asians, there was considerable support for the African cause. The finances of UNIP<sup>4</sup> were largely supplied by Asian traders, and individual African leaders were helped in various ways by certain Asians.

It is, however, necessary to keep the Asians' political role in perspective. The official posture of their political parties was generally one of support for African demands, but it is doubtful if the community as such was enthusiastic about the prospect of independence. The Asian leaders who pressed for commitment to the African cause were seldom popular in the community.

By the early 1960s Asian support had become relatively unimportant in terms of its impact. In retrospect the Asian contribution may seem less in the support given to Africans than in the willingness to forego special minority provisions.

There was seldom close working collaboration with the African politicians and the day-to-day strategies were not planned together. On the other hand, the failure of early Afro-Asian parties in East Africa in the immediate

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<sup>3</sup> Tanzania African National Union.

<sup>4</sup> United National Independence Party.

pre-independence period was due to the fact that the African leaders alienated support by associating with Asians.

The decision of the major African parties in all the three countries to exclude non-Africans from membership till just before or after independence, whatever its justification, must also have affected the potential contribution of the Asians.

## Independence

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Independence in these countries found the Asians in the position of an unpopular minority. In East Africa they numbered about 360,000, with about half living in Kenya, 10,000 in Malawi and 8,000 in Zambia. Their numbers were too small to be politically significant, and yet too large to permit an easy solution of their problems. They themselves were deeply divided into various sub-groups, which made united action impossible. The Asian community was regarded by the indigenous people as still alien and thus potentially disloyal. It had few friends outside. While the British government was greatly concerned to secure provisions for the white settlers and civil servants, it displayed scant regard for the plight of the Asians, even though in terms of legal status, they were just as much the responsibility of the British.

The Indian government, which some might have expected to come to their support, kept aloof; its official advice was that the Asians should identify themselves with the new countries and should manifest this identification by taking out citizenship.

The strictly neutral position of the Indian government was in contrast to its earlier stance. Before India became independent, the India Office in Britain and the Indian government had consistently championed the cause of the Indians overseas.

It was as a result of pressure from the Indian government that the grievances of the Kenya Indians were brought up at the Imperial Conference, and in 1921 a resolution was passed at the Conference that it was incompatible with India's status as an equal member of the Empire that disabilities should be imposed upon the British Indians lawfully domiciled in some other parts of the Empire.

But after India's independence, the Indian government, anxious to lead the Third World, encouraged nationalist activity in Africa, and once the African countries became independent, showed itself even less anxious to get involved in the question of the Asians.

The achievement of independence in these countries brought about a radical transformation of the situation. It meant the transfer of power to the indigenous people, who had hitherto been the most under-privileged group and had most lacked the opportunities of economic and social advance. There arose a new group who now wielded political power but remained economically deprived. The old regime had been established primarily for the benefit of the immigrants, even though it is possible to argue that the Asians were merely the indirect and unintended beneficiaries. It was obvious that the new political élite would replace it with one more responsive to needs of their own community.

As the more vulnerable of the previous privileged minorities, this had tremendous implications for the Asians, who were ill-prepared to meet them. The constitutional arrangements for independence had done little to protect or help them. The Europeans were well taken care of. For the civil servants a scheme was introduced whereby they could either retire prematurely and obtain special compensation, plus accelerated pensions, or stay on until they were asked to retire, and obtain these benefits then. The white farmers, really significant only in Kenya, had a comparable scheme: about £50m was contributed by the British government to a land purchase fund so that any farmer who wanted to sell his farm could do so at the high 1959 market prices.

The campaign to extend the civil service arrangements to Asian employees was rejected, while the proposal that some compensatory scheme to buy out the Asian traders who wanted to sell, never even received consideration. The Asians were, however, covered by the provisions for the protection of human rights, particularly of personal liberty and property, that Britain wrote into each of the independence constitutions, except in Tanganyika.

In one way, the independence constitutions contained a fair deal for the Asians. This concerned citizenship. Many of those involved in the Indian diaspora in other parts of the world have suffered from being denied citizenship in the countries of their residence, and have agitated for it.

In East and Central Africa, citizenship became the crucial issue in the future of the Asian community. Before Independence, most of the residents of these countries, including Asians, were British citizens or British protected persons. It was only with independence that national citizenship was established.

While there were some differences, all the constitutions carried a similar scheme for citizenship. Under the scheme, a person would become a local citizen automatically on independence, or would have an option to become so within a specified time at his request, or his pre-independent status would remain unchanged.

In East Africa and Malawi, the ones who became local citizens automatically were those British citizens or protected persons who had been born in the country and one of whose parents had also been born in the country. In Zambia it was enough if the person was himself born there. Automatic citizenship was also conferred on those who had been born abroad if their father had been entitled to citizenship or but for his death would have become a citizen.

The second category, those with an option, covered certain groups of people who had a close connection with the country but failed to qualify for automatic citizenship. Such persons were allowed to register as citizens; indeed they had a constitutional right to be so registered, provided they applied within a prescribed period — in each case, two years from independence, but the categories of people entitled to registration varied from country to country.

In East Africa and Malawi persons who would have been automatically citizens by virtue of birth in the country

but for the fact that neither of their parents were born there were included; such persons in Zambia, as we have seen, would have become citizens automatically.

Another category common to all countries was persons who on the date of independence were British citizens (citizens of the UK and colonies) who had acquired that status by naturalisation or registration in the country whose citizenship they were seeking.

In Kenya, but not in the other countries, there was an additional category: all persons who were citizens of the UK and colonies and the Republic of Ireland on the day of independence and were lawfully and ordinarily resident in Kenya. Malawi also had an additional category: persons who were citizens of the former Federation and who could prove a 'substantial Malawi connection' by his (or his father's) birth, registration, naturalisation, residence, adoption, or voting rights. In Kenya and Zambia there was also an entrenched right to naturalisation. Citizens of Commonwealth or certain African countries who had satisfied certain residential requirements (four years in the case of Zambia) had a right to citizenship.

Finally, all the constitutions provided that anyone born in the country after independence, unless the offspring of diplomats or enemy aliens, would automatically become citizen. So in most cases would children born abroad of a local citizen father. Those who did not become local citizens automatically or by option were allowed to retain their earlier citizenship which in most cases happened to be British.

A considerable number of Asians, especially in East Africa and Malawi, would have become automatic citizens but the exact number is difficult to come by. At the beginning the governments were anxious that the Asians should apply to become citizens in significant numbers. They were both inspired by a vision of a non-racial society and hoped to show to the outside world the confidence with which their new regimes were regarded.

The Asian response, unfortunately, was a poor one, and particularly in the early months few applications were made. The reluctance was in part a result of confusion about the implications of citizenship. Primarily, the decision to retain British or Indian citizenship arose from the fear that to give this up would be to give up the right to any kind of protection in the event of confiscation of property or persecution.

This was a time of some anxiety, not so much for what was happening in East and Central Africa but due to disturbances in neighbouring countries. Also, rumours were current that once a person gave up his foreign passport, he would not be allowed to travel abroad, or at least not without the payment of a substantial sum of money. For many not taking up local citizenship was seen as keeping open an option of settlement elsewhere. They expected redundancy and victimization and felt they might eventually have to build a home in some other country. Furthermore, and this factor was particularly strong in Central Africa, there was fear for their culture — sometimes seen as the forced marriage of their daughters to outsiders — and if the preservation of their culture required it, they would emigrate.

