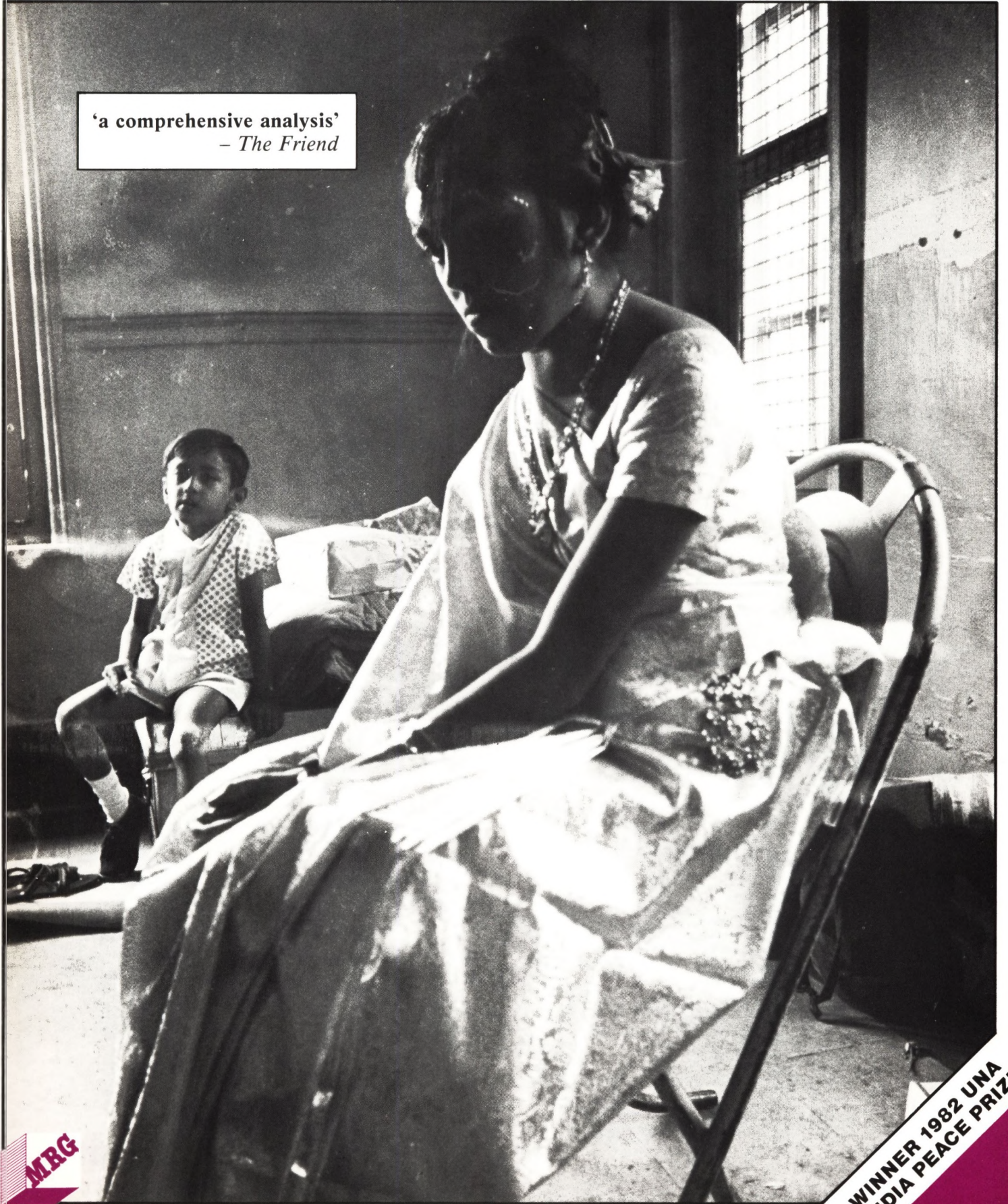


The new position of East Africa's Asians: problems of a displaced minority

The Minority Rights Group **Report No.16**

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- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- 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
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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East Africa's Asians

By Yash Tandon and Arnold Raphael

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The cover photograph of a young Ugandan Asian woman is by David Robison, Camera Press.

Printed by Expedite Graphic Limited, Murray House, 3 Vandon Street, London SW1H 0AG.

ISBN No 0 946690 20 0

This report was first published in September 1973.

First revised edition, June 1978.

Second revised edition, November 1984

The report that follows has been commissioned, and is published, by the Minority Rights Group as a contribution to public understanding of the problem which forms its subject. It does not necessarily represent, in every detail and in all its aspects, the collective view of the Group.

Author's Note: I would like to acknowledge my debt to the various people who read through the first draft and made significant suggestions which have helped in improving the manuscript. I am particularly indebted to Mr. Dent Ocaya-Lakidi of Makerere University Kampala, Professor Roland Oliver of the School of Oriental & African Studies, Professor Ali A. Mazrui of Stanford University, Professor Donald Rothchild of the University of California, Davis, Dr. Michael Twaddle of The Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, Mr. Praful Patel of the Committee on United Kingdom Citizenship, Mr. J.E.S. Fawcett of The Royal Institute of International Affairs, and Mr. Dipak Nandy of the Runnymede Trust. Y.T.

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CONTENTS

<i>Tables: Indians abroad</i>	2
<i>Asians in East and Central Africa</i>	5
<i>Asian Sub-groupings</i>	6
Introduction: A Question of Rights and Morals	3
Part One – The Colonial Origins of the Crisis of Colour	3
Part Two – The Question of 'Integration' and Asian Social Exclusiveness	8
Part Three – The Siege and the Squeeze	9
Part Four – Emigration and Exodus	11
Part Five – Conclusions and some Recommendations for the Future	15
<i>Footnotes</i>	17
The East African Asians – The Situation in 1984 by Arnold Raphael	19
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	20

INDIANS ABROAD

	No of those who have accepted foreign citizenship			No of those who have accepted foreign citizenship			
	1970	1980		1970	1980		
EUROPE				ASIA			
France	1,400	500	6	Bhutan	n.a.	40,000	20
Netherlands	1,500	101,500	100,000	Burma	272,000	300,000-	7,200
Norway	n.a.	1,450	75			400,000	
Portugal	n.a.	6,000	5,939	Hong Kong	5,000	12,600	4,000
Spain	1,600	4,000	37	Indonesia	27,600	20,000	5,000
Sweden	n.a.	1,900	1,172	Japan	1,150	1,850	110
Switzerland	n.a.	2,400	450	Laos	1,800	60	—
United Kingdom	270,000	673,000	250,000 †	Malaysia	810,000	1,208,500	1,009,500
			(est.)	Nepal	n.a.	3,800,000	2,388,000
West Germany	4,700	13,000	1,521	Philippines	2,500	3,000	500
				Singapore	125,000	159,000	122,000
				Sri Lanka	1,234,100	1,350,000	432,986
				Thailand	18,000	20,000	10,000
				Vietnam	2,000	200	n.a.
AFRICA				AUSTRALASIA			
Algeria	n.a.	1,500	40	Australia	3,100	42,000	n.a.
Ethiopia	4,500	2,350	450	Fiji	241,000	300,700	300,650
Ghana	1,750	1,250	44	New Zealand	6,100	10,000	9,200
Kenya	182,000	79,000*	72,500				
Lesotho	n.a.	1,000	800	AMERICAS			
Malgasy	12,000	20,000	15,500	Brazil	n.a.	2,000	8
Malawi	11,300	4,900	3,640	Canada	20,000	175,000	95,000
Mauritius	520,000	623,000	612,527	Grenada	9,500	3,900	3,700
Mozambique	n.a.	22,050	21,800	Guyana	357,000	424,400	424,100
Nigeria	n.a.	15,000	3	Jamaica	n.a.	50,300	50,000
Somalia	1,350	1,100	172	Panama	n.a.	1,500	250
South Africa	614,000	750,000 (est.)	n.a.	Surinam	101,700	124,900	124,750
Sudan	2,550	1,800	98	Trinidad & Tobago	360,000	421,000	420,000
Tanzania	105,000	59,000*	55,000	U.S.A.	32,000	365,000	35,000
Uganda	76,000	430	300				
Zambia	10,700	22,600*	9,000	Other countries (total)	n.a.	12,000	2,300
Zimbabwe	10,000	n.a.	n.a.				
MIDDLE EAST				Total	6,500,000	11,014,000	7,463,200
Afghanistan	20,000	30,000	25,000				
Aden	2,000	—	—				
Bahrain	n.a.	40,000	200				
Iran	1,000	20,800	920				
Iraq	12,000	20,250	10,000				
Israel	23,000	—	—				
Jordan	n.a.	3,515	—				
Kuwait	12,000	65,000	100				
Libya	n.a.	10,000	—				
Oman	n.a.	60,000	5				
Qatar	2,000	30,000	125				
Saudi Arabia	1,000	120,000	2,000				
United Arab Emirates	5,000	152,000	2,000				
North Yemen	n.a.	3,500	300				
South Yemen	n.a.	100,000	99,500				

The figures for 1970 are based upon information in the *Times of India Directory and Yearbook, 1970*. The figures for 1980 are based on *Government of India Parliamentary Record*, and have been collected (and in some cases amended) by Dr Arthur W. Helweg of Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA.

† UK figures are from the 1981 Census.

* These figures appear to be over-estimates.

Since 1969 the Indian population of all of the East African countries has diminished, while Indians in Western Europe, the Middle East and North America have substantially increased in numbers.

INTRODUCTION: A QUESTION OF RIGHTS AND MORALS

While an extended discussion on the issue of minority rights is impossible in a report that deals with one specific case-history, it is not out of place to raise a few important issues for theoretical debate occasioned by the events under consideration.

Out of General Amin's peremptory expulsion *en masse* of some 50,000 Asians from Uganda in August 1972 arises the obvious question of whether the General had overstepped the boundaries of human rights in this case. But in order to determine this we have to come to some agreement as to what these rights are, and whether these can be deemed to be inherent in minority groups just as they are deemed, in liberal theory at least, to be inherent in individuals. Indeed, is there anything called 'minority rights'? Are not all rights, including protection against discrimination on account of race, colour, tribe, religion, language, region and class inherent only in the individual? Or is a minority's right of protection against summary mass expulsion a special kind of minority right, so that it could be argued that while an alien individual of a certain race, etc., may at times have to be expelled for reasons of state (especially if he is involved in a criminal act) the same cannot be done to a whole minority community?

This would lead to a discussion of a different order: can an entire community be charged with generalised criminal behaviour? And by what process of law may they be tried for that? Preceding the Asians' expulsion from Uganda, General Amin had launched a protracted and vehement attack on the Asian community for their alleged malpractices involving corruption, overpricing and undercutting, breaches of tax and foreign exchange regulations, and so on, amounting to 'economic sabotage' of the country. Is there a court anywhere, one might ask, that can try a minority on such a charge? And if individual instances might be cited as evidence, could the crimes of a few be a sufficient basis for sanctions against a whole community? Is there a sense in which a whole minority community can be deemed to be responsible for the crime of a few? This presupposes that the community has the means by which to bring to order those of its members whose negligent or criminal behaviour could bring down the house on the entire community. Indeed, General Amin apparently had implicitly given credence to this supposition. In a conference of the Asians that he had called in December 1971, he had uttered his collective charges against them and had asked them to find their own means of correcting their behaviour. What did the General have in mind then? Did he think that the Asians had the means at their disposal (perhaps an informal court to try the culprits, and informal social sanctions to bring them to book) to correct the situation? Or did he then think that in his scheme of things the Asians were doomed anyway, no matter what they did?

These are not speculative questions at all. They concern vital issues relating to a determination of criminal behaviour by a whole community that might then provide a reason for their mass expulsion. For if such reason for expulsion can be found, and be found to be justified, then it could still be maintained that a minority community *does* have a right of protection against mass expulsion, *except where* it may be collectively indicted on a criminal offence. The debate on minority rights would then shift its ground.

Instead of discussing simply minority rights, we would then be discussing what constitutes a 'criminal offence' by a community, and by what processes of law or justice might this be determined. The Asians were accused not only of 'economic sabotage', but also of social exclusivism. For example, they refused to allow their daughters to marry Africans. It was a special or perhaps not so special kind of racial arrogance of the Asians. Was that also a crime suitable for punishment by mass expulsion?

The discussion of minority rights and the legitimacy of mass expulsion in terms of crime and punishment would lead the discussion to the narrow confines of legalistic and jurisprudential concepts. Indeed, much of the discussion following the expulsion of the Asians from Uganda did take place in these juristic terms. But there is another angle to the problem. This is related to the whole realm of thought centering round the question of historical justice. It goes much beyond the contemporary concepts of collective crime and collective punishment. It ties an explanation of contemporary action to a past injustice. It would embrace, for example, the general anti-colonial reaction of the colonised peoples of the world against their European powers. It would explain, to give a particular instance, the recovery of Goa by India by means of a quick military victory over Portugal in 1962. The question of historical justice thus raises wider issues than those of contemporary legal norms.¹

The overall point of the argument is that, whatever the merits of a juridical debate, there are, in addition, considerations of historical injustice that must enter into the discussions on the situation of the Asians in East Africa, and the decision by General Amin to expel them from Uganda. The situation is by no means as simple as will resolve itself by a resort to principles of 'plain morality'.