The slowness of the Asian response no doubt irritated the governments and their leaders. The rush of applications as the two-year period of grace drew to a close added to the irritation. Africans felt the Asians had been an unconscionable time weighing the pros and cons. Moreover, the governments were beginning to be embarrassed about the Asians who were citizens. Policies were being formulated to bring Africans into commerce, to advance their educational and other progress and for this discrimination in their favour was perceived as essential. The more Asians became citizens and therefore entitled to the same rights as the Africans, the less effective would this discriminatory policy be. There also grew a feeling that many Asians were becoming citizens in order to avoid the adverse effects of a discriminatory policy and legislation; they were seen as opportunists and 'paper citizens'. The consequence was that the governments became much less enthusiastic about granting citizenship. Applications filed within the prescribed period were not processed, and some still remain unprocessed to this day.

Moreover, some of the governments proceeded to amend their laws to prevent or restrict the acquisition of citizenship. Kenya amended the section in the constitution which conferred a right to citizenship on Commonwealth residents of prescribed length, so that they lost this right and merely became 'eligible'.

Malawi introduced new legislation in 1966, under which children born there after 5 July 1966 no longer became citizens automatically. Such children could become citizens only if one of their parents were both a citizen of Malawi *and* a person of African race. Others could apply to become citizens, but whether their application succeeded or not depended entirely on the discretion of the government. As a result children of non-African citizens could become stateless. Similarly, children born of Malawian citizens abroad could become Malawians only if one of the parents were a citizen by birth *and* of African race.

In Uganda, when the government announced its proposals for the new constitution in June 1967, racial provisions similar to Malawi's were put forth, but were finally abandoned as a result of the opposition they ran into. Nevertheless, the new constitutional provisions were more restrictive than at independence: children born in Uganda were citizens only if one of their parents or grand-parents were a citizen of Uganda. The events after the overthrow of Dr. Obote are recorded in *The New Position of East Africa's Asians: Problems of a Displaced Minority*.  
MRG Report No. 16

In Tanzania, as a result of the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, new citizenship regulations were promulgated, which in practice affected the Zanzibaris only. The result was to introduce an important new category among the East African Asians. Under these regulations, all the citizens of Tanganyika and Zanzibar on 25 April 1964 became citizens of the Union — with some exceptions. Excluded from the Union citizenship were three major categories: (a) those who had been deprived of their Zanzibar citizenship by the Revolutionary Council, or deported or exiled from Zanzibar; (b) Zanzibar citizens who had become so solely by virtue of their naturalisation or registration in Zanzibar under the 1948 British Nationality Act; and (c) Zanzibar citizens by virtue of



birth or father's birth in a part of the dominions of the Sultan other than that included in the State of Zanzibar. While many of the last category might have some other nationality as well (e.g. the Asians in Kenya's coastal strip), others and almost all in the first two categories, became stateless. It is estimated there are something like 7,000 Asians in this category, most of whom are either in Zanzibar or have fled to Dar es Salaam.

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## Part Two:

### THE SITUATION IN 1971

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#### The nationality problem

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To summarize the tangled nationality position of the Asians in East and Central Africa by 1971, this can be divided into four broad categories:

First, there were those who were citizens of a country in East or Central Africa, referred to here as local citizens. It is very difficult to obtain precise figures, but our own estimates are as follows — in Tanzania, about 20,000 opted to become citizens, while another 60,000 were citizens by automatic operation of the law. The comparable figures for Kenya and Uganda are 20,000 and 50,000, and 13,000 and 30,000 respectively. Far fewer opted for citizenship in Central Africa: in Malawi not more than 20; in Zambia about 100. Of those who became citizens automatically, there must be about 2,000 in each country, in most cases minors.

Secondly, there were those who hold some form of British nationality, either as citizens of the UK and colonies, or as British protected persons. In Kenya, at independence, there were just over 100,000 British citizens and 3,000 protected persons among them. There was considerable emigration, leaving probably just over 50,000. In Tanzania, there were probably not more than 25,000 British Asians, a considerable number of whom were protected persons. In Uganda there were about 40,000 British Asians, of whom again a sizeable number were protected persons. In Zambia there were about 8,000, and in Malawi about 10,000 to 11,000.

The third category are citizens of India or Pakistan. Excluding the 'expatriate Indians' who have largely come since independence on short contract terms as technical staff, there were about 15,000 in East Africa, and less than 1,000 in Central Africa.

The final category concerns stateless persons or those with doubtful status. There were about 7,000 in Tanzania, while the number in Uganda was not known.

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#### Post-independence

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The future of the Asian community — whether or not it stays in Eastern Africa, and if so on what terms and under what conditions — depends in large measure on the policies of the new governments. After an initial period of some vagueness, these policies are becoming increasingly clear, at least in their implications for the future of the Asian community. Discussion here will focus on those aspects of the policies which have a bearing on the situation of the Asians.

It is, at the outset, important to make two distinctions. While it was possible to talk in a general way of the whole region during the colonial period, each of the independent countries has adopted different policies, even though it is possible to trace the influence of one country on another. Secondly, the laws and the practices of the countries distinguish between Asians who are also citizens of the country and those who are not. It is therefore no longer possible to speak of the whole Asian community as if it shared a common fate, at least in the immediate future.

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#### Restrictions on non-citizen Asians

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It is unlikely that significant numbers of non-citizen Asians will remain in East and Central Africa for many more years. Each of the countries embarked on policies described as localization or Africanization, whereby the key areas of economic and governmental activity will be in the hands of citizens.

Starting with the civil service, the policy has been extended to private commerce and to a lesser extent, industry. Legislation was enacted in all the countries to give the authorities the necessary powers to implement this policy. Africanization of the civil service was relatively easy, as the government concerned could determine its own recruitment policies. Non-citizens who were already in governmental employment could be asked to go under legislative provisions especially enacted for this purpose. These measures have been important in East Africa; in Central Africa, as we have seen, few Asians were employed in the civil service. The results of this policy can be seen in the table below which shows the number (in thousands) of Asian employees in the public services in Kenya and Uganda.

Years	Kenya	Uganda
1961	12.2	2.0
1962	12.0	1.8
1963	11.9	1.7
1964	8.8	1.8
1965	9.5	1.6
1966	10.6	1.6
1967	8.5	1.6
1968	8.0	1.3

It should be noted that these years brought a rapid expansion in the number of public employees in all three countries. Thus the relative fall in the number of Asian employees was even greater than is brought out by this table. Secondly, a substantial but unknown proportion of these Asian employees were citizens of these countries. Thus the fall in the number of non-citizen employees was quite considerable.

Comparable figures for Tanzania were not available, but there is no reason to doubt a similar trend there. Most of the Asians replaced from the public services would fall in the category of clerical, executive and skilled manual grades, though a few in the higher reaches of the civil services have also been affected.

The other legislation which specifically affects non-citizens concerns immigration and trade. At the time of independence a majority of the Asians had acquired the

status of 'permanent residents'. Everywhere, except in Malawi, this status was converted to a residence permit of a maximum of two years. In Tanzania it provided that no non-citizen (except an African from a few neighbouring countries) can remain in the country without an entry permit. The permits are issued subject to conditions relating to the area within which the holder may reside, the occupation or business (if any) in which he may engage, and the restrictions, prohibitions, or limitations subject to which he may engage therein; the permits also specify the duration of his residence in the country.

Over and above all this, the permits are liable to be cancelled at the discretion of the immigration authorities, after confirmation by the appropriate minister. This legislation enables the government to exercise effective control over the numbers, location and occupation of non-citizens. It also means they have little security of the right to reside in the country, as was demonstrated by expulsion orders against over 300 Asians in 1967.