Quite apart from the question of rights and morals is the purely sociological question of whether the Asian minority has a better future in a state that has declared itself in favour of capitalism (like Kenya) or one that has opted for socialism (like Tanzania). In the case of Uganda, the issue is no longer worth discussing. Uganda, under Amin, seems to have opted not just for capitalism, but for *black* capitalism. By definition, then, its brown residents, whether citizen or not, had no future in Uganda. The question is still worth discussing with respect to the other states in East Africa. To this I return at the end of this report.

Part One:

THE COLONIAL ORIGINS OF THE CRISIS OF COLOUR

What has the importation in recent years of thousands of Turkish workers into West Germany, of Malawians to South Africa, of Pakistanis to Britain and of Algerians to France in common with the importation of 32,000 Indian railway workers into East Africa at the turn of the last century? What does the strike of the coloured workers at Loughborough in Britain in October and November 1972 have in common with the strike of 50,000 African and Indian workers at Natal in South Africa in February 1973?

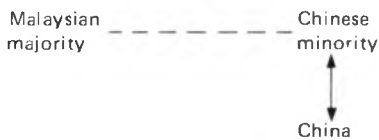
These questions are not at all irrelevant to the subject of this paper. Often the problem of the Asian minorities in East Africa is presented as if it were a bilateral problem between Africans and Asians. Indeed, the whole contro-

¹ for footnotes see page 17

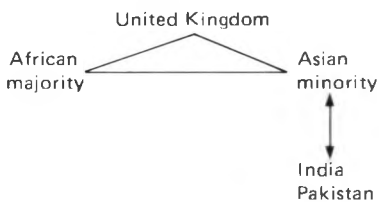
versy over who is 'to blame' for the bad race relations in East Africa – the Asians for their alleged failure to 'integrate' or the Africans for their allegedly discriminatory policies – is often debated in purely bilateral and racial terms. But this misses out a third very important dimension of the problem, namely, the colonial dimension. Historiographically, we have now moved from blaming every problem in Africa on colonialism to looking for internal causes, but this in turn can be carried too far.

It is most important that we recognise the problem of the Asian minorities in Eastern Africa as, in a fundamental sense, a trilateral problem. Like many ethnic minorities in the world, such as the Chinese in Malaysia, the Asians in Eastern Africa look across their shoulders to their country of cultural origin – India/Pakistan – for sympathy and spiritual survival. But most Asians in East Africa, especially those who carry British passports, look upon Britain also for protection and, as an ultimate contingency, for economic survival. The two types of situations may be represented diagrammatically as:

Bilateral Minority Problem



Trilateral Minority Problem



The East African Asians possessing British nationality are, in a real sense, a *dual minority*. They are a minority for both Britain and the East African countries, and many of their problems arise out of this peculiar predicament of theirs. The Asians were encouraged to enter East Africa at the point in the history of the development of capitalism when imperial Britain was penetrating East Africa. What this has in common with the present importation of coloured labour into Britain, France, Germany and South Africa is simply that they are all manifestations of the law of unequal development by which the peripheral sections of the weaker races ultimately become the labour pool for industrially more developed societies. French or German industrialists cannot fully satisfy their labour demands from the local labour pool. Coloured labour, in any case, is cheaper, less unionised and more easily disciplined than local labour. Coloured labour also helps to keep down the wages of the indigenous proletariat. Of the 95,000 workers employed by the Renault factories in France, for example, 21,000 come from overseas. West Germany has over 3 million immigrant workers.² The former Commissioner for social affairs at the European Economic Community, M. Albert Coppé, said in a revealing speech in December 1972 that Europe's immigrant work force should be regarded as the EEC's tenth partner.³

Investment capital has, as far as possible, employed the cheapest labour, whatever its colour. Why could not the British bring English workers to East Africa to build the

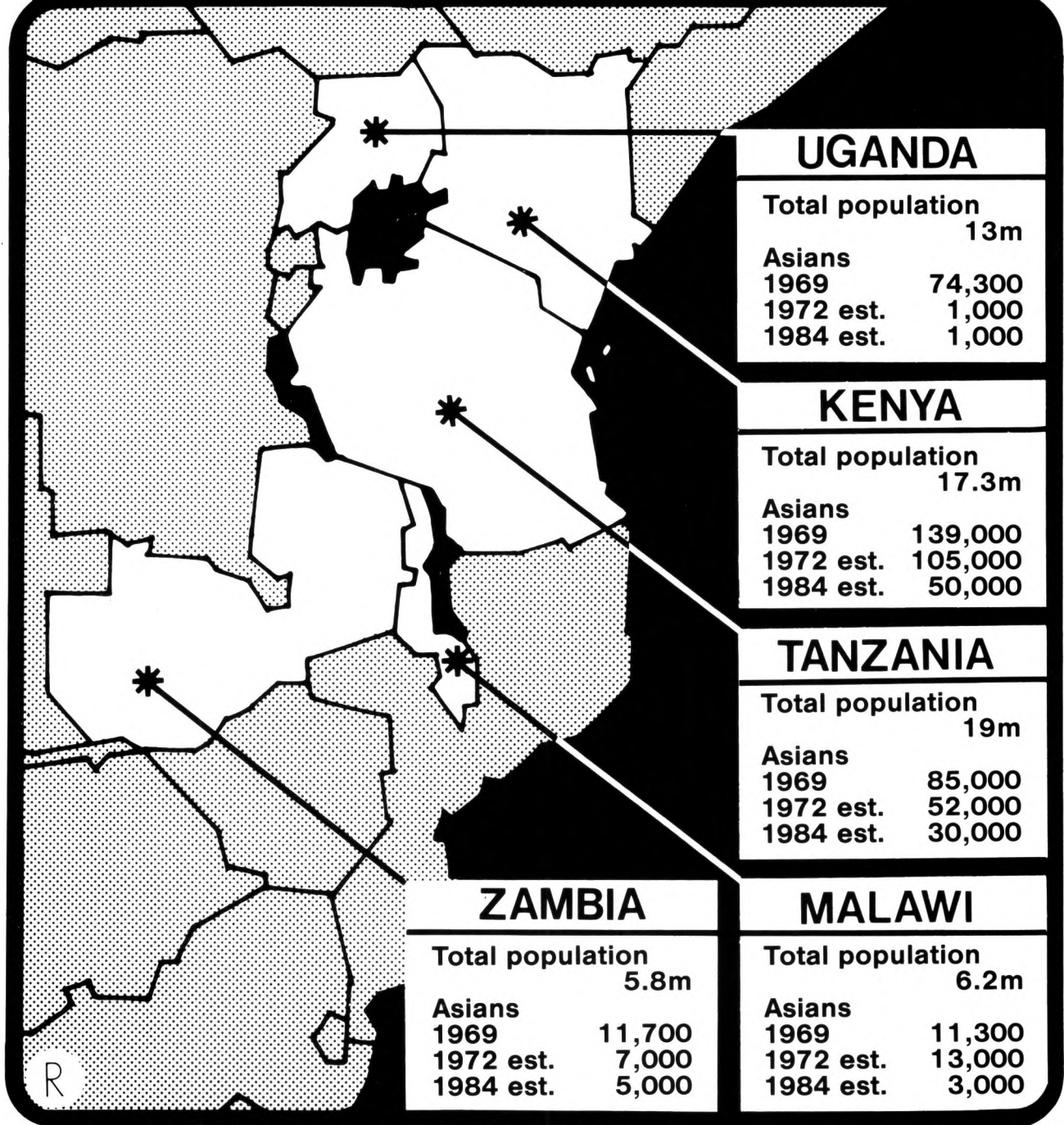
railways in the 1890's? Because they were needed more urgently in the British factories to manufacture, among other things, the railway engines and the rolling stock for East Africa, as well as shirts, shoes and toothpaste that hopefully the Africans would begin to purchase once the railways penetrated the African hinterland and made bark cloth, skin shoes and chewing stick appear 'uncivilized'. But if the English workers were unavailable, why did the British not employ the indigenous African labour? Precisely because the Africans had not yet become sufficiently interested in the money economy or in imported shirts, shoes and toothpaste, since their communal economy produced all they wanted of material things. Money incentive, therefore, was inadequate to alienate them from the land to make them work on the railways.

So 32,000 Indians were brought to East Africa to build the railways in the late 1890's. This, of course, was not the first contact between the Indians and East Africa. Trade had flourished between India and the East African coast for centuries, but this was sporadic and did not generate an imperial relationship between the two. Individual Indians even managed to penetrate as far as Tabora in Tanzania (Musa Mzuri in 1825) and Uganda (Allidina Visram in 1896 before the railways reached there). The railways were the first systematic labour input of the Indians on the soil of Africa.

However, only a quarter of the railwaymen made any permanent settlement in East Africa. Nairobi is often referred to by present-day African politicians, with a mixture of ridicule and irony, as the 'Bombay' of East Africa. But it is not an accident; Nairobi was created as a depot for the rolling stock and repair yards and the Indian railwaymen made their first settlement in East Africa around this depot. The numbers of the railwaymen were soon augmented, especially after the First World War, by other immigrants from India. These were petty traders and younger sons of peasants released from the land – mostly from Gujarat and on a smaller scale from the Punjab. The railways, as well as the British administration and the demands of British industry, were beginning to break up African communal and feudal life, and to generate local demand for salt, soap and shillings. The money economy was thus introduced into the peasant, subsistence and self-sufficient communal and feudal economy of the Africans. Thus entered on the East African scene the legendary Indian *dukawallahs*⁴ – the petty traders dotted all along the railway line and in the interiors selling salt, sugar, silk, sandals and soap. The range and sophistication of the commodities increased as the money economy expanded. This is not to say that Africans had neither trade nor traders before the coming of the Indians. But much of the African trade had been supplanted and distorted in previous centuries through commerce in slaves and ivory. And the products of African craftsmanship could not in the long run stand up against the competition of the products of European technology. Most significantly, the imposition of alien rule in Africa stopped the natural evolutionary development of its society, and thrust Africa abruptly into the 'modern' era without the growth of indigenous capital, technical skill or a middle class.

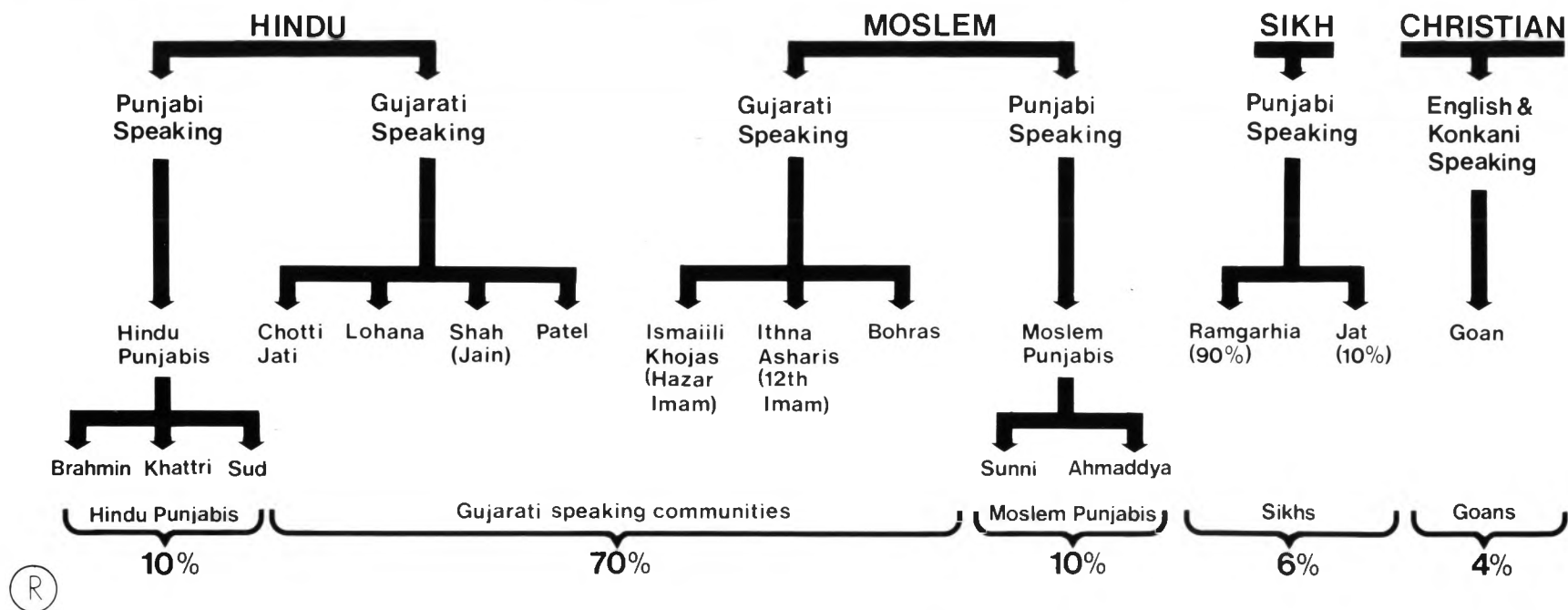
Without going in detail into the economic history of colonial East and Central Africa, we might simply state a few of its salient facts. One is that production was based on the classic mercantile system: cash crops, such as cotton, were introduced to feed the factories in Britain, such as the Lancashire textile mills; manufacturing was generally prohibited in the colonies so as to protect metropolitan industries from colony-based competition (though the white

ASIANS IN EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA



All the figures quoted are estimates. It is very difficult (and in some cases impossible) to obtain accurate figures but the above figures do illustrate clearly a general trend for both, the numbers of Asians in East and Central African countries and their proportion in the total population, to drop significantly over this period.

ASIAN SUB-GROUPINGS IN EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - BY RELIGION, LANGUAGE AND CASTE



9

(R)

settlers in Kenya were allowed to get away with minor food processing industries, and Indians in Uganda with cotton ginning, but not textile manufacturing); colonies were to be run as economically and as self-sufficiently as possible (there was nothing like development funds, for example, until nearly the eve of independence).

Secondly, almost all ownership of means of production and distribution was in the hands of either Europeans or Asians. Africans were openly and officially discriminated against for such things as bank loans and trading facilities. For example, Africans in Uganda were specifically forbidden by legislation to own ginneries. The Credit to Natives (Restriction) Ordinances discouraged bank loans to Africans. The 1938 Trading Ordinance in Uganda limited the geographical spread of the Asians in the countryside, and while this was ostensibly done to protect Africans from Asian competition in rural areas, it served to reinforce the Asian commercial hold over the urban trading centres from which the Africans were excluded or discouraged.⁵

Thirdly, though Africans were initially unwilling to provide labour for the railways, it was not long before they were forced into labour to meet the demands of the mercantile economy. By 1920 *Kipande* or forced labour was much used in East Africa. Squatter labour in Kenya was paid as little as four to eight shillings a month. In the various British colonies in East and Central Africa, the system was broadly similar. In Kenya, the Africans were alienated from the best agricultural land, and then turned into labour to work on that land for the Europeans; in Uganda, on the other hand, there was not much alienation of land, but Africans were alienated from the product of their labour, cotton or coffee, at prices that left them no better financially than their Kenyan compatriots. In Tanganyika, — then a League of Nations Mandated Territory — there were elements of both types of alienation. The Central African countries, Rhodesia, Malawi and Zambia, came nearer the Kenya model of alienation than the Uganda model, with copper substituting for land in Zambia.

What effects did the colonial system have on the economic stratification of the races in East and Central Africa? It built in these parts of Africa a *relationship of production* between the three races in which the British, representing wealth and power, owned most of the financial institutions and many of the production and the larger enterprises involved in distribution; the Asians, representing an alien and powerless middle class, owned some of the large industrial enterprises, most of the retail distribution, and provided the necessary middle level professional and artisanal skills; and the Africans, representing 97.5 per cent of the population and as the original owners of the land, provided wage labourers, taxi drivers, domestic servants and future politicians.

The *per capita* income of Kenya in 1968 was about £30 p.a. However, some 31 per cent of the African male working population could earn up to £119 p.a., and 49.3 per cent between £120 and £239 p.a. Only 1 per cent earned £900 p.a. and over. As for the European male workforce, 80.4 per cent earned £1800 p.a. and above (the higher limits going probably to over £30,000), and of the Asian male work force 86.8 per cent earned £720 p.a. and over.⁶

As for the occupational breakdown of the three races, taking Kenya as our example again, the following table based on the 1968 figures provides valuable clues.⁷

	Percentage		
	African	Asian	European
Directors and top-level administrators	0.4	13.4	15.2
Professional	0.6	4.0	15.4
Executive and managerial	1.4	11.4	30.1
Technicians, work managers, workshop foremen & other supervisory personnel	2.6	13.5	12.1
Teachers	8.2	8.3	10.4
Secretaries, stenographers and typists	0.5	7.6	9.3
Clerks	6.4	13.9	1.2
Book-keepers, cashiers & book-keeping clerks	0.7	8.0	1.0
Operators of office machines	0.3	0.8	0.1
Technical sales representatives & brokers	0.2	2.6	0.8
Shop assistants	0.4	2.2	0.1
Skilled and semi-skilled not included above	23.3	13.0	3.3
Unskilled labourers	55.0	1.3	1.0

A number of observations might be made on the basis of the above table. First, the figures are for 1968, which is 5 years after Kenya's independence. By this time corrective measures might be expected to have brought many Africans into the top administrative, professional and executive positions. Hence the pre-independence situation was undoubtedly much worse for the Africans. Secondly, the figures relate only to the modern sector of the economy, and therefore leave out Africans working in the peasant subsistence sectors of the economy. Therefore, the true picture of the Africans' subordinate position in the economy is even starker than the table indicates. Nevertheless, even of the modern sector, 78 per cent of the Africans in active employment provided wage labour and miscellaneous skilled and semi-skilled services; the Asians were more widely spread among the various occupations than any other race; and the Europeans were still in 1968 quite obviously in the top echelons of administration and economic management. Despite the remarkably small populations of Europeans and Asians in Kenya,⁸ they were able in fifty years to own or otherwise control most of the productive resources of the country. A study carried out by the National Christian Council of Kenya in 1968, entitled *Who Controls Industry in Kenya*,⁹ brought out the revealing fact that most of the large enterprises in the field of domestic crop production, export industries, mining, quarrying and cement, commerce, hotels and property, transport, construction, and the manufacturing industries were directly or indirectly in the hands of Europeans, and to a smaller extent in the hands of the Asians. Even where the Kenya Government provided substantial equity capital for many of these enterprises, the control still remained in the hands of a group of powerful directors through a chain of interlocking directorships that connected them with big financial and investment capital in Europe and South Africa. The study mentioned 50 top directors in the year 1968 of whom only 5 were Kenya Africans. Of the remaining, 34 were Europeans, 4 were Europeans holding Kenya citizenship (including Lord Delamere, the imperial baron, who owned thousands of acres of the most fertile land in Kenya and fought tooth and nail against Kenya's independence) and 7 were Indians.

A failure to understand these very salient features of the Eastern African economies must grossly distort one's perspective on the problem of minority rights and the antecedent moral issues. One does not have to be a racist to

take the view that the protection of minority rights cannot mean a perpetuation of historically derived minority privileges. On the other hand, when economic disparities follow racial contours as starkly as they do in Eastern Africa, even the most enlightened among the under-privileged majority must be forgiven for thinking that somehow race lay at the root of all problems. In a continent that is beset with other possibly violent racist situations, such as in Rhodesia and South Africa, it is not difficult to give racial expressions to frustrations whose roots are essentially economic rather than racial. It is precisely these kinds of frustrations that politicians and new dictators exploit to suit their interests.

Part Two:

THE QUESTION OF 'INTEGRATION' AND ASIAN SOCIAL EXCLUSIVENESS

No term has been so much abused as 'integration' in discussion of race relations in Eastern Africa. Indeed, its very vagueness is the source of its most explosive potential in verbal dialectics. The accusation 'the Asians have never integrated with us' becomes at the same time the most serious indictment against the Asians, and a justification for drastic actions against them, such as the expulsion by General Amin from Uganda in 1972. The three implied assumptions that underlie the accusative use of the phrase have seldom been critically scrutinized: one, that there is a well integrated East African society into which the Asians do not fit; two, that the onus of integration, whatever it means, lies with the Asians; and three, that the Asians' failure to integrate is the cause of their ultimate demise in East Africa, or its corollary, namely, that the Asians can survive in East Africa only if they 'integrate'.

However, there are two senses of 'integration' which cannot form a meaningful strategy of survival for the Asians, whatever they may do. The first is the sense in which an outsider may be initiated as a full member of an African tribe through certain rites and rituals such as those described by President Jomo Kenyatta in his well-known book *Facing Mount Kenya*.¹⁰ Even if the Asians were to be invited to be so initiated, and here presumably the onus would lie as much with the Africans as with the Asians, it would not be possible for them simply to dissolve their ethnic identities and be absorbed mysteriously in the hundreds of tribes that exist in East and Central Africa. Perhaps the failure of the Asians is not that they could not be thus 'integrated' into African tribal societies, but that they could not get their own ethnicity recognised as a distinct 'tribe' of East Africa. If the Luos, Kikuyus and the Baganda can co-exist as tribal groupings without demanding that one be 'integrated' with the other, why could not the Asians get themselves recognised as a separate tribe of East Africa? Is the fact that they came from across the seas and that they bear a distinct skin pigmentation a permanent bar to their recognition as a separate tribe? Would their alien origin and skin colour mean that they should either 'integrate' with one of the indigenous tribes, or stand condemned permanently as an unintegrated alien community?

A second sense in which integration is sometimes demanded of the Asians is also one that cannot form a meaningful strategy for them. Often this form of integration is emotionally woven round the prescriptive formula of inter-

marriage, as if miscegenation was the solution to East Africa's racial problem.¹¹ It cannot be, for even if intermarriage were to be encouraged or forced (as Sheikh Aboud Karume did in Zanzibar), it would — if it were 100 per cent successful — dissolve Asian ethnic distinctiveness but give birth to a yet new community of hybrid population. The problem of the Asians is thus not solved; it is only transformed into a new problem. The accusation that 'Asians do not allow their daughters to marry us' must, therefore, be seen for its symbolic importance. As Justin O'Brien wrote: '... it is reflective of the simple folks' feeling that the Asians must somehow be brought down from the pedestal ... It is not that many Africans would have wanted to marry Asian girls — but to have got some of them in a sexually subordinate position would have served the same purpose as getting their male protectors to soil their hands on land.'¹²

The only form of 'integration' that was then left open to the Asians was what some sociologists call 'horizontal integration', much in the way that inter-tribal integration takes place in modern African nation states without destroying vertical integration within tribes. The elements of this type of integration are difficult to define, and its durability is open to question. The Ibos' violent but unsuccessful struggle for secession, the periodic massacres of the Batutsi and the Bahutu in Rwanda and Burundi, the tension between the Kikuyu and the Luo in Kenya are all indicators of the frailty of horizontal integration between tribes, let alone races, in Africa. Something else is required, besides cocktail mixing, for holding races and tribes together in Africa — a subject beyond the scope of this report. When the Asians in East Africa are accused of not mixing as well as the Europeans, it is usually the cries of those African *evolués* who have alienated themselves from their own land and traditions¹³ and have adopted the pseudo-Western culture which they offer to liberated Asians to emulate as the new culture of Africa.

Having argued thus so far, it must be said that the Asians do indeed lead a socially distinctive life in East Africa. In part, at least, this is undoubtedly a product of a false sense of superiority that Asians have generally displayed *vis à vis* the Africans, while they resented at the same time being looked upon as inferior by the Europeans. During the 1920's and 1930's, for example, the Asians in Kenya fought vigorously to preserve their racial equality with the Europeans.¹⁴ They lost, and gradually accepted the reality forced on them that they were in a racially stratified society in which they occupied the middle position between the superior white masters (usually a representative of His or Her Imperial Majesty, or a missionary) and the inferior natives (usually a domestic servant or a poor customer across the counter).

It must also be pointed out, furthermore, that the Asians are by no means an integrated community themselves, though it may be that to an outsider 'all Asians look alike'. About 70 per cent of the Asian immigrants into Eastern Africa are Gujarati-speaking peoples from India, and they give the dominant cultural stamp to the whole community. Of these the Patels (Hindu by religion) and the Ismailis (Moslem by religion and followers of the Aga Khan) are perhaps the best known communities. Also Gujarati-speaking are other less well-known or smaller communities the Shahs, the Lohanas and the people of Chhoti Jati or of artisan class (all Hindus of one sort or another), and the Ithna Asharis and the Bohras (both Moslem). Then there are the Punjabi-speaking peoples consisting out of the total Asian population of some 10 per cent Hindu, 10 per cent Moslem, and some 6 per cent Sikh. Finally, there are the

Goans who are mostly Christian and Konkani-speaking.¹⁵ It is true to say that there is more mixing among the Asians themselves than between them and the members of the other races. This, however, is a function as much of their economic role in East Africa and their geographical concentration in the urban areas as of their racial identity. Nonetheless, all the Asian communities are rigidly endogamous and, in their separate ways, strongly culture-bound.