In Kenya, Uganda and Zambia the legislation about residence, employment and trade was even more thorough going, the prototype being the pioneering Kenya models. The Kenya Immigration Act of 1967 stipulated that all non-citizen employees were liable to be asked to obtain work permits in order to continue in employment. As of January 1970, only employees falling within certain categories were called up to obtain work permits. These categories, however, comprise the great bulk of Asian employees such as shop assistants, cashiers, accounts clerks, salesmen, typists, secretaries, stenographers and most kinds of skilled manual workers. Work permits were granted only after the Kenyanization Bureau had satisfied itself that no citizen with the requisite qualifications was available. At the same time, work permits were normally granted for periods of one to two years, during which time the employers were expected to train Kenyans to take over the jobs on the expiry of work permits.

The Trade Licensing Acts of Kenya, Uganda and Zambia had two major provisions which affect non-citizen businessmen. The Acts reserve certain areas — the non-scheduled or non-prescribed areas — which in effect included all areas outside the main shopping centres of a few large cities, for citizens only. Non-citizens were allowed to operate there only if granted a licence, given for one year at a time. Only in the scheduled areas, which were steadily shrinking, could non-citizens carry on their trade. The second provision of the Acts restricted trade in certain commodities to citizens only. The list, which is periodically extended, now includes such commodities as maize meal, sugar, rice, fresh vegetables, lentils, cement, meat, cigarettes, blankets, milk, shoes and sandals.

How did these measures affected the Asian community? To attempt an answer to this, it is necessary to form some idea of the number of gainfully employed Asians. No figures are available, but in Kenya, rough estimates indicate that the number might have been in the range of 42,000. Of these 11,000 to 12,000 were thought to be citizens of Kenya. Therefore, potentially about 30,000 Asians were likely to be affected by Africanization measures. In the first year of operation of the Immigration Act, it has been estimated that out of nearly 10,000

applications for work permits, about 1,000 were rejected. It may be safely concluded that virtually all were Asians.

Similarly in the first year of effective operation of the Trade Licensing Act, it was reported in early 1969 that nearly 3,000 Asian traders had been refused trade licences. It is likely that quite a few of them were subsequently granted licences, though the exact figures are not known. Again in early 1970 it was reported that nearly 1,000 Asian traders had been refused licences, 600 of them from Nairobi. It is clear that if these figures are true, they imply a sharp reduction in the number of Asian traders. It should also be remembered that many of these firms were owned by several heads of families. Thus, if in 1969 and 1970 a total of 3,000 Asian traders were refused licences, this would affect roughly 15,000 to 18,000 Asians in Kenya.

The policy in Zambia is even more far-reaching. In 1968 President Kaunda announced that as from the beginning of 1970, non-citizens would not be given licences to operate in non-urban areas. In 1970 this was followed by another announcement that they would not be allowed to operate in urban areas either, from the beginning of 1972 [See *The New Position of East Africa's Asians*].

In Malawi, despite the absence of specific legislation, a somewhat similar process took place. In 1968 the Asian traders in the rural areas (none of whom was a citizen) were given two years in which to move away from the villages and rural trading centres to towns and larger urban areas. Most Asians from the rural areas moved out and were given licences to operate in urban areas. Many of the shops vacated by the departing Asians remained unoccupied and the government had second thoughts about the pace of application of its policies. The government announced plans, following the example of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia, to set up an Import-Export Company, a subsidiary of the Malawi Development Corporation. One of its purposes being to supply goods to African businessmen.

It does not follow necessarily that all the Asians affected by these laws must quit. In Malawi, the Asian traders were still allowed to operate in urban centres, and indeed no trader was out of business as a result of removal from the rural areas. In Zambia displaced Asian traders were urged to move into industry.

In East Africa opportunities in industry still exist; it is, however, unlikely that industry will be an answer to the problems of most of these people. In Malawi all industrial projects had to be licensed under the Industrial Development Act, which was often used to confer monopolies. Some Asians who applied for industrial licenses met with refusal. Whatever the reasons — and it is possible that in many instances the Asian applicants did not command sufficient financial and technical resources, the feeling persists that the government discriminated against them, largely under the influence of white expatriate civil servants who channel such licences to European firms. In Zambia few Asians were organized to go into industry; the leap from retail trading to an industrial enterprise is a big and difficult one. Moreover, and this factor is present to some extent in all the countries, except possibly Kenya, Asians feared that if they started an industrial project which is successful, the government will move to take it over.

Additionally, there was the feeling that their days in Africa are numbered anyway, and as it may be necessary to quit in a few years' time, it is better to go while there were still possibilities of starting a new career elsewhere.

In Malawi, in particular, this feeling was aggravated by what is regarded as arbitrary action by the government. Deportations at short notice are still common; the Business Licensing Act has been amended to provide that if a partner in a business is deported, the trade licence of the entire partnership is automatically revoked; while perhaps the most dreaded legislation is the Forfeiture Act passed in 1966 under which, if the minister is satisfied that a person's conduct has been or may be prejudicial to public security or the national economy, he can apply the Act to that person whereby all his property, commercial, real and personal, is confiscated by the state. The decision of the minister cannot be questioned in a court, nor any other action under the Act. The spate of deportations and confiscations lowered the morale of the community.

### Possibilities of emigration

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An immediate problem of emigration is to find another place to settle. A whole series of restrictions have been imposed on movement which were not expected a few years ago. Many of the Asians who did not take up local citizenship had hoped eventually to settle in Britain. A study undertaken in Kenya in 1968 showed that of the Asians who were contemplating eventual emigration, 18% preferred to settle in Britain, while 67% preferred India and 6% chose Canada. However, the accuracy of these figures is questionable. The purpose of the survey was to try to show that Britain had panicked in passing the 1968 restrictions on immigration as the number of Asians who wished to go there was quite small. The interviewees were aware of this, and their answers could well have been determined by the desire to prove that a large number was indeed not involved.

Another reason why only a small percentage opted for Britain could have been fear of encountering racialism there which had been stirred up in order to increase the pressure for immigration restrictions.

According to the figures in the survey, only 12,000 Asians would have wanted to go to Britain, though Asian British passport holders were estimated at 67,000. A more accurate assessment would almost certainly have put Britain as the first preference of the majority. It is also likely that proportionately more Asians in East Africa than Central Africa would have preferred Britain to India or Pakistan. Britain does appear to offer better prospects than the other two countries but many of the Central African Asians still feel strong cultural and emotional ties with their countries of origin. Some are still first generation immigrants and they lack the educational and other skills that would facilitate adaptation in a foreign country like Britain. Some are already said to have made investments in India.

The East African Asians, on the other hand, are more sophisticated and skilled, and more adjusted to a cosmopolitan environment. Conscious as they are of the benefits of education, they are also attracted by the excellent opportunities for the education of their children in Britain.

Up to 1962, immigration into Britain from the Commonwealth was unrestricted, but in that year legislation was passed, the effect of which was that only a limited number of immigrants would be allowed in annually. The legislation did not, however, affect British citizens, wherever they might be, provided they held passports issued by Her Majesty's Government in Britain. Before independence in this region of Africa, British citizens there were affected by these restrictions, as their passports were not issued in Britain. The position of the protected persons was similar. After independence, British citizens once again acquired the right of free immigration to Britain, as they became entitled to UK passports, although the British protected persons still remained excluded.

For a few years after independence, only a small number of Asians from East Africa and fewer still from Central Africa, went to Britain, but towards 1967 the flow increased, especially from Kenya and Uganda, so that while in 1965 and 1966 about 6,000 had emigrated annually, in the first two months of 1967 alone about the same number emigrated.

The reason for this was only partly the tougher conditions for them in East Africa; more important was the suspicion that Britain was soon to introduce legislation to restrict their right of entry into Britain, a suspicion encouraged by the rather racialistic stand of some leading British politicians.