The point about integration, to close this part of the discussion, is that whatever it means, it is not something that can be created overnight. Psycho-social conditioning that is rooted in colonial history and economic relations does not disappear simply by an exercise of human will. Fundamental changes are necessary in the economic system — the very system that presently feeds racial antagonism. Paradoxically, however, these changes are themselves likely, in the short run, to reinforce racial tension since they tend to increase the sense of insecurity and isolation of the affected minority and force them to act in a manner prejudicial to their survival in a period of revolutionary change. It is this particular phase which the Asians are now passing through in East and Central Africa, and which is described below.

Part Three:

THE SIEGE AND THE SQUEEZE

To be a relatively privileged but powerless alien minority is an unfortunate position in any circumstance. The Asians in East Africa are by no means unique in this. Chinese communities have discovered this, for example, in Indonesia. But significantly it was not until after 1900 that the Chinese in Indonesia became victims of racial disturbances. Why was this so? One theory has it that it was then that the indigenous Indonesian petty *bourgeoisie* were beginning to emerge, and they found that their best strategy to power and wealth was to incite mass riots against the Chinese tradesmen in order to make way for themselves.¹⁶ This theory is reinforced by the experience of the Asians in East Africa. The first major anti-Asian trade boycott took place in Uganda in 1959, and it was led by an aspiring Muganda businessman, Augustine Kanya. Predictably, it was the emerging Baganda petty *bourgeoisie* that benefited from the boycott, for in the seven months that it lasted, they took over small trading centres and transport services from the Asians. Among those who suffered were, besides the Asian small traders, about 10,000 African workers who initially joined in the racial riots with alacrity but discovered themselves out of a job at the end of the boycott, and peasants who got their farms burnt to the ground for breaching the boycott. Typically, the petty *bourgeoisie* was rising up on the backs of the workers and the peasants. In Kenya, at the present time, it is the Asian small traders who are allegedly blocking the advancement of the African petty *bourgeoisie*, and who are under the threat of redundancy through a cancellation of their trading licences — not the Asian professionals. In the case of Uganda too, though the expulsion of the Asians by General Amin was much more openly racially-motivated than anywhere else in East and Central Africa, the brunt of attack was on Asian traders.

Anti-Asian hostility in East and Central Africa is thus a comparatively recent phenomenon, no more than twenty years old in a history of over seventy years of Asian presence in East Africa. In the previous period the energies of African nationalists were employed in the struggle to win

the political kingdom from the British. In this, the Asians, like the masses of African population, were by and large inactive. They were primarily interested in making money, but there were many individuals who did help the African nationalist cause. In most East and Central African countries, much financial help for African political parties in the years of their genesis and early growth, came from Asian businessmen. The Asians also helped with printing, pamphleteering and publicity of African demands. M.A. Desai, for example, was a friend and adviser to Harry Thukku, sometimes referred to as the progenitor of African nationalism in Kenya; and A.B. Patel, a far-sighted and enlightened Asian leader, was friend to many African nationalists. Even the conservative and tradition-bound Indian National Congress in Kenya fought political battles for the Africans in the early years of African nationalism. 'The position of the Asians in Kenya,' writes Elizabeth Hopkins, 'was facilitated as well by a long history of sympathy and support for the African despite the risks of such co-operation. During the period before 1945 when direct representation was denied the African, the Indian representatives of the Legislative Council played an important role as spokesmen for African opinion, often far more indeed than the European missionary nominated to ostensibly represent 'native' interests.'¹⁷ What changed all this? In the final analysis, it was the emerging consciousness among the Asians, as independence drew nearer, that African governments might well be a threat to their own position of privilege and security. The breakdown in 1960 of civil order in the then Belgian Congo (now Zaire), internal wars in Rwanda and Burundi, and incidents within East Africa itself such as the 1959 trade boycott in Uganda, seemed to confirm Asian fears and predilections for their future in Africa. The result was that the Asians began to look for safeguards. The Indian National Congress in Kenya, and its counterpart in Uganda, the Central Council of Indian Associations, for example, began seriously to propose that the Asians should have communal representation in the new Parliaments. The younger and more radical leadership among the Asians, however, recognised in these proposals the false sense of security they contained, and were successful ultimately in sabotaging the older leadership.

In Tanganyika, Zambia and Malawi, while private reservations about independence existed, they did not find political expression as they did in Uganda and Kenya. In Tanganyika, it was due primarily to Mwalimu Nyerere's enlightened leadership (he strenuously fought against racial bar to membership in the Tanganyika African National Union as no other African leader did in Uganda or Kenya), and to far-sighted Asian leaders like Amir Jamal, later to become independent Tanzania's Finance Minister. In Malawi, the Asian Convention was opposed to federation and asked for no special safeguards for the Asians during the constitutional talks with the British Government; and in Zambia similarly, while no organised political life existed among the Asians, they asked for no special safeguards and individuals among them financially and in other ways helped Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party. Nonetheless, Asian fears and their sense of insecurity persisted. The overall Asian position remained ambivalent. Their scepticism was interpreted by African leadership as 'political fence-sitting'. When the issue of choosing citizenship arose, the ambivalence showed itself the most starkly.

The Independence Constitutions of East and Central African states gave those Asians who were not automatically citizens by virtue of their birth,¹⁸ an option to register as citizens within a grace period of two years. Most Asians

preferred to keep their options until the last few months of the grace period. Legally they had a right to do this, but it was taken by the African governments as an expression of the Asians' lack of faith in them. As a result (or was this an excuse?) the Governments imposed periodic administrative embargoes on the processing of Asian applications for citizenship. In Uganda, there were thus 12,000 such applications that were pending. In Kenya it is virtually impossible now for an Asian to acquire citizenship, even for the foreign-born wife of a Kenya-born Asian citizen. Zanzibar introduced new regulations in April 1964 which, in effect, deprived some 7,000 Asians of their nationality. In Malawi the Constitution was amended in 1966 and removed the eligibility to automatic citizenship for children born after 5 July 1966 unless at least one of their parents was a person of African race as well as a citizen of Malawi. Thus, Malawi has its first generation of stateless children, in cases where both parents are of Asian origin and have Malawian nationality.

Pressures began to mount at the same time for rapid Africanisation of the economy. Tanzania was the first country to have introduced the system of work permits. These were given to non-citizens to fill in specified jobs, and only if no Tanzanian nationals were available for the jobs. Simultaneously, Africans were encouraged to take to business, and co-operatives were set up in wholesale and retail trade. However, these had limited success, and Tanzania began increasingly to take an ideological approach towards the policy of Africanisation as towards other problems of the state and the economy. This approach, enshrined in the famous Arusha Declaration of 1967, set out to ensure that the Asian petty *bourgeoisie* and the European comprador class were not thrown out simply to make way for an African *bourgeoisie*. The underlying rationale behind this was that it was easier to throw out the foreign petty traders at a later date than to dislodge an indigenous *bourgeoisie* that have entrenched their position in power and economic wealth of the country.

Accordingly, Tanzania began a series of nationalisations of the main economic institutions of the country, including banking, insurance, export-import, wholesale trade, industrial production, transport and retail distribution. Ironically, the Asian expertise was used both to start the nationalised industries and to make Asian private enterprise redundant. The final crunch came on 22 April 1971 when, with the passing of the Acquisition of Buildings Act, the Government took over all rented buildings valued at T.shs. 100,000 (£5,833). Tanzania had an Asian population of 88,700 at the time of its independence (1961 census). By 1971 there were probably¹⁹ no more than 52,000 Asians left in the country, of which some 25,000 were citizens, 20,000 were British citizens, 2,000 citizens of India and Pakistan, and 5,000 people of undetermined nationality.

Kenya's approach is radically different from Tanzania's. Although partial nationalisations have indeed taken place in Kenya, and although the state has intervened in the economy in a major way through such institutions as the National Trading Corporation and the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation, the whole economic ethos in Kenya is to encourage and build a strong indigenous capitalist class. There are two consequences of this policy for the Asians. The first is that the Asians who are the first to go are the small traders, especially in the outlying districts of Kenya, and the bulk of Asians at the lower ladders of the economy occupying clerical and semi-skilled jobs. By the Immigration and Trade Licencing Acts of 1967 the Government made it obligatory for non-citizens in

certain categories of occupations (which are continually increased) to obtain work permits to continue in employment. These are granted normally for one or two years by which time it is expected that local staff would be trained to take over from the non-citizens. In addition, non-citizen trading activities are restricted to certain geographical areas and to certain commodities. Thus Asians are gradually eased out of their traditional role as retail distributors.

The second consequence of the state policy of Africanisation is that it prepares the ground for collaboration between Asian and European financiers, big businessmen and industrialists on the one hand, and the emerging African capitalist class, especially those who are in big-time politics and in powerful civil service positions. Whether the new capitalist marriages across races will last is difficult to say, but it would not at all be surprising if, after having consolidated their position and learnt the tricks of capitalism, the new African *bourgeoisie* were to kick out their Asian and European mentors, especially those who have no international connections on which Kenyan capitalism will continue to depend.

Kenya had at independence an Asian population of 176,613 (1962 census). The 1969 census recorded a figure of 139,037, which, taking into account the natural increase of population at 2%, is a drop of 44% from the 1962 figure, and not what it would appear at first sight.²⁰ At present there are not likely to be more than 105,000 Asians in Kenya, of whom 65,000 are reckoned to be citizens of Kenya.

Uganda's Africanisation programme under President Milton Obote started with the Kenya pattern, and changed, though too late for Obote, into the Tanzania pattern in May 1970. The 1969 Immigration and Trade Licencing Acts were modelled after the Kenya Acts of the same title, and they had the same objective, excepting that all categories of occupations were called for work permits. In May 1970, on Labour Day, President Obote announced partial nationalisation (with the State owning 60 per cent of the equity) of the commanding heights of the economy. Thus while the 1969 measures promised that things would go Kenya's way (with the state doing the spadework for local capitalists), the 1970 measures promised a socialist State on the Tanzania lines. Uganda's Asian population numbered 77,400 at independence (1961 census figures). In 1969, there were 74,308 Asians, of whom 25,657 were recorded as citizens. At the time of the expulsion by General Amin in 1972 there appear to have been no more than 50,000 Asians in the country.

Zambia and Malawi each has smaller Asian populations than the East African states. Zambia recorded 10,705 Asians in the 1970 census, and Malawi 11,299 in the 1966 census; and it appears from unofficial estimates that these figures have remained by and large stagnant over the years, so that the net increase in population through birth has been more or less offset by emigration. The figures for citizenship are not available, but they are likely to be very small, probably 1000 in each country, and most of them are likely to be minors with an option to confirm their British nationality on attaining maturity. Therefore, almost the entire Asian populations in Malawi and Zambia stand to be eased out sooner or later. Zambia and Malawi, despite their much smaller Asian minorities, are tougher on them than the East African states. In 1968 President Kaunda declared that non-citizens would not be allowed to operate in rural areas as from 1970; in 1970 a ban was placed on them to operate even in urban areas. However, while the

Asian shopkeepers have been under pressure, the Zambian Government has over the years recruited hundreds of Asians from India as accountants, teachers and technicians. Malawi, on the other hand, has no systematic Africanisation programme, though it has set up an Import-Export Company to encourage African businessmen. What perhaps causes greater insecurity in Malawi is the ease with which non-citizens are deported on the slightest pretext, and their property confiscated under the 1966 Forfeiture Act. Malawi offered to take up some of the Asians expelled by Uganda in 1972 on the ostensible grounds that Malawi urgently needed their services, although it is unlikely if the offer was seriously taken up by the Asians.

Whatever form it has taken in the various East and Central African countries, it is clear that the non-citizen Asians are under considerable pressure everywhere to make way for Africanisation. There are three consequences of this for the Asians. One is that their sense of insecurity increases as the pressure mounts. The second is that they begin to look for suitable openings for resettlement in other countries. And the third is that the question of citizenship becomes a divisive factor among Asians.

Insecurity is the mother of much evil and ingenuity. The whole arms race between nations is in essence a result of a competitive quest for security. The Asians in East and Central Africa, once their future was put at stake on the altar of Africanisation began to lead a life as if in a state of limbo, waiting for the day when they would bid farewell to Africa. Their constant subject of conversation from then on, whether they met on the golf course or in their favourite evening sit-ins in the bazaars of Kampala, Nairobi or Lusaka, was how much more time they had in Africa and what stage they had reached in securing a British quota voucher or a local work permit. Another subject for conversation was the latest price of gold in the open market and the price of pounds sterling, dollars or rupees in the black market; which officials in the local Immigration Department or the Ministry of Commerce or the British High Commission were open to corruption,²¹ and vain speculation about how the fortunes of Asians might alter with changes in the composition of the Governments of East and Central African countries. The situation gave rise to a whole new breed of entrepreneurs, called simply 'agents', who would perform services, such as securing a passport or a work permit or a British quota voucher, with or without bribes, for what sometimes were extortionate fees. Ingenious formulae were devised for salting money out of the country. There must be at least a score of such formulae, the most common being 'overinvoicing' for imports and 'underinvoicing' for exports (with the difference paid into Asian bank accounts in London or Switzerland), receiving payments in foreign currency for services rendered in East Africa (especially in the tourist trade), and straight currency transactions. The foreign exchange regulations permitted only a limited amount of capital repatriation on emigration: £2,500 in East Africa (reduced from £5,000 that existed before 1968); £8,000 (if over 55) and £6,000 (if under that age) in Zambia; and £7,000 (if over 55) and £4,000 (under that age) in Malawi. The remaining assets could then be taken out over the years in smaller annual instalments (£1,000 in East Africa, £5,000 in Zambia and £4,000 in Malawi). But the wealthy Asians were taking no chances and were busily transferring their money abroad while it was still possible. By way of caution against generalisation, it must be said that not all Asians indulged, or could afford to indulge, in these practices, nor indeed were these practices confined to the Asians only,

for Europeans and African ministers were often as conversant with these practices as the wealthiest and the shrewdest Asians. When General Amin of Uganda made his massive attack on the Asians at an Asian conference in December 1971, and accused them of all the evils under the sun — including robbing the country of its valuable foreign exchange, overcharging and undercutting African traders, hoarding, smuggling and corrupting African officers — he was, of course, wildly generalising, but he was nonetheless correct in his description of certain types of Asians who were driven to all these practices through a sense of insecurity. What the General's analysis lacked was a proper historical perspective.

Part Four: EMIGRATION AND EXODUS

As argued previously, the Asians who were carrying British passports were essentially a *dual minority*. It is a dubious privilege when one is an unwanted minority in both countries, but it can have its advantages.

The British has tried to shake off the Asian minorities in East Africa by persuading the East and Central African countries during the negotiations for independence to take them on as their responsibility. Although they succeeded in securing fairly generous citizenship laws for the Asians from the African nationalists, they could not entirely shake off the Asians. The Asian minorities were given the right to a U.K. passport and with it the right to enter Britain. A number of British Ministers who then had responsibility (including the late Iain Macleod and Mr. Reginald Maudling) are on record as testifying that Britain had undertaken this commitment.²² However, when the time came to honour this commitment, the British demurred. Immigration of the coloured workers from the New Commonwealth was all right as long as the demands of British industries required it. But too many of them began to come into Britain, especially from the West Indies, India and Pakistan, until their presence became a source of racial tension in the country, avidly fanned by 'keep Britain white' militants. In 1955 there were 42,700 immigrants from the New Commonwealth, 46,850 in 1956, 57,700 in 1960 and 136,400 in 1961.²³ The 1961 figure was high because immigrants rushed in to beat the limited ban on coloured immigration that Britain was contemplating imposing in 1962. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962 restricted the right of entry of immigrants under a regulated system of work vouchers.

But none of this had anything to do with British Asian citizens in East and Central Africa: their immigration into Britain had not yet begun, and, being British, the 1962 Act did not apply to them. Accordingly, they had assumed free entry into Britain whenever they so desired. As a result mainly of the policy of Africanisation in Kenya and State socialism in Tanzania, however, some 6,149 Asians had emigrated to Britain in 1965, and 6,846 in 1966, still a relatively small number. In 1967, however, speculation mounted in East Africa that Britain was considering closing the door against British citizens of Asian origin, and in that year 13,600 Asians emigrated to Britain. In the first two months of 1968, 12,800 more immigrants came to Britain, mostly from Kenya.²⁴

The anticipated Act was passed by the British Parliament in February 1968, and it came into effect on 1 March. Its purpose was to restrict entry into Britain of certain categor-

ies of British citizens overseas who had no 'close connection' with Britain — meaning briefly that neither they nor their fathers or grandfathers were born in Britain. Most outside observers agree that the Act was unwarranted. First, there was no evidence that Asians in East and Central Africa were contemplating mass exodus into Britain,²⁵ and under the existing regimes in these countries there was no likelihood that the Asians would be asked to leave *en masse*, as General Amin did in 1972. Secondly, coloured immigrants into Britain from the New Commonwealth had dropped from 57,700 in 1960 and 136,400 in 1961 to 46,953 in 1966, and therefore there was no need to panic about a coloured invasion of Britain even if East African Asians had decided to exercise their right of entry into Britain.²⁶ Thirdly, as subsequent events following Amin's expulsion of Asians from Uganda proved, Britain could not really disown her citizens in East and Central Africa, whether or not their fathers or grandfathers were born in Britain. Fourthly, the Act purported to create obligations for third states whereas these states had no say in the making of the Act. How could Britain unilaterally pass legislation that demanded that third countries should keep her citizens in their territories until Britain was ready for them? By so acting, Britain created misgivings in the minds of East African governments about the credibility of British obligations towards its citizens in their countries, and thus raised the issue to a new level of controversy. This was particularly noticeable in the tense relations on this issue between Britain and Uganda under President Obote. And fifthly and above all the Act introduced official racial discrimination into the British immigration policy.

However, the 1968 Act did not shut the door completely against British Asians resident in East and Central Africa. It introduced a special quota voucher system for them, which would enable 1,500 families to enter Britain every year. It was immediately apparent that the number was quite inadequate. In January 1970, for example, it was revealed in the British Parliament that there were 4,436 pending applications for special vouchers in Kenya, 1,020 in Uganda and 1,536 'elsewhere'.²⁷ That made a total of 6,992 against the voucher quota of 1,500. What happened to those who did not get the coveted voucher?

The unfortunates did not all become destitute overnight. But the system, in the first few years, worked inequitably for the really hard pressed. The vouchers were often given to those still in employment in East Africa, a result of the meticulous British queue system, while there were many displaced through Africanisation who were unable to get the vouchers. This, however, was partially rectified later when evidence of complete destitution improved chances of jumping the queue. Nonetheless, after a time the queue became so long, especially in Kenya, that a two-year waiting period became the norm. Therefore, destitution did set in for those whose posts were Africanised, and who could not get vouchers, and whose meagre savings were gradually depleted. If they were in Britain they could at least have received welfare benefits, as Ugandan Asians did after their 1972 exodus on arrival in Britain; but in East Africa there was nothing. In two reports by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, brought out in April 1970 and July 1971, evidence was produced of the effects on the voucher system.²⁸ Poverty is the progenitor of many other ills, and there were cases in East Africa of family break-ups, psychological break-downs and even a few suicides through desperation. The two reports also produced evidence of the callousness of British immigration officers towards the Asians. Overt and covert racialism was

abundantly practiced by the officers, and this was officially brought out in a case involving a British immigration officer whose South African background left a distinctively racialist attitude in his manner of behaviour towards the Asians. The open racialism of many British immigration officers frequently produced ugly scenes between them and the usually pliant Asians. But the attitude of the officers was only a minor irritant. They were only applying a bad law in a delicate human situation, and they often did not match up to the demands of humanity. However, it was the law itself which was the major culprit.

There were only two outlets left for the Asians caught between the squeeze of Africanisation and the partial blockade of British immigration doors. One was India, and the other Asian ingenuity. People in Britain often wonder why the Asians in East and Central Africa do not go to India or Pakistan. The reason is not far to seek. It is primarily economic. To be able to die in poverty among people with the same skin colour is a dubious compensation for the possibility of a good job and full life in Britain. Nonetheless, there were people, usually the old, who did prefer to die near the holy shrines of India, and those, usually the very rich, who could start business in India. The rest preferred Britain. India, however, barred her doors to the British Asians once Britain passed the discriminatory 1968 Act, which provoked the Kenya Asian crisis. Until then it was free entry to India for all Asians. It was not until July 1968, that the doors were partially opened. The Anglo-India Agreement of that month provided that 'persons of Indian origin holding U.K. passports and resident in Kenya who are compelled to leave and wish to go to India with a view to possible eventual settlement' could get admission into India, provided their passports were endorsed by the British High Commission to the effect that such people had a right to enter Britain. However, this option to enter Britain could be exercised only within three months of entry into India, and it was given only after making sure that the applicants were not successful in their attempts to settle in India. Not many Asians who exercised this option to India understood the three months limitation on their other option, and either because of this or because the Asians genuinely decided to stay put in India, only 6% of those who entered India in 1968/69 exercised their right of entry into Britain. The figure for the 1969/70 period was 16%. In the three years 1968-71, India admitted about 15,000 Asians from Kenya under this Agreement. In total however, India had nearly 40,000 Asians with UK passports in 1971.

Asian ingenuity was the second way out of their predicament. This took several forms. One was to get a re-entry (into East Africa) endorsed on their passports (obtained with or without bribes) which enabled them to secure tickets to Britain. Once on the plane they would cancel or mutilate their re-entry stamps, which meant they could not get back to East Africa. The only choices the airport authorities in Britain then had were either to take them into the country (and put them in detention until temporarily released on bail or held for a maximum period of 28 days when an application under *habeas corpus* would secure their release), or send them back with the airline in which they came. The latter practice produced a new phenomenon known as Asian 'shuttlecocks' or 'migronauts', but since no country in the world would accept these Asians holding British passports, they eventually landed at British airports again. By July 1972, there were 112 people in detention in England; 30 people were deported twice to India with 7 of them circulating round the world on their second trip (at the expense of the British Treasury),

and 61 people were temporarily in Italy and Spain, 40 in Geneva and 21 in France.²⁹ Yet another ingenious device was for these Asians to come to Britain with the 'D Passports' (known popularly as devalued passports)³⁰ on some legitimate business (for which they could secure a visitor's visa), and then lose or mutilate the passports once they were in England. The Home Office then had to issue them with new passports, and since these were issued in London they did not come under the limitations of the 1968 Act. This was so at least until the Home Office became wise, and stamped the limitations onto the new passports. In the meantime, literally thousands of Asians were able to slip through this loophole. Given the discriminatory character of the 1968 Act, this might all seem fair game. However, there was one class of Asians who could always gain entry into Britain without difficulty. These were people who could prove that they had substantial money or assets in Britain. They could then get 'settlement vouchers' stamped on their passports which exempted them from the limitations of the 1968 Act. This not only introduced a further discrimination, this time between the rich and the poor, but also encouraged the rich British Asians in East and Central Africa to send their money out to Britain, by fair means or foul.

In the meantime pressure increased in Britain, by organisations such as the Committee of United Kingdom Citizenship led by an Asian immigrant from Uganda, Praful Patel, and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants led by Mary Dines, for an increase in the Special Vouchers for British Asians in East and Central Africa. As a result, the vouchers were increased from 1,500 to 3,000 in May 1971, and a special once-for-all bonus of 1,500 was made in 1971 to clear the backlog of voucher applicants. Later, another 500 were added to the number, but these were reserved especially for those in India holding British passports.

There was one special problem with Uganda, however. This was the case of some 12,000 Asians who had applied for Uganda citizenship, but whose applications came under an embargo the Government had imposed against granting further citizenships. President Obote tried in 1970, before he went to the Singapore Commonwealth Conference, to use this special problem as a negotiating counter with Britain: as the price of an increase in the Special Vouchers for British Asians in Uganda, President Obote offered to speed up the applications of these 12,000, and also to confirm the citizenship status of those who for one technical reason or another could not acquire or stood to lose Ugandan nationality. The Agreement was nearly reached, for though the British mission that went to Uganda in January 1971 failed to grapple with the substantive aspects of the problem, it was expected that after the Singapore Conference, President Obote would arrive in London to finalise the agreement. On 25 January, 1971, however, General Amin staged his coup. The issue of the 12,000 was expected to be resolved along the lines President Obote had suggested, but Amin prevaricated. In December, 1971, he decreed the cancellation of all pending applications for citizenship, but after a suitable offer of military aid by Britain, the cancellation was withdrawn. Eight months later Amin announced that all Asians were to leave the country within ninety days, and the 12,000 along with thousands of others fell into the British lap. General Amin is nothing if not a typical military man. Having made up his mind that the Asians were an enemy of the state and must therefore be expelled, he was not going to change it, whatever the short run economic consequences for his country and the human cost. By skilful use of religion (he claimed frequent

sacred communion with God) and black African nationalism as an ideology he had secured what looked like popular support for his policies. His decision to expel Asians was probably made even as he came into power, and he made no distinction between citizens and non-citizens. In October 1971, he decreed a headcount of the Asians, and in a deliberate act of humiliation got them to thumbprint the forms they had filled, just as Africans were made to do during colonial days. In December he summoned a conference of the Asians where he charged them with social exclusiveness, corruption and business malpractices of many kinds. There was, as we have earlier seen, much substance in his charges. The Asians, however, responded with a bold memorandum countering each charge point by point, and throwing the burden of improving the situation onto the Government.³¹ General Amin had no such intention, of course, and on 4 August 1972, he ordered a mass expulsion of all Asians from Uganda. Subsequently, following a protest by the radical National Union of Students of Uganda, the General clarified that the expulsion order applied only to the non-citizen Asians.