Legislation was in fact introduced in February 1968 as an amendment to the 1962 Act. It provided that certain categories of British citizens overseas had no right to enter Britain, notably those who had no 'close connection' with Britain, in the sense, *inter alia*, that neither they nor their fathers or grandfathers were born in Britain. Though the legislation was not couched in racial terms, its effect was to introduce racial discrimination for the first time in British nationality and immigration laws, and the overwhelming majority of British Asians were thereby deprived of the right to enter and settle in Britain.

However, the 1968 legislation did not impose a total prohibition on the immigration of British Asians. The government announced a scheme of special vouchers of 1500 a year for heads of families. They are called special vouchers because, unlike the vouchers under the 1962 Act, they are not related to prior employment or professional qualifications, but give a right of entry regardless.

British Asians can also apply for ordinary vouchers under the 1962 Act, but as they have few means of arranging employment before reaching England and as the categories of 'professionals' is rather limited, not much use can be made of them. In 1969, for example, only 10 out of 300 vouchers assigned to Kenya were taken up.

It became obvious that a ceiling of 1500 special vouchers would cause considerable hardship, for it would leave a large number who would be unable either to obtain or hold employment or carry on trade in East and Central Africa and yet who would have no right to enter Britain.



Since the enactment of the 1968 amendment and the fixing of the quota at 1500, the pressures of Africanization have increased, though it was privately admitted in British government circles that it was hoped the amendment would have the effect of slowing down Africanization programmes. But given the quota of 1500, it would take over ten years for the backlog to be cleared.

As British policy is now administered, priority for the right to enter under the voucher system is given to those whose entry permit is cancelled or not renewed. In practice, therefore, a person can be without any employment or place to live, and yet not qualify for a voucher. Only if he becomes destitute does he move up in the queue. The result is that unemployed Asians live on their savings or on charity, uncertain of their future and becoming increasingly desperate. A few even seek illegal entry.

If they are refused entry in Britain, other countries can, and do, refuse to take them, so that Britain is ultimately forced to admit them, though, more as a punitive measure than anything else, not until they have been locked up in jail for 28 days, this being the maximum period of detention pending inquiries allowed under the 1968 Act, before a habeas corpus application would probably secure their release.

The preceding discussion about the right of entry to Britain and the restrictive legislation in existence applies only to the British citizens; it has no relevance to the British protected persons. Under British law these are aliens, and at no time had unrestricted right of entry into Britain. Nor are they eligible to apply for entry under the Commonwealth Immigrants Act. Thus their position is worse even than that of the citizens of other Commonwealth countries.

The status of British protected persons is anomalous both under international law and British law. They have no territorial connexion with Britain, are not nationals, and yet, *vis-à-vis* third parties, Britain claims to speak for them and they can demand the protection of the British government in foreign countries. The device thus prevents statelessness of a considerable number of persons, yet the rights of such persons are minimal and they share many of the disabilities of stateless persons.

Britain's international responsibility to her citizens, even though treated as second rate under her own domestic legislation, is clear. If no other country wants them, Britain has to take them in. This position has indeed been accepted by the government, for when he was introducing the legislation, the Home Secretary told Parliament that if a citizen 'was thrown out of work and ejected' from a country, Britain would have to take him. While much hope was placed on this admission, it has in practice been interpreted to mean physically thrown out, and not just put out of employment.

What are the alternative avenues of emigration? Many of the Asians who are equipped for a life in the UK could also fit into Canadian society, and many have been willing to emigrate there, despite their greater ignorance of conditions in Canada. A certain amount of emigration to Canada does take place (approximately 5,000 went in 1968 alone), but immigration regulations are stringent, being related basically to Canada's man-power require-

ments, and it is unlikely that many Asians will qualify for settlement. The Asians who qualify tend to be those with considerable means, groups which are very mobile anyway. So Canada cannot really be looked to, to alleviate the hardship cases unless there is a significant change of policy.

Small openings have existed for skilled and semi-skilled Asians in some developing African countries; Zambia, for example, wanted to use Asian railway workers and teachers to reduce her dependence on Europeans, and Ethiopia recruited a number of Asians. These countries cannot, however, be expected to absorb more than a small fraction, and even that possibility has been in jeopardy since the 1968 amendment to British immigration laws, for these other countries have been anxious not to be landed with UK Asians with nowhere else to go after their term of employment comes to an end. Pakistan introduced similar restrictive regulations. An unexpected result of the British legislation was thus to reduce severely the scope of Asians to move even to countries where their services are needed.

The most serious repercussion in this respect has been in relation to the right to settle in India, but so far this applies only to the Asians in Kenya. Many of them who had planned to emigrate to India suddenly found after the 1968 law that doors to India were also barred. Whatever the reason for this — it was generally assumed to be a method of putting pressure on Britain to accept her legal obligations *vis-à-vis* the UK Asians — it introduced a further element of uncertainty and hardship. A partial way out was found in an agreement made between India and Britain in July 1968. Its terms cover 'persons of Indian origin holding UK passports and resident in Kenya who are compelled to leave and wish to go to India'. If such persons are denied permits for residence or opportunities of employment or trade, they can seek an endorsement on their passports from the British High Commission, and on the presentation of this endorsement, to the Indian High Commission, they become eligible for admission into India. The endorsement is to the effect that the person concerned has a right to enter the UK and will be issued with an entry certificate on application to the nearest British representative. Even in this case the applicant has to be at least out of a job to be eligible.

In order to ensure that this procedure is not used to bypass the quota set under the 1968 Act, the endorsement is given only when the British High Commission is convinced after careful investigation that the applicant genuinely wants to settle in India. The result is that most of those who go to India under this scheme seem to settle there; only 6% of them had applied to go to Britain by 1971. But the result was also a waiting list for those wishing to go to India, and others who not yet unemployed but wishing to go there have difficulty as well. Of those who do go to India, but later change their minds and wish to avail themselves of the option to go to Britain, it has been alleged that they have found the endorsement useless, having to take their place in the queue for the 1500 vouchers. Exact figures of those who have gone to India under this system are not available, but it is estimated that in the seven years up to 1968, 40,000 Asians permanently settled there. It is still likely to be some years before all those who want to go to India are able to do so.

Since the 1968 British law, much of the discussion about the plight of the non-citizen Asians has been about the limited possibilities for emigration. While for large numbers this is the immediate problem, a longer term problem is that of establishing a new home and a new form of livelihood. Many of the people involved are of advanced age, have worked all or most of their life in East Africa, and may now find it difficult to make a new start. This is more true of the shop-keeper or small wholesaler than of the white collar worker or artisan. Most have put aside some capital which they hoped would help them make a start. But in many cases such capital is rapidly eroded, due to their unemployment, while they wait their turn to go to Britain, India or elsewhere.

Even if substantial capital is available, only a limited amount can be taken out initially on emigration. In East Africa the sum used to be £5000 per head of family, inclusive of personal belongings; and thereafter £2000 a year till the whole of the amount was taken out. In 1968 the initial amount was reduced to £2500 because of fear of a severe drain on foreign exchange reserves at the time of the 'exodus'.

In Central Africa the provisions were quite liberal. In Zambia a person was allowed £8000 initially if over 55 or £6000 if under 55; thereafter £5000 annually. In Malawi a person of 55 years or more could take out £7500 initially, otherwise £4000; and thereafter £4000 annually, though not all families who applied to leave under these terms, received approval for their applications.

There is no guarantee that the various members of a family will find themselves in the same country abroad. One of the less publicized but sad consequences of the tangle of the various citizenship and immigration laws is the splitting of numerous families. Various members of a family have found different nationalities ascribed to them by the automatic operation of the law; certain members opted for local citizenship while others did not. The more educated members find that they get a visa for settlement in Canada, while those less skilled do not have a similar opportunity. The tradition of family cohesion and assistance which has been an important factor in the success of the Asians in commerce and industry in East Africa thus breaks down often when the family emigrates.