The Asians and the British Government were incredulous. For some six weeks after the expulsion order they lived in a twilight period of false optimism that the General might relent. However, after the General's soldiers began harassing the Asians, the latter panicked. But the British High Commission still punctually closed their office at 4.30 p.m. Only after the soldiers rounded up a score of Europeans and beat them up in the prisons, did the British finally decide that the General meant business. The point is made simply to show how slow the British were in accepting responsibility for the safety and well-being of their minority even at a time of grave urgency.

General Amin's weapon of terror was most effective.³² Within the last six weeks of the period of the ultimatum, some 50,000 Asians left hurriedly with no more than their life in their hands, and £55 in cash (reduced from £2,500) for those who could secure emigration treatment. 27,140 of them arrived in Britain, 10,000 in India (of which 6,000 were British passport holders), 6,000 in Canada, 1,000 in the United States, 1,000 in Pakistan, and 4,000 in United Nations camps (940 in Italy, 100 in Greece, 400 in Belgium, 200 in Malta, 300 in Morocco, 500 in Spain and 1,500 in Austria), and a few hundred in Australia, New Zealand, Kenya, and Malawi. It was thus a major international operation. Many of these thousands were, in fact, Asians holding Uganda passports, and those who were rendered stateless either by the technicalities of the Uganda Constitution or by the Uganda soldiery. In the initial days of the expulsion order, those who claimed to be Uganda citizens had to present documents to prove their claims. An estimated 15,000 had their Uganda passports and citizenship certificates withdrawn from them allegedly for lack of documentary evidence to support their claims, such as a birth certificate or a marriage certificate. Not all of these, however, became stateless. Many regained their British nationality if they could prove that they had not renounced their British nationality within 90 days of being registered as Uganda citizens. And yet many carried the status of British Protected Persons, which is an anomalous status, for under British law they are aliens although *vis à vis* third countries they can demand British consular protection.

When it finally came to the crunch, the British Government would appear to have acted much more generously than the official policy and the bureaucratic attitude of the immigration officers in the British High Commissions would have led one to expect. British generosity, however, was

always forced generosity, not spontaneous, and it caused much avoidable hardship to the Asians. Thus immediately after General Amin's expulsion order of 4 August 1972, the Under-Secretary at the Home Office, David Lane, declared: 'We are already a crowded island, and immigration must and will remain strictly controlled.'³³ For six weeks after that the British Government tried by one means or another to sabotage General Amin's attempt to carry through the programme of evicting the Asians in the three months' deadline. The first step was to send a senior British Minister, Geoffrey Rippon, to Uganda to persuade General Amin to change his mind, or at least to extend the ultimatum to anything up to two years; but Amin did not give way. Then all manner of delaying tactics were adopted by the British Administration in an attempt to make Amin's deadline difficult to meet, but Amin's intimidation tactics soon put an end to that. However, when it became inescapably clear that Britain had no choice but to receive this hapless minority which, through an accident of history of which Britain was the prime mover, held no other passport but British, the doors to Britain were opened. A Uganda Resettlement Board was set up to receive and rehabilitate the Asians, and the Conservative Government carried out a major moral campaign to persuade a sceptical public to rise up to Britain's sacred responsibilities as a civilized nation.³⁴

However, some anomalies still remained, and it took a long time for the British Government to take clear-cut policies on these, and then only grudgingly. First there was the question of British Asian women whose husbands were either citizens of Uganda or stateless. Britain would not allow these women entry on the grounds that their place was with their husbands. Ultimately, and after much pressure from several concerned parties, the Government relented and let these women in. Then there was the question of letting in young people over the age of 21 who did not hold British passports, but who were still dependants and lived in a joint family. After much pressure, many of these too were let in. Then there was the question of Ugandan Asians attempting to take refuge in Britain from Amin's brutal soldiery. On arrival at the London airport, however, the first eight were deported back to Uganda. Later, cries in Parliament of 'Jews being sent back to Hitler's Germany' forced the Government to take a more humanitarian approach towards them. Then there was the question of some 340 heads of families in the United Nations settlement camps in Europe who could not join their families in British settlement camps because they were either stateless or carried Uganda passports. There is at least one known case of a three-year old child who died pining for his father in Europe.³⁵ Ultimately, the Government relented on these cases as well.

Turning now to an evaluation of Uganda's action against the Asians, the moral issues boil down to two. First, was it proper for General Amin to have summarily expelled all non-citizen Asians; and second, was it proper for him to have intimidated the citizen Asians until they too were forced to leave?

The right of states to expel its non-citizen population is a disputed issue among international lawyers.³⁶ While it is widely recognised that under international law a state has a right to expel its alien population, it is generally recognised that such a right can only be exercised with due care for the life and well-being of the expelled people, and that the expulsion has to be carried out under due processes of law. In other words, it should not be carried out arbitrarily, and it should be subject to appeal by the alien or aliens

affected. On the other hand, with an eye to the needs of the newly independent developing states whose economies are dominated by aliens, as indeed is the case in East and Central Africa, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides (Article 2(3)) that: 'Developing countries with due regard to human rights and their national economy may determine to what extent they would guarantee the economic rights recognised in the present Covenant.'³⁷ The fact that Uganda has not ratified the Covenant does not diminish the validity of the principle insofar as it is generally acceptable. Amin can take refuge under this Covenant and argue that the human rights of the Asians were subordinate to the interests of the national economy.

Nonetheless, it must be asked if Amin had no choice in the interests of his national economy but ordering a summary expulsion of the Asians. Could he not have chosen either the Kenyan path of gradual replacement of the Asians from the economy with African entrepreneurs, or the Tanzanian path of building socialist structures which would both take over from the Asians and employ them where necessary for their various skills? That depends on whether he thought that both these methods were foredoomed to failure because the Asians would have continued to retain control over the economy, and that the only way was to throw out the Asians and compel Africans to be self-reliant. That also depends on whether Amin saw the necessity of choice. The question of moral choice is pertinent only for those who would want rationally to view the costs and benefits of alternative schemes, and choose the one scheme that maximises the demands of economic nationalism and minimises the costs in human terms. It is hardly likely that Amin thought in these terms on this issue. For him it was important that the economy be seen to be in the hands of the Africans, and the surest way to do this was to expel the Asians. But even if Amin did not see the options subjectively, is there an objective case to be made for the argument that there did exist viable options to the mass expulsion of the Asians? What lessons are there from the Kenyan and Tanzanian experiments in this matter? In both these countries there is no question that the Asian hold over the economy has considerably diminished. It is questionable, however, whether the two countries have achieved a self-reliant economy, since crucial decisions on many aspects of production, planning and execution are still made by Europeans and Asians. But this should not be regarded as an invalidation of their particular approaches to Africanisation of the economy, for it could be argued that they are still in the transformation stages, and that by the time Africans have learnt skills from Asians and Europeans they would be in a better position to command the economy than the self-learning Africans in the present-day Uganda. All this is arguable and, since final judgements must be left to posterity, any attempt to do so now would be purely speculative. All that can be said is that if the Tanzanians or Kenyans do succeed eventually in building an African-controlled self-reliant economy, the case for Amin's expulsion of Asians for achieving the same objective would lose its historical merit.

But all this is to argue in terms of expediency. The rights of alien individuals are regarded as expendable in order to create a nationally controlled economy. There are no moral considerations involved even for Kenya or Tanzania. All issues are matters of expediency. If that is the case, could it not be argued that the differences between Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania are only really differences of tactics – that if the latter two have not summarily expelled their alien Asian minorities, it is because they see that better use

can be made of them in the transitional phase of transforming the economy? That indeed would seem to be the case if one were to put the Africanisation policies of Kenya and Tanzania in their correct historical perspective. And yet they have the merit, if only perhaps unwittingly, of being on the side of human compassion, for they have not sacked their Asian minorities preemptorily and have thus avoided world attention.³⁸

Judgement on Amin is the harsher for his expulsion of those Asians who were citizens of Uganda. To say that these Asians had left of their own free will would be as absurd as arguing that after the Jewish massacre of Arabs at Deir Yassir in Palestine in April 1948, the Arabs had abandoned Palestine of their own free will. Intimidation by Amin's soldiers and a general sense of insecurity for all Asians (but not for Asians alone) during the months of August to November, 1972, were responsible for driving Uganda Asian citizens out of the country. Amin had himself made no distinction between citizen and non-citizen Asians when he had first announced his decision on 4 August that all Asians were to leave Uganda within three months. Unless one were to ascribe to the concept of racially pure states, Amin's expulsion of citizen Asians should get the full weight of moral condemnation that it deserves.

Part Five:

CONCLUSIONS AND SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

It should be evident that the so-called Asian minorities of East and Central Africa are not just African minorities; they are even more significantly minorities of Britain living temporarily outside Britain. The British press and other media have been distorting this reality over the years, and even during the Uganda crisis. The very phrase 'Uganda Asians' or 'Kenya Asians' seemed calculated to give the impression that these Asians were somehow the sole responsibility of Uganda or Kenya. But while it is true that they were resident in Uganda or Kenya, most of them continued to remain a British responsibility. In 1967-68, long after the two year grace period given to the Asians to opt out for local citizenship had expired, between half and two-thirds of the Asian populations in East African countries, and about 90 per cent of those in Malawi and Zambia, continued to remain British subjects or British Protected Persons. These people were residential non-national minorities for East and Central African states, but they were national minorities of Britain living abroad, a fact of history, in the making of which Britain had a greater share than any other nation in the world.

It should also be evident that insofar as the Asians in East and Central Africa became a problem, this was a result of a complex of factors. The Asian communities themselves are certainly not blameless for the emergence of the problem. Their cultural arrogance and a sense of racial superiority *vis à vis* the Africans were at times as bad as that of the Europeans. But all this talk about Asians not integrating with the Africans, at least in the senses discussed above, is largely a chimera: as well might one blame the West Indians in Brixton in Britain for not integrating with the English. Integration certainly has an ethnic and social dimension. But it also has an economic dimension. Much of the racial stratification in East and Central Africa had an economic base, rooted in and cultivated by colonial policy. What the

Africans wanted after independence, however, was not integration, but a takeover of the economy — and in this, given the priorities of modern nation states, they were perfectly justified.

So the ultimate demise of the Asians in Africa was inevitable. The European demise in Africa is also inevitable in the very long run; but at least in the short run in places like Rhodesia and South Africa they have the power of the state and the gun behind them. The Asians had no power. They therefore had to go. The only issue was the manner of departure of the Asians. From the African side, their departure was never rapid enough, but if there were constraints against hastening the process, these were not moral constraints but economic and international. Much as they wanted speedily to Africanise their economies, there were just not enough of the African middle-class to take over from the Asians. The international constraint came from Britain. By persuasion, threats and promises of economic and military aid, Britain for some time succeeded in slowing down the departure of British Asians from East Africa. And the victims of the Africanisation pressures on one side and the partial immigration blockade by Britain on the other side were always the Asians — the *poor* Asians, for there was always, as shown earlier, one law for the rich and one for the poor. The only equitable thing about General Amin's expulsion order against the Asians was that, like death, it did not discriminate between the rich and the poor. The Madhvanis of Uganda were swept away by the same broom as the Asian squatters of Kisenyi and Katwe.

For the future, therefore, the problems of the Asians in East and Central Africa should, as far as humanly possible, be divided between those who are Britain's responsibility, and those who are the responsibility of the East and Central African states. It is curious that once the Uganda crisis was over, the British Government decided to go back to square one in its policy towards the remaining British citizens of Asian origin in Africa. The Home Secretary, Robert Carr, in a statement to the House of Commons on 25 January 1973, warned in no uncertain terms countries which still have Asians holding UK passports that, should they do an Amin on these Asians, Britain would not take them in: 'The Government therefore thinks it right at this time . . . to make it clear that, while we shall continue to accept our responsibility to United Kingdom passport holders by admitting them in a controlled and orderly manner through the special voucher scheme, this is as much as it is reasonable and realistic for us to do if good community relations are to be maintained in Britain.'³⁹

Was this a retraction of the obligation undertaken by the British Government of 1968 towards British passport-holding Asians contained in the statement by the then Home Secretary, James Callaghan? He had said: 'I was asked what we would do about a man who was thrown out of work and ejected from the country. We shall have to take him. We cannot do anything else in the circumstances.'⁴⁰ If there were any doubts, Robert Carr cleared these in a speech to the Young Conservatives at Bournemouth. The effect of his recent Commons statement, he said, had been 'to modify the undertaking given in 1968 by making it absolutely clear that . . . it was just not possible for us to take on the responsibility for accepting another expulsion of a complete community.'⁴¹ Thus the British Government is not just back to square one. It has, in fact, taken a retrogressive step. Indeed, this step coincided with the British entry into the European Community and the passing of the Immigration Act, 1971. The first had the effect of liberalising the entry into Britain of nationals of the EEC countries. The second introduced a 'grandparent

clause' which exempted Commonwealth citizens with a grandparent born in Britain from a work permit to enter Britain (the clause is therefore referred to by its critics as 'likely-to-be-white' clause). The effect of all these events is that while an unlimited number of Italians, Belgians, Australians and Canadians can freely enter Britain, the Asians in Africa holding British passports can enter Britain only at the stipulated annual rate of 3000 voucher holders and their dependants. There is, indeed, speculation that, in view of the sudden influx from Uganda, this number may well be reduced.