The question may well be asked as to how the Asians expect to fare in their second migrations. Whether they return to their ancestral homes in India or Pakistan, settle in the harsher climate and strangeness of Canada or encounter colour-conscious Britain, will they not carry with them a minority group syndrome and its complexes? Are they not exchanging one evil for another?

It is of course difficult to answer this question. Asians who leave East Africa are doing so either because they are being forced out or because they feel the future holds little for them or their children there. Not many of them have had strong emotional attachments to East Africa, and, as they perceive it, the vindictiveness of the governments have made many more of them frustrated and bitter. Thus, while there will undoubtedly be physical inconvenience, suffering and financial loss involved in leaving East Africa, for only a few of the Asians will there be emotional regrets, except when families are split up.

Even if their new abode is not positively welcoming, the absence of those negative features is itself a good start. The Asian migrants are willing to make a fresh start and anxious to feel a sense of security. They find they do not stand out among, and are not conspicuously more affluent than, their new hosts. They are better equipped than many other immigrants and with their advantages of education, skills and finance, they do not experience too much difficulty in establishing themselves in their new homes.

It may be that, in time, the only relevance East Africa will have for them is the lesson they may have learnt from their first experience of migration. Whether or not they have come to see that rigid, communal isolation is good or unwise for a minority is not clear; what does seem more obvious is that in their new lands the tendencies towards integration and assimilation are much stronger than they ever were in East Africa.

### **The problem of Asian citizens**

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The most significant consideration for our purpose is the future of those Asians who are citizens of one of the countries of East Africa. Most, if not all of them, expect to continue to live there. Will they be allowed to carry on their pursuits and treated on a basis of equality with the Africans? What economic prospects do they have? What role will they play in society? Will they continue in their communalistic ways or will there be greater integration with the other races? Answers to these questions depend on a variety of factors.

What are the policies of the governments in relation to the Asians? What is the attitude of the Asians? How will the economies of these countries develop? Will there be political stability?

The policies of these countries differ from one another. Even within a country, there have been fluctuations of policy in the short period since independence. Further, there is sometimes dissonance between policy and rhetoric, and between law and practice. An attempt will be made to describe the policies and to assess the implications for the Asians, but the above proviso should be kept in mind.

The official policy in all three countries of East Africa is that of equal treatment for the Asian citizens. Sometimes this policy gets blurred because when official threats or warnings are made or given to Asians, it is not always clear that it is the non-citizens who are referred to. Also, many statements of policy are vouched in terms of 'Africanization', which has similar terminological ambiguities and racial connotations, although its use has on occasions been defended on the basis that it refers to all citizens. But it is doubtful if the policy is absolutely fair in its application to Asians, for despite their high educational and technical skills, few Asians occupy really senior positions.

Citizen Asian attitudes are partly a response to their environment, to the policies of the governments and to the opportunities that are open to them. It would be true to say that the situation is unsettled. It is unlikely that many citizen Asians will leave in the near future,

and indeed some of them have done extremely well lately due to the removal of competition from the non-citizens. Thus, for the foreseeable future at least, most citizen Asians will remain in East and Central Africa.

In assessing their future prospects, particularly in regard to their relationship with the Africans, it would be best to do so in various sectors: economics, education, politics and social relations.

## Economics

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The role of Asians in the economic life of the regions has decreased. An instance is the decline of their role in the marketing of cash crops, which was an important function of and source of income for Asian traders, especially in Uganda and Tanganyika. The marketing and ginning of cotton was once a virtual Asian monopoly in the inter-war period in Uganda, but later there was a steady increase in the share of co-operatives and individual growers in cotton marketing and ginning. This was the result in part of the natural growth of the co-operative movement but the process was also significantly aided by government legislation, even in the colonial period, which in effect compelled Asian ginners to sell out to co-operatives through control of the allocation of the cotton crop to ginneries in different zones. The result was that by the early sixties the co-operatives and individual growers virtually controlled the marketing and ginning of the entire cotton crop.

A similar policy was applied to other cash crops. Coffee curing and marketing which until the fifties were largely in the hands of non-Africans had been firmly placed in the hands of co-operatives by 1966. Likewise, greater control was secured over the marketing of minor cash crops through the creation of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Board.

In Tanzania, co-operatives had played a more important role from an earlier period, particularly in the Chagga area. But official policy has been to place the marketing and processing of all agricultural products as soon as possible in the hands of co-operatives and state marketing boards.

The consequence has been virtually to eliminate the Asian role in the marketing and processing of the important cash crops in the East African countries.

There has been a similar decline in commerce. Initially Tanzania made an attempt rapidly to increase the share of co-operatives and African businessmen in wholesale and retail trade. The first Five-Year-Plan issued in 1964, for instance, aimed to increase the share of co-operatives to 10% of wholesale and retail trade by 1970 and 30% to 40% in the longer run. In order to further this objective, the International Trading and Credit Company of Tanganyika Ltd. (INTRATA) and the Co-operative Supply Association of Tanganyika (COSATA) were set up by the government. However, subsequent experience with COSATA was disastrous as the organisation built up huge liabilities and ran into heavy losses. The co-operative movement thus failed to make any significant inroads into wholesale or retail trade.

Meanwhile the government's attitude toward private African enterprise was undergoing a fundamental change. This was crystallized in the publication of the famous Arusha Declaration of 1967. As is well known, this called for a wide-ranging programme of nationalization of private banking, insurance and leading commercial and industrial enterprises. At the same time, the leadership ethic effectively put an end to the incipient business activities of the African political and bureaucratic élite. The government turned away from the policy of encouraging the emergence of an African business class. The paradoxical result of this move towards socialism was thus to shield established Asian and European businessmen from the incipient competition of African traders. However, long-term policy continued to be the elimination of capitalist elements in the commercial and industrial sectors and their replacement by co-operative and state-owned enterprises.

It should be noted here that the majority of the enterprises nationalized at the time of the Arusha Declaration were large scale, expatriate-owned firms. The nationalized commercial firms were amalgamated with INTRATA to form the State Trading Corporation (STC). Soon after its inauguration, the STC was handling 20% of all imports and 7% of total exports. It had also acquired distribution rights for certain locally manufactured products. Since that time, the STC has steadily extended its business in all these directions.

The logical outcome of this policy was reached in February 1970, when the Tanzanian Government announced that the entire wholesale trade would be handled by the STC. This was bound to affect large numbers of Asian traders, many of whom would be forced to close down. Even retail traders were to find trading under the new conditions less attractive and profitable. In the early stages of the take-over of wholesale trade, the STC expected to make considerable use of the Asian merchants with experience in this field.

The thrust of Tanzanian policies has been to transform the colonial economy into a socialist economy. In sharp contrast to this, Kenya has followed a vigorous policy of Africanization of commerce and industry and has pioneered many techniques in this area which are being adopted in other Eastern and Central African states facing similar problems. Even where state institutions have been created in the fields of commerce and industry, they have been used more to push Africanization than to extend state control and ownership. In the earlier period the emphasis was on increasing the competitiveness of African businessmen through training, subsidized loans, commercial extension services, etc. But this did not yield rapid results and the government introduced new legislation under which non-citizen employees and traders had to obtain work permits and trade licences in order to continue in gainful employment. This we have already examined.

In addition to these tools, the government has also created other institutions and policies to accelerate Africanization. The Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC) has, among its other functions, the promotion of African business enterprises through loans, advisory services and equity participation. The Kenya National Trading Corporation (KNTC) has



monopoly rights in the import and distribution of certain commodities, and it assists African businessmen by granting them distributive rights in these commodities. It also provides training facilities for them. Local manufacturers of some important products have been persuaded or required to distribute their products through KNTC and hence through African traders. Under the Transport Licensing Act, non-citizen businessmen must obtain licences to operate carriers. Various steps have been taken to accelerate African participation in the construction industry.

Uganda followed policies and practices very similar to Kenya's, i.e. to promote African, as opposed to just citizen, business activities. Their effect, as in Kenya, was the Africanization of small-scale capitalism. However, unlike the position in Kenya but in the spirit of the Arusha Declaration, the Uganda Government announced in May 1970 the complete or partial nationalization of major sectors of the economy, including import and export trade, all manufacturing and plantation industries, banks, oil companies, public transport and mining companies.

Whereas policies aimed at greater localization affect only the non-citizen Asians and in fact may temporarily help citizen Asians by reducing competition in business and employment from non-citizens, measures of a socialist nature adversely affect all capitalist enterprises, whether owned by citizens or non-citizens. The ultimate logic of a socialist economy is of course the complete elimination of all capitalist elements in the society.

In Zambia the position is similar to that in Uganda before the change of regime. President Kaunda has nationalized the major sectors of the economy, while retaining strong incentives for the growth of local capitalism.

Some years ago business families planned for their sons to enter the business. More and more the Asian parent began to plan for his childrens careers other than commerce. Higher education had a higher premium than ever before, while increasing importance was also attached to the acquisition of technical skills. While many Asian youths will be able to avoid unemployment because they possess special skills, others will inevitably fail to find jobs. Some sections of the community suffered drastic reduction in their standard of living.

There seem to be few avenues of escape to other ways of making a living. In Kenya land is scarce, and it was impossible for Asians to have a chance to go into agriculture. Such a possibility, however, exists in Tanzania where land is more plentiful. A number of young Asians have been trained in agriculture, and initial experiments in settling Asians on land and introducing them to farming have been successful. The government has encouraged such prospects and given them technical assistance.

Another area where Asians could make an important contribution is in the more technical and skilled areas of public and semi-public employment. As the East African countries move more and more towards state ownership and control and as parastatal institutions proliferate, there is an increasing demand for personnel skilled in the ways of commerce, insurance and accounting. At present most of such persons are to be found among the Asian

communities. To an important extent the success of experiments in state enterprise depends on these Asians. In Tanzania the services of Asians have been used, and it is generally acknowledged that the success of nationalization owes a great deal to their work. Kenya and Uganda showed little inclination to employ Asians in similar ways.

## Education

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As we have seen, the educational systems in colonial times operated along racial and segregated lines. In addition there were enormous disparities in the standards of education available to the children of different races. Equally, there was great disparity in access to educational facilities among them. While practically every Asian or European child went to primary school and most (at least in East Africa) had access to secondary education, the primary school enrolment ratios for Africans in the fifties was considerably below 50%, while only a tiny fraction of the relevant age group could be provided with secondary education. The educational system for all three races was based on the British school system, with similar curricula and examinations.

It was to be expected that after independence the national governments would introduce major changes in the systems inherited from the colonial era. Education is a key instrument for forging national unity and for promoting the development of the economy. In addition, because of the almost universal desire for more and better education, it also became a highly sensitive issue in national politics. There have been many important changes in the educational systems of these countries in the last decade. Our purpose here is to focus on these changes in so far as they affected the Asian community.

The first major reform was the integration of the school system. This affected both government and communal but state-aided schools. This integration was brought about by opening the erstwhile Asian and European schools to African children. In these preference is given to African children. Quotas are set, so that already most of the former Asian schools have a pre-dominance of African children. Even as between children of citizens, Africans get preference. Under this policy the proportion of African children admitted to such schools in Kenya was raised from 33% in 1966 to 80% in 1970. The result was that it was much more difficult for Asian children to get to school. The pressure is felt particularly in the secondary schools; most children are able to get into primary schools.

The situation became most critical in Tanzania, where the government took over all schools. In Zambia the situation was much better and most Asian children could get to secondary schools — because of the big expansion of educational facilities just before and after independence. In Malawi it became increasingly difficult to find secondary school places.

The response of the Asian community to these reduced educational opportunities was to establish their own unaided schools, as they had done at the turn of the century. It has been estimated that in Tanzania alone no less than 24 secondary schools sprang up all over the country

between 1964 and 1971 to cope with the educational crisis. Similarly in Kenya several new secondary schools were built.

In addition to community-run schools, private schools, run on commercial lines, have mushroomed in the last 25 years. In Malawi a company has been set up in which shares can be bought, which entitle one to a place in the secondary schools financed by these funds. While such schools serve a real need, they tend to be inferior to government schools and as they have little or no subsidy, even when they are not profit making, the fees tend to be relatively high, thus precluding most children of poor parents. Some parents manage to send their children overseas, but apart from the cost factor, governments have been restricting the use of foreign exchange for this purpose. For instance, in August 1970, Tanzania refused to provide foreign exchange for the overseas school education of residents of Tanzania.

The second reform has been in the direction of 'nationalization' of the educational systems. The curricula are being redrafted to reflect local history, geography, zoology, etc. In Tanzania and Kenya, Swahili is increasing in importance, and already up to the first eight years or so, schooling in Tanzania is done through the medium of Swahili. There is more stress on the relevance of education to the problems of these countries, here again Tanzania taking the lead. There is now considerable emphasis on rural and agricultural education, and the school entry age has been raised from five or six to seven, so that the students are more able towards the end of primary school to learn skills like carpentry and farming. Primary schools are no longer perceived as producing an élite for secondary and university education. School-leaving and higher school certificate examinations for East Africans are conducted locally.

Whilst these changes undoubtedly represent a step forward from the national point of view, their effect on the Asian community has been a mixed one. On the one hand, Asian citizens should benefit from a system which is more suited to local conditions and more attuned to the needs of the economy. On the other hand, it reduces their mobility if they have to move. It renders a little more difficult the acquisition of high educational and technical skills which the community feels is increasingly becoming indispensable to its survival; and the new emphasis on agriculture is less relevant for the Asian community which has always been and will continue to be highly urbanized.

At the post-secondary level, the children of citizen Asians have done well. The universities have been able to absorb all the candidates qualified for entry, and because of the earlier favourable position of the Asians, a disproportionately large number of university students are or have been Asians.

This was, however, not true of Malawi and Zambia, where only about 12 Asian students attend University, not all of them local Asians. Lack of financial means has been no barrier. In Malawi, university education has been free and in Zambia it is heavily subsidised, while in East Africa all qualified citizens are able to secure government bursaries to supplement whatever support the parents can afford.

A considerable number of Asians graduated from the University of East Africa (now broken into national universities). Most of these have been in medicine, engineering, architecture and other science-based professions — areas where there is a great dearth of qualified people in East Africa. In the course of time the results of changes in the schools system will no doubt be reflected in the university intake.

## Politics

In East Africa, Asian politics had been active and feverish. As we have seen, this was largely because political representation was on a communal basis. At independence; communal and fancy franchises were abolished. At the same time, political rights were reserved to citizens. These two factors combined to reduce Asian interest and effectiveness in politics. Politics are now a matter of political parties, where the role of the individual politician is less important than before. Politics are also based on tribal or regional support and alliances.

In this context, Asians feel there is no scope for a distinctive Asian contribution. Asian political parties have been voluntarily dissolved. Many Asians, particularly in Zambia and Malawi, feel there is safety in low visibility and that the absence of involvement in politics will serve to remove them from controversy and factionalism. In these countries there are no prominent Asians in political life.

This is unlike East Africa where some of the Asians active in politics before independence were kept on as a reward for their past services or in order to present a picture of non-racialism or to strengthen its prospects.