The conclusion is therefore inescapable that, as the *New Statesman* pointed out, 'racism is built into public life' in Britain.⁴² The Asians of East and Central Africa are becoming decreasingly a minority problem for these countries and increasingly a minority problem for Britain. There must be at least 200,000 Asians from East and Central Africa who are now in the United Kingdom. In a generation's time they will be indistinguishable from their brothers and sisters from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the West Indies. One recommendation of this paper, therefore, is that the Minority Rights Group should undertake another study of the coloured minority in Britain, given particularly the allegations that the coloured are treated as 'second-class' citizens in Britain. Furthermore, Britain should carry out a census of its Asian citizens living as unwanted minorities in East and Central Africa, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. Speculation about the likely ill-effects of coloured immigration into Britain is often widely off the mark because it is based on figures that are purely conjectural. The 80,000 figure that was bandied about by the National Front as representing the Asian influx from Uganda dwindled to 27,000 at the most. The British Government did try to take the Asian census in Uganda after General Amin's expulsion order, but computer failure rendered the exercise useless. In any case, why should such an exercise be carried out only at the time of a crisis?

Another suggestion is that Britain should start negotiations with countries like Malaysia where there are people holding dual nationality, one of these being British in an attempt to get the people to opt finally for the local citizenship only. Negotiations should also begin with India in order to get Asians holding British passports there, mostly from East Africa, (estimates range between 40,000 and 60,000) to take up Indian nationality. These are admittedly delicate problems, especially if the individuals concerned do not co-operate, but in a package deal with Malaysia and India, including an unqualified guarantee by Britain to take in those people who only hold British citizenship, the difficult problems might well be resolved.

With respect to the Asians holding British passports in East and Central Africa, it is necessary to reassure them, by changing the existing legislation where necessary, so that they can come to Britain whenever they wish to exercise their right of entry. It is most unlikely that they will instantly pack their bags and come to Britain. For as long as they are enjoying profits and good sunshine they are likely to remain there. Most of them have applied for the special quota vouchers only as an insurance for the future. But should circumstance in, say, Kenya, take a particular political turn, and another expulsion order be issued to the British Asians, Britain would have no choice but to take them in. It is less than honest for the Government to suggest that they will not be taken in. If the threat was aimed as a deterrent against an expulsion order of the kind that General Amin issued, then it must be made clear that events in Africa are

driven by much stronger forces than impractical threats by Britain. Such threats are superfluous with regimes like President Kenyatta's which are committed to a gradualist policy anyway⁴³, and they are only provocative for regimes, such as might replace that of President Kenyatta, which see in the Asian position an exploitable political issue on which to gain power.

In the meantime, negotiations should begin between Britain and the East and Central African countries on the question of transfer of British Asian assets out of these countries. In the case of the European farmers who left Kenya after independence, the British Government made substantial loans to the Kenya Government to purchase the white farms, and the farmers were then paid these amounts in Britain. The Kenyans were thus put in a heavy repayment burden to purchase back the land that once belonged to them anyway. Thus, in any settlement that is made, an important consideration should be to avoid crippling the economies of these poor African countries with heavy debt burdens. On the other hand, the situation that now prevails with respect to British citizens from Uganda must not be allowed to repeat itself. A formula needs to be devised which somehow ties the present Asian assets in East and Central Africa to financial assistance to British Asians who immigrate into Britain, or for that matter India. One suggestion is to issue to the Asians something like an assets certificate, based on the value of the assets left behind, against which they can secure annual payments in Britain, or raise loans. This could be tied in with British development aid to the African countries. If something like this is not worked out, then in all probability the illegal transfer of funds from East and Central African states will continue, with an increasing risk to the Asians of prosecution, and a possible politicization of this very sensitive and emotional issue (described often as 'milking' the African economies), until another mass expulsion of the Asians becomes the only alternative left to African politicians.

In the long run, and provided a political crisis of the Uganda kind does not break out in the meantime, most non-citizen Asians in East and Central Africa would have left for Britain or for other Commonwealth countries, excepting those in short contractual and professional employment. The problem then would be only of citizen Asians. However, whether these would then constitute a 'problem' remains to be seen. For the time being, and as the Uganda experience has shown, their well-being seems to be tied by the colour of their skin to the well-being of their non-citizen brethren. There is an increasing feeling among Kenya Asian citizens that things will improve for them once the non-citizens have left. Citizenship has thus become a serious divisive factor among the Asians. There are two assumptions behind this optimism, which might turn out to be false assumptions. The first is that the citizen Asians will finally decide that Africa is their home and that there is no point, come what may, in looking across their shoulders to either India/Pakistan or the United Kingdom as an insurance against future disturbances in Africa. Unfortunately, the Ugandan experience will make such a final and irrevocable adjustment to Africa psychologically difficult for most citizen Asians. During the first few weeks of Amin's expulsion order, most of them discovered that citizenship was merely a piece of paper which could be torn away, as happened with some 15,000 of them in Uganda. It must be added that there is a parallel feeling among many Africans also that for the Asians the citizenship papers are a pledge of loyalty not to Africa but to their God of money, and that these papers merely help them to

continue to stay in Africa and to exploit Africans. Therefore, the tearing up of Asian citizenship papers may not be as sacrilegious as it might appear to outsiders.

The second assumption is that once non-citizen Asians have left, the visibility of citizen Asians will diminish, thus making them less exposed to African hostility and jealousy. While this is a valid assumption for Malawi and Zambia, after the non-citizen Asians have left, and now also for Uganda, this is not so for Kenya or Tanzania. In Kenya, particularly, there will remain, if peace and tranquillity should continue, between 50,000 and 65,000 citizen Asians, which population should continue to increase through the natural process of birth. In proportion to the total population this will be even smaller than it is now. Yet if these people continue to concentrate around Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu, and particularly if they continue to live relatively ostentatious lives compared to the ordinary Africans around them, they will still be visible targets of attack or possible scapegoats in times of future political or economic crises. The fact about Amin's expulsion order that excited many racialist militants in neighbouring Kenya or Tanzania was not that the non-citizen Asians were thrown out (for they would have one day gone anyway), but that large numbers of citizen Asians were also wiped out.

There remains the question of whether the future of citizen Asians is likely to be more secure in socialist Tanzania or in capitalist Kenya. In theory, it could be argued that a socialist egalitarian society, by bringing down the Asian from his historical pedestal and by making him one of a class, is better equipped to diffuse antagonism against the Asians, than a capitalist society in which the Asians will continue to reap benefits of their past accumulation and business skills and to stay in the top echelons of economic prosperity. There are already signs in Kenya that the rich Asians, together with Europeans, are forging an economic alliance with the new African economic elite. They will therefore have a greater stake in the stability of the regime, and much to lose should the regime change its character or personalities. This could lead to temptations to interfere with the political system with the money the Asians (and Europeans) have at their command in order to ensure the political control of their African associates. In the long run, the Kenya situation is unlikely to be stable for the Asians. A tripartite

African-European-Asian political-economic conglomerate has something to fear from the masses when the latter become aware of the economic injustice done to them. In Tanzania, on the other hand, there are fewer rich Asians than before, and they are nowhere near the top political circles for them to acquire a stake in the perpetuation of the regime. If anything, it is a change of regime in favour of one that allows free enterprise which may be to the interest of the large body of Asians, but it is unlikely that they will indulge in subversive activities. It is easier, from the practical and moral point of view of the Asians, to aid a regime in the seat of power than to try to subvert it.

In the ultimate analysis, the long-term future of the citizens of Asian origin in East Africa will depend on continuing peace in the area, visible progress in the standard of living of the vast majority of the African population, the pace at which the economy can be transformed so that most of it is owned by the indigenous people, the degree to which the Asians are able to disintegrate as a distinct racial minority (for there appears little chance of them being accepted on the same level as an indigenous tribal grouping), and the continued respect by the Governments of the Asians' ordinary rights as individuals that citizenship confers on them. Most of these are factors over which the Asians themselves have very little control. As the Uganda Asian Memorandum to General Idi Amin, presented in December 1971, argued:

'... the small minority Community of the Asians ... lacks the Constitutional authority or organisational resources by itself to bring about major economic and social changes that appear necessary at the present time. Inevitably the Government with the power and the organisation at its disposal must take the initiative and direct the course of changes in Uganda.'⁴⁴

Finally, it may be more functional for plural societies to begin to think in terms not of minority rights but of individual rights. Rights are not inherent in a group; they must be seen as part of an individual person. It is the duty of the Government to protect the basic rights of an individual — such as the right to life, liberty and worship, and the right to participate in social, economic and political functions of the state. It is the obligation of the individual to exercise his rights without encroachment on the rights of others.

— Yash Tandon, 1973

FOOTNOTES

¹ See Y. Tandon, 'The Expulsions from Uganda: Asians' Role in East Africa,' *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 6 No. 6, (November-December 1972), p.8.

² See *The Times*, London, 5 February 1973.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The word *duka* in Swahili means shop. It is derived from the Hindi word *dukan*.

⁵ For an account of how this occurred, see Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Tanzania Publishing House, 1972, and D. Rothchild and Michael Rogin, 'Uganda', in G.M. Carter (ed.) *National Unity and Regionalism in Eight African States*, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1966, pp. 419-21.

⁶ Republic of Kenya, *Statistical Abstract*, 1970, p. 173.

⁷ Adapted from:— Republic of Kenya, *Employment and Earnings in the Modern Sector*, 1968-1970. Published in August 1972, p. 77 Table 28.

⁸ See Appendix 3 at the end of the paper.

⁹ Published by the East African Publishing House, Nairobi, 1968.

¹⁰ Published in 1938; reprinted, London: Secker and Warburg 1959. For an analysis of citizenship based on kinship, see Mazrui, *op. cit.* and A.N. Getao, 'An Analysis of the African Point of View', paper read at Community Relations Workshop, Nairobi: The National Christian Council of Kenya, December 1972.

¹¹ President Idi Amin of Uganda often emphasised inter-marriage as a means to national unity. He himself has wives from four different regions of Uganda, and was thought at one time to have wanted to take an Asian wife.

¹² Justin O'Brien, 'General Amin and the Uganda Asians', *The Round Table*, January, 1973, p. 98. The reference