Another characteristic of politics in East and Central African countries is the trend towards a one-party system. In such a system there is either in law or in practice one effective political party which controls most institutions of the state and the instrumentalities of propaganda. Free from fears of rival political parties, the leaders in such a system can impose on the country decisions that may otherwise be politically risky. Theoretically such a system should be more favourable to the Asian politicians than the two-party system; and also to the Asian population in general. In a two-party system, it is difficult for Asians to decide which party to support; whichever party they do not support, threatens them with all kinds of reprisals.

As Asians in East Africa have generally been divided in their support between the two parties in a particular country, they became the target of abuse and threats from both sides. A one-party system eliminates the need for this agonising choice; Asian loyalties to the political system can be manifested more readily and fearlessly. This theoretical proposition may not work out, however, for the single party is seldom as monolithic as it seems. It would be disastrous for the Asians to become involved in the subterranean struggles for power within the single party.

It is interesting to look at the actual political participation of Asians since independence. Tanzania is perhaps the country in which Asian participation at grass roots level was most pronounced. This is partly due to the fact that

local politics were more important in Tanzania than elsewhere as a result of TANU's structure, but in part it is a reflection of the determination of the Asians there to involve themselves in the affairs of the country. While a considerable number of Asians are members of TANU, especially in the smaller urban centres, only comparatively few have played an active part in its management. But their number is larger than is generally supposed.

In a study in Dar es Salaam in 1968, a significant Asian participation in the affairs of TANU was found to take place. Several political leaders, branch and cell leaders, were interviewed and it was the general opinion that since independence there had been greater willingness on the part of Asians to join in political activities. A large number of cell leaders were found to be Asians, estimated at 10% of the total in the capital, though exact figures were not available. The opinion of an Ismaili leader was also recorded that 90% of his community had joined TANU.

At the national level, too, Asian participation had been significant and the general elections in 1965 and 1970 showed it was still possible for an Asian candidate to defeat an African rival in a predominantly African constituency. One of those elected in 1965 and again 1970 was Amir Jamal, the Minister for Finance.

In Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Malawi, there has been less Asian participation. In the general elections in Kenya in 1969, not a single non-African candidate was elected, (and it is doubtful if results would be different if elections had taken place in Uganda). Perhaps it is not just a coincidence that the Asians in these countries are so highly involved in organizations like Lions and Rotary Clubs; feeling unable to participate in the national political system, they look to the activities of these organizations for excitement and prestige.

## Social

Social relations cover a wide spectrum, ranging from behaviour to a domestic servant to inter-racial marriages. African leaders say that Asians must integrate themselves with the host society. Asians agree — so long as integration does not mean inter-racial marriages, forms of forced association or a threat to their own culture. There is thus a serious misunderstanding about what is meant by or involved in integration.

Integration presumably means a state of affairs where the various communities live in harmony owing common loyalty to key political and administrative institutions. Beyond that, it can take the form either of pluralism, where each group retains its cultural and social institutions, or assimilation, where the cultures mix and merge, with the dominance in most cases of the culture of the majority group. On this important issue, there has been little meaningful discussion. What the Asians prefer is perhaps clearer than what the Africans want, but even among the former attitudes are changing.

The Asians have a predilection for pluralism and this predilection is more marked in Central Africa than East Africa. This attitude is rooted deeply in their culture, and the difference between the Asians in East and Central Africa is due to the greater hold of culture and tradition

on the latter group. Colonial rule served merely to reinforce cultural isolation and social and economic divisions.

We have already discussed various changes since independence that should have had the effect of breaking these down. Perhaps the most important of these is the integration of the educational system. The emphasis on education in the early years of Asian settlement owed as much to cultural as to economic reasons. The early educational system for Asians laid much emphasis on religious instruction, Indian languages and generally on the transmission of traditional Indian values and culture. But over the years the Asian education system has been steadily westernized, and education has played a key, if unintended role, in promoting social change within the Asian community.

Almost within a generation, the Asian population has been wrenched from a traditional society, and has turned its sights to a western-orientated one. Thus any enquiry, for example, into the extent of change from the joint family to the nuclear family, with its profound social consequences, must devote attention to the impact of education.

In this connection, it is particularly relevant to assess the role played by education for girls. In the last twenty years, there has been a virtual social revolution in the status of women in Asian society. Increasing educational opportunities, which in turn led to a large number of Asian women seeking paid employment, have been a key element in this process. The recent moves towards nationalization of the education systems, with greater emphasis on local material and local problems, will further accelerate the detachment of the Asian community from their inherited culture and traditions. The rapid disappearance of Indian languages in the primary and secondary schools will in the long run prove a powerful factor in the erosion of Indian cultural influences.

The integration of the educational system from the kindergarten to the university will have a profound long-term effect on the attitudes and positions of the new generation of East African Asians. It is bound to lead to better race relations, to improved understanding of the diverse cultures of East African societies and to enhanced social contacts across racial lines. The reduction or elimination of differential educational facilities for different races can be expected in the long run to lead to a corresponding reduction of racial inequalities of income and wealth.

What of the preference of Africans? Some African leaders have asked for total assimilation, as signified by inter-racial marriage. Others have shown no marked preference for this degree of social integration, and it is significant that the rising African élite prefers to socialize inter se; its members prefer to marry girls of their own tribe. It is therefore difficult to say whether the Africans want total assimilation or not.

The policies of the governments have been ill-defined. The Zanzibar government came nearest to demanding complete assimilation. And characteristically it is in the sphere of marriage that the government there applied most

pressure. President Karume brought pressure on the Asian community to encourage the marriage of their daughters to Africans and a decree passed in 1970 dispensed with the necessity for the consent of both parties to the marriage.

The mainland Tanzanian government has also shown a predilection for assimilation, though not of so drastic a nature and has been careful to avoid the impression of coercion. It has frequently attacked communal cultural and social institutions, stopped radio broadcasts in Indian languages and insisted on active Asian participation in local self-help schemes and in the rallies and other activities of the party, TANU. The emphasis on Swahili as the national language also helps to bring the Asians more into the main-stream of national life as does an integrated system of schooling.

Kenya (and Uganda), despite economic pressures on the community, has done little to accelerate integration. Communal institutions flourish, including schools. Fewer efforts have been made to get the Asians involved in political parties or schemes of self-help, and women and youth organizations have not really become multi-racial.

Even greater isolation is tolerated in Zambia and Malawi. Asian housing is still largely segregated, and few even of the educated Asians participate in the cosmopolitan life of the capitals.

One of the difficulties of discussing policies of assimilation in the East and Central African context is the lack of a defined, homogeneous culture to which assimilation might be effected. The various tribes have differences, and in any case the African way of life is itself undergoing far-reaching changes. In the absence of a stable dominant culture, assimilation is not very practicable. The irony of the situation may well be that the common meeting ground of the two communities will be Western culture.

If one is to go by trends since independence, one can say that the earlier pressures on the Asian community to 'integrate' are weakening. Perhaps the Asian exclusiveness in the past has been resented not so much in itself as for its implications of racial arrogance and superiority. As more and more Africans move into positions of responsibility and wealth, they acquire greater confidence and seem less disturbed by Asian exclusiveness. So far there has been no concerted attack on the exclusiveness of any communities (except in Uganda). The Asian community which is regarded as having made the most progress in integration with the Africans is the Ismaili group who have responded to the able leadership of the Aga Khan and his administration. Almost all the 8,000 Kenyan Ismailis, for example, took out citizenship at the time of independence. Yet the Ismailis are as culturally bound as other Asian groups, and their social organization is even more cohesive and exclusive than that of others. With political freedom and increasing African prosperity, there is less concern with social distance between the races.