- to land comes from Amin's statement in November 1972 that citizen Asians who are left in Uganda would be sent to the countryside to do cultivation.
- ¹³ See Okot P'Bitek, *The Song of Lawino*, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1966.
- ¹⁴ See L.W. Hollingsworth, *The Asians of East Africa* London: Macmillan, 1960; J.S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.
- ¹⁵ See diagram on page 8.
- ¹⁶ See G.G. Tjwan, 'The Changing Trade Position of the Chinese in South East Asia', *International Social Science Journal*, (UNESCO), Vol. 23. No. 4 1971, p. 570.
- ¹⁷ Elizabeth Hopkins, 'Racial Minorities in British East Africa', in Stanley Diamond and Fred Burke, *The Transformation of East Africa*, London: Basic Books Inc., 1966, p. 121.
- ¹⁸ In East African countries and in Malawi, to qualify for automatic citizenship, at least one of the parents as well as the applicant have to be born locally; in Zambia, on the other hand, it was enough if one was locally born.
- ¹⁹ These are only estimates. The Tanzania Monthly Bulletin of Statistics were used to work out, from the figures of emigration given, how many Asians must have been left in the country. The breakdown into citizens and non-citizens is not given in Government official publications.
- ²⁰ See Dharam Ghai, 'Asians in Kenya: Some Economic Aspects', Paper Presented at the NCKC Community Relations Workshop in Nairobi, November 1972.
- ²¹ In one bizarre incident that took place in Uganda in May 1970, a senior British official arranged for his kidnapping and detention in a fisherman's island in Lake Victoria by his Asian friends who acted as passport 'agents'. The subsequent trial by a British judge brought out that the official as well as the 'agents' had taken money from Asian clients for securing them immigration documents.
- ²² See Iain Macleod's open letter to the *Spectator*, 23 February 1968; and Mr. Reginald Maudling in *Hansard* (HC) Standing Committee B, cols. 109-110, 25 March, 1971.
- ²³ Clifford Hill, *Immigration and Integration*, Pergamon Press Limited, Oxford, 1970, p. 27.
- ²⁴ Source of figures: *Immigration and Settlement 1963-1971*, Runnymede Trust, 1972.
- ²⁵ This was brought out in a survey carried out by Dr. Peter Marris and Dr. Ronald Rothchild in Nairobi in August 1967.
- ²⁶ Clifford Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- ²⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, London, 17 February 1970.
- ²⁸ Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, 'The Unemployed, Homeless and Destitute', April 1970 (for Kenya), and 'A Report on the Situation of British Asians in Uganda', July/August 1971 (for Uganda).
- ²⁹ Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.
- ³⁰ All those whose British passports were issued in East Africa had their passport numbers prefixed with the letter 'D', and most of them came under the control of the 1968 Immigrants Act.
- ³¹ See Justin O'Brien, *Brown Britons*, Runnymede Trust, August 1972, Appendix 2.
- ³² See Justin O'Brien, 'General Amin and the Uganda Asians', *The Round Table*, January 1973.
- ³³ *The Times*, London, 7 August 1972.
- ³⁴ The most skilful handling of this was at the Conservative Conference at Blackpool in October 1972, at which the Government got its policy of admitting the Asians from Uganda accepted by the conference by a vote of 1721 to 736. See *The Times*, London, 13 October 1972.
- ³⁵ See *Sunday Telegraph*, 18 February 1973.
- ³⁶ See P. Van Panhuys, *The Role of Nationality in International Law*, 1959; A.H. Robertson, *Human Rights in the World*, Manchester 1972.
- ³⁷ See Richard Plender, 'The Ugandan Crisis and the Right of Expulsion under International Law', *International Commission of Jurists*, Report, 1972, pp. 19-32.
- ³⁸ It must be added here that since this paper is about the Asian situation, it precludes an analysis of the expulsions of alien Africans by African governments. These somehow do not catch world publicity. Several thousand Nigerians were thrown out of Ghana in 1969; Ghanaians, in turn, were thrown out of Sierra Leone and Liberia; thousands of West Africans were expelled from Zambia in 1971; and many more thousands cross borders in East and Central Africa every year as political refugees. In comparison to all these, the Asians from Uganda have fared much better.
- ³⁹ As reported in *The Times*, London, 26 January 1973, p. 8.
- ⁴⁰ *Hansard*, Vol. 759, 1968, Col. 1501.
- ⁴¹ *Sunday Times*, London, 4 February 1973.
- ⁴² *New Statesman*, 2 February 1973.
- ⁴³ President Kenyatta said in a public speech in Nairobi on 1 June 1973: 'The rights of all and their property will be fully protected. There will be no privilege for the minority. Equally we shall see that no member of any group undergoes discrimination at the hands of the majority . . . Independence is nothing without the guarantee of human freedoms and human rights. As the majority has growing needs and legitimate demands, so have the minority the right to tolerance and protection'.
- ⁴⁴ For the text of the Memorandum, see Justin O'Brien, *Brown Britons*, Runnymede Trust, Appendix 2.

THE EAST AFRICAN ASIANS – THE SITUATION IN 1984 by Arnold Raphael

The Asians of East and Central Africa continue to live in a state of contained anxiety. They go about their daily lives with confidence and energy. But the old, nagging fears for the future remain. Prosperity has both eased and compounded their uncertainties.

They may still be needed, yet are unwanted. And because they are unwanted their loyalties are divided, which in turn makes them suspect in African eyes. It is a vicious circle. Migration would break it, but that ultimate stage of despair has not been reached, assuming continued regional stability.

The descendants of the Indians who built the East African railways in the 1890s, and of the clerks and traders who followed them to Kenya and Uganda, have preserved intact their forebears' religion and culture. The Asians today personify the very negation of integration. There is therefore a deep-rooted, if not ineradicable, conflict between the non-permissive society of the Asians and the general permissiveness of modern African society. It is aggravated by the continuing prominence of the Asians in the commercial and industrial fields.

With the rise of the African mercantile class since independence, the Asians no longer actually dominate the private sector. Moreover, the pressure on the Asian communities eased considerably with the departure of large numbers of their members following independence in the 1960s.

In 1968 there were no less than 260,000 in Kenya alone. As the tables show, the figures have sharply declined, as they have in other territories with smaller communities, during the colonial period. In Uganda, of course, almost the entire Asian community, including those who had taken Uganda citizenship were expelled by Amin in 1972. But the numbers argument should not be taken too far.

While it is true that Africanization is all but complete in the regional states (the transition continues of course in Zimbabwe), the fact is that – for the ordinary African – the Asians remain omnipresent, the rich alien (in fact, they are by no means all rich) in their midst still holding the purse strings.

This is patently not true. But it has the illusion of truth, and for this reason. A new generation of brown expatriates are at work throughout the region. The 'two-year wonders' are no longer all white. Thousands of Asian teachers, doctors, engineers, accountants and railwaymen (in Zimbabwe to replace artisans who have 'gone South') are sent to Africa under Indian and Pakistan technical assistance programmes, or hired privately.

As it is impossible for the African in the street to distinguish between resident or indigenous Asian and the new contract men, it *appears* as if the Asians still abound, are still entrenched in vast numbers, and their stranglehold on the country is as strong as ever. Thus the Asians, for all the changes that have occurred are still as vulnerable politically by their mere presence, albeit temporary in a great many cases. That they are still the scapegoats of Africa was all too evident at the time of the abortive coup in Kenya in 1982. Several Asian women were raped and many Asian shops were looted by rampaging crowds.

It was no coincidence that at that time the Asian intake in English preparatory schools and public schools increased significantly. The rich were quietly evacuating their families, at least temporarily and taking up residence in their long-established homes in England. Many have gone back to Kenya, while others have joined the ranks of those who had long ago decided to have a foot in both camps. They commute between London and Nairobi like

other businessmen, the difference being that the Asian merchants have a brother or cousin living in Kenya looking after the family interests. Some groups maintain their headquarters in Britain or the United States – one is based in Bermuda. Yet their business by and large remains in East Africa. These corporate commuters have taken the decision that the risk to their business and their families is too great to have all their eggs in one African basket. President Obote, who has long had Asians among his closest advisers and has Asian High Commissioners in the key London and Delhi posts, has failed in his efforts to secure the return of the Asians expelled by Amin.

No more than a handful are prepared to give Uganda another chance. But Asian companies, including the powerful Madhvani and Mehta groups, have all returned but on a corporate rather than individual basis. A large number of Indian and Pakistani contract personnel have been hired. But there will never again be the large Asian community in Uganda which once so completely dominated the private sector – and paid the penalty under Amin.

Asian compensation claims against the Uganda Government have still to be settled, and at the time of writing three elderly Asians were seeking a judicial review by the High Court in London of the British Foreign Secretary's decision to cease direct negotiations with Kampala and leave it to expellees to pursue their claims individually. The Asian applicants want the courts to set this decision aside, maintaining that the British Government is in breach of international law and its own rules on compensation claims by its citizens overseas. Predictably the High Court rejected the application on the grounds that the Foreign Secretary's action lay within the Government's prerogatives and was therefore outside the court's jurisdiction. An appeal has been lodged.

While the Asians view their prospects in Africa as pretty dismal, their current position is not too uncomfortable. It is true that those who took out citizenship and who looked to careers in the civil service, the police and the armed forces, and perhaps a political role, albeit modest, have been disillusioned. Few if any will advance beyond the middle ranks, their paths blocked by Africans and, indeed, the need for Africans in the top jobs on political grounds. In Kenya an African constituency has again voted in a white MP; but in a neighbouring Nairobi constituency an Asian was not re-elected last year. The fact is that there is no elective place for Asians in Africa.

Yet for all their impediments and uncertainties, life for the Asian is by no means intolerable. The private sector remains open to them. Only in Malawi are they restricted to certain trading areas: they must now do business in the towns, where there is little scope, rather than in the rural areas where they enjoyed a monopoly. But in Kenya and Zambia, for example, the Asians continue to thrive. They have been compelled to africanize their staff but remain in control. The most lucrative partnerships are between African businessmen or those in high places – Ministers and Senior Civil Servants – and the well established Asian entrepreneurs, especially those who have close links with Europe, notably Britain, and the United States. It means that the Asians have a friend at court, while the Africans benefit from their enterprise and expertise. It may be a marriage of convenience, but it works – not least because, for all the snide remarks about Asians, their flair and vigour, their efficiency and astuteness and understanding of international trade, is widely respected in East and Central Africa. It has engendered, if not complete trust and amity between the host and minority communities, then at least a mutually profitable working partnership.

Such a relationship would have been unthinkable in the ethnic ferment of the independence struggle, in which some Asians at least gave personal and financial support

for the Nationalist cause – and which, in their view, has never been fully recognized by those whom they assisted to gain power. The Asians continue to bear chips on their shoulders, feeling cheated and hard done by, resenting their resentment by the Africans and the superior attitude of the remaining Europeans, of being used and yet despised by the other races.

Yet there has been no great rush to leave. The number of Asians holding British passports remains much what it was five years ago, with the exception of course of Uganda. The only thing which has changed is the actual designation of the UK Asian passport-holders. Under the 1982 British Nationality Act they have been classified as British Overseas Citizens with restricted rights of entry under the 1970 voucher scheme. To regulate – i.e. reduce the intake into Britain to appease the anti-immigration lobby – some 5000 vouchers for UK Asians are issued every year. About 3000 are allocated to Kenya. It would therefore only take 18 months' allocation to bring out all the remaining UK Asians in East Africa. But there is no demand for these vouchers within Kenya.

The British Government nevertheless has refused to transfer the unwanted East African vouchers to India. Of the East African Asians who went to India to mark time before finally settling in Britain, some 3500 are still waiting for vouchers. With India allocated only 500 a year, many will have to wait for seven years. For the very elderly wishing to join their sons and daughters in Britain, the delay presents great hardship. Britains' Asian citizens overseas and their dependents still face racial discrimination by act of the British Parliament.

In 1981, President Kenneth Kaunda said:

'Those brothers and sisters who come from outside, whether they be from Asia, Europe, Latin America, from anywhere once they select to be Zambians under our constitution, they are simply Zambians. And therefore one has to ask them to behave like Zambians. They should not have two homes – one in India, the other in Zambia. We want them to have both of their feet in Zambia.'

These sentiments remain beyond reproach. But the circumstances of Africa, the rising tide of black expectation – and of unemployment – dictate that the Asians have a foot, where possible, in both camps – in Britain or North America (where the Aga Khan has helped thousands of his Ismaili followers to settle) or in India. But whatever their anxieties and limitations imposed upon them, it must – in the final analysis – be said that Asians

in East and Central Africa enjoy freedom under the law and complete religious freedom, and continue to enjoy a good standard of living.

They may see British, American and EEC aid as 'protection money', and they have certainly taken out their own 'fire insurance' in the form of property and investments overseas, particularly in Britain. They are aware that the Uganda expulsions were the work of a madman and unlikely to be repeated elsewhere in the region under responsible leaders. Yet they are equally aware that Idi Amin's actions were warmly applauded by most Africans, and it is the knowledge of such applause which to a great extent accounts for the divided loyalties of the Asian communities. But the awareness that there is no real future for them in an African country is tempered by a grudging acknowledgement that the present is not all that bad and could be a great deal worse.

In 1963, there were 344,000 Asians in the five countries. Today, they are down to about 85,000, of whom 65,000 are nationals of these countries: Kenya has 40,000 citizens of Asian origin, Tanzania 20,000, Zambia 3000, Malawi 1000 and Uganda 1000. Of the 20,000 or so British Asian citizens remaining in East and Central Africa, Kenya accounts for 8000, Tanzania 8000, Malawi 2000, Zambia 2000, plus a few hundred in Zimbabwe and Uganda.

At the time of going to press, there was speculation that the Kenya Government were planning to deprive Asians living abroad of their citizenship. No official statement has been made by Nairobi. But there are persistent rumours that some expatriate Kenya Asians resident in Britain or America have not had their passports renewed and that those who had had experienced great difficulty. As stated above, several thousand Kenya Asians commute between London or New York and Nairobi. They regard the UK or the USA as their base, feeling more secure there while at the same time carrying on, or diversifying overseas, their businesses in Nairobi.

It is a classic case of a foot in both camps, and this duality, this lack of complete commitment, understandably offends Nairobi; but the Asians themselves see it as a form of 'fire insurance'. For all its irritation, it remains to be seen whether the Kenya Government would actually go as far as stripping expatriate Asians of their citizenship. It would hurt Kenya's international trade, not to mention the international repercussions following any action which would, in effect, render people stateless.

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Today the Asian communities who remain in East Africa are much smaller in numbers and doubt whether their future there can be truly secure – however prosperous they may be.

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