It is, however, unlikely that the pattern of inter-racial social relations will remain unchanged. There are many forces at work which would lead to the breakdown of isolation. The abolition or reduction of communal schools and other services is bringing the different Asian

sub-communities together. The unfreezing of the structure of distribution of wealth and jobs is of profound significance. What was often a class problem tended to be viewed as racial, for such were the economic disparities between the races that social contact was barely conceivable. Now the former strict segregation of residential areas is breaking down as the African élite moves into the more fashionable areas. Even in the less desirable areas, the Asians and the Africans have become neighbours. In a great many spheres of life, there are more and more contacts, not least in the trade unions, which till recently had been inclined to racialism, but now tend to bring together the working members of the two races.

In Tanzania, the government introduced a system of national service, where the service men and women live in camps for five months of a two-year period. The scheme is optional for certain groups, compulsory for others. It was unlikely that many Asians would have volunteered for national service but a number of them come under the compulsory scheme and have been in the service.

Quite apart from helping the image of the community by this conspicuous commitment to the nation, the experience of the youth of various races living together in such close proximity for five months while engaged in tasks of what is often referred to as nation-building cannot but increase racial understanding, and produce a comradely spirit which transcends racial differences. Other significant factors for change already discussed, are at work in the newly integrated kindergartens, schools, and universities.

It is doubtful whether the Asians will establish contacts with Africans at all levels of society, or only in the upper reaches. While the social pattern of relationships will change, it may well be a long time before this happens on a significant scale. There appears to be less and less direct pressure on the communities to get together. There is a natural predilection in most groups in East Africa for social exclusiveness or at least a preference for social contacts with those of one's own kind. This will not in itself harm the future of Asians so long as the colonial coincidence of race and wealth changes.

What is important is that the hostility against the Asians should disappear or diminish. With prosperous African middle and upper classes, we may reach a state of stability, where social diversities are accepted within a wider framework of political and economic integration. As far as divisions within the Asians themselves are concerned, it is likely that these will become less important as communal institutions decline.

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## CONCLUSION

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The increasing pressures on the Asian community (particularly after the expulsion of 74,000 Asians from Uganda in 1972) brought their problems to a watershed. The issues involved are becoming clearer and sharper. Their solution, however, may not become obvious for some time. While government pressures have brought the issues to a head, there is little evidence that the governments concerned have given consideration to the role and place of the Asian. Nor have the Asians themselves a clear idea of



the solutions needed; they seem to feel that all depends on government policies. By abolishing racial barriers and racial institutions, the governments have set in motion forces for integration. They must now ensure that integration takes place in a meaningful way, and accept their responsibility for ensuring equality and justice among all citizens.

The future prospects of the Asians remain in doubt, but certain developments seem clear. First, over the next few years there will be a significant reduction in the number of Asians in East Africa. Their shops in the rural areas will disappear, leading, at least temporarily, to further concentration in the more highly urban areas. Second, the Asian dominance of commerce will decrease further, giving way either to African enterprise or state enterprise. In professions as well as other forms of employment, there will be an increasing participation by Africans.

The result of all these developments should be to take some of the heat out of the Asian problem. A consequence of this may be that the pressures on the community to change and to integrate, which were strong at independence, will ease or disappear.

In that case the Asian predilection for communal exclusiveness will assert itself, postponing further a meaningful integration between the two communities.

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**APPENDIX I:**

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**Asian Population in East and Central Africa in Census Years, and estimates for 1972**

Year	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	Zambia	Malawi
1917	11,787	—	—	39	481
1921	25,253	5,604	—	56	563
1931	43,623	14,150	—	176	1,591
1945	—	—	—	1,117	2,804
1948	97,687	35,215	46,254	—	—
1956	149,000	62,900	74,300	5,450	8,504
1961-62	176,613	77,400	88,700	7,970	10,623
1966	—	—	85,000	—	11,299
1969	139,037	74,308	—	—	—
1970	—	—	—	10,705	—
1972*	105,000	1,000	52,000	7,000	13,000
Local citizens	65,000	700	25,000	1,000	1,000
UK citizens	35,000	150	20,000	6,000	11,000
Indian/Pakistani citizens	2,500	150	2,000	—	—
Stateless or people of undetermined status	2,500	—	5,000	—	1,000

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**APPENDIX II:**

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**Racial Composition of Kenya (census figures)**

	1948	1962	1969
African	5,251,120	8,365,942	10,733,202
Asian	97,687	176,613	139,037
European	29,660	55,759	40,593
Arab	24,174	34,048	27,886
Other	3,325	3,901	1,987
Total	5,405,966	8,636,263	10,942,705

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**APPENDIX III:**

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**Asian exodus from East and Central Africa since African independence (Estimates)**

United Kingdom	200,000
India	60,000
Pakistan	10,000
Canada	10,000
USA	5,000
Other	5,000
Total	290,000

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\*Estimates only

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**Select Documentary Films**

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- Telco no.  
..... *'Unloved – Yet Necessary' (Ungeliebt – doch Unentbehrlich)* looks at the political and economic situation of the Asian minority in Kenya. Broadcast 20 March 1978, WDR, P.O. Box 101950, 5000 Cologne, West Germany.
- 710974 *'The Forgotten People'*, Asians expelled from East Africa in Britain. 50 mins colour. Broadcast 24 February 1971 in 'Man Alive' (Villiers House, Haven Green, London W5 2PA).
- 724052 *African Attitudes to Asians* – 18 mins colour, Richard Kershaw interviewing Africans and Canon Burgess-Carr. Broadcast 2 October 1972 In Panorama (BBC TV, London W.14).

The above film list was provided by Richard S. Clark, TELCO, 19 Gurnell's Road, Seer Green, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2XJ, UK.

Enquiries regarding these films should be addressed to the broadcaster and not to TELCO.

The authors of this report are Professor Dharam P. Ghai, who when writing it was Director of Economic Research at the University of Nairobi, and his brother, Professor Yash Ghai, then of the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar es Salaam.



The sequel, *The New Position of East Africa's Asians: Problems of a Displaced Minority*, by Yash Tandon was published in 1973, with a revised edition (with Arnold Raphael) in 1978, as MRG Report No. 16 (price £1.20).



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<sup>1</sup>The Internationalist; <sup>2</sup>New Society; <sup>3</sup>Times Lit. Supplement; <sup>4</sup>Belfast Newsletter; <sup>5</sup>Irish Post; <sup>6</sup>International Affairs; <sup>7</sup>Sunday Independent; <sup>8</sup>Asian Review; <sup>9</sup>The Friend; <sup>10</sup>Afro-Asian Affairs; <sup>11</sup>E. African Standard; <sup>12</sup>Sunday Times; <sup>13</sup>New Community; <sup>14</sup>The Times; <sup>15</sup>Information; <sup>16</sup>The Observer; <sup>17</sup>Irving Horowitz; <sup>18</sup>The Guardian; <sup>19</sup>Peace News; <sup>20</sup>The Freethinker; <sup>21</sup>The Spectator; <sup>22</sup>The Geographical Magazine; <sup>23</sup>New World; <sup>24</sup>Melbourne Age; <sup>25</sup>The Economist; <sup>26</sup>Neue Zürcher Zeitung; <sup>27</sup>Resurgence; <sup>28</sup>Feedback; <sup>29</sup>Time Out; <sup>30</sup>Evening Standard; <sup>31</sup>Tribune of Australia; <sup>32</sup>The Scotsman; <sup>33</sup>The Financial Times; <sup>34</sup>New Statesman; <sup>35</sup>The Nation; <sup>36</sup>Bernard Levin; <sup>37</sup>BBC World Service; <sup>38</sup>International Herald Tribune.

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