

URCHINS, LOAFERS AND THE CULT OF THE  
COWBOY: URBANIZATION AND DELINQUENCY IN  
DAR ES SALAAM, 1919–61

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ABSTRACT: During the British colonial period a substantial young African population emerged in Dar es Salaam. Both colonial officials and African elders viewed this with dismay. They felt the resulting demoralisation of African youth posed a threat to both (African) authority and (colonial) order. However, measures aimed at addressing the ramifications of this phenomenon were mostly unsuccessful. Ironically, whilst British colonial policy aimed to keep African youth quiescent in rural, gerontocratic, tribal administrations, colonialism in fact provided the context in which both rapid urbanization and generational tension occurred. These continued to occur after independence; and it is argued that TANU politicians not only inherited the problems associated with the administration of the Tanganyikan capital, but that their responses were influenced by European and 'elite' African attitudes of the colonial era.

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, colonial period, urban history.

THE presence of large numbers of poor and often parentless juveniles scraping a precarious existence on the 'mean streets' of African towns and cities has become an increasingly familiar phenomenon in post-colonial Africa.<sup>1</sup> By 1995, it was estimated that there were as many as five million so-called street children in the region.<sup>2</sup> African towns have also, since independence, experienced a substantial increase in the numbers of African youth, among whom unemployment is widespread. The official reaction to these groups has been to consider them a problem; a view shared by municipal officials, the police and politicians alike. Negative perceptions of youths as threatening civil order have often resulted in their harsh treatment, with forcible removal from towns a frequent response<sup>3</sup> and their harassment by municipal authorities common practice.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This research was facilitated by financial assistance from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, the University of London Central Research Fund, the British Institute in Eastern Africa, and the Royal Historical Society. I gratefully acknowledge their support. Without the advice and editorial wizardry of David Anderson the article would have been substantially weaker (and longer). Thanks must also go to Thomas Spear and William Nasson for their comments.

<sup>2</sup> J.-P. Velis, *Blossoms in the Dust: Street Children in Africa* (UNESCO, 1995), 5. For contemporary Dar es Salaam, see V. Bamurange, 'Relationships for survival – young mothers and street youths', in *Haraka, haraka... Look before you leap: Youth at the crossroad of custom and modernity* (Stockholm, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> See A. Burton, 'Wahuni (The undesirables): African urbanisation, crime and colonial order in Dar es Salaam, 1919–1961' (PhD thesis, University of London, 2000), 2–4.

<sup>4</sup> Bamurange, 'Relationships'; P. Kilbride, C. Suda and E. Njeru, *Street Children in Kenya* (Westport and London, 2000). For West Africa, People's Educational Association of Sierra Leone, *Bras, Greens and Ballheads: Interviews with Freetown 'Street Boys'* (Freetown, 1989).

One aim of this article is to show that the problem of urban youth is not simply a product of the post-colonial era.<sup>5</sup> In a discussion of colonial Dar es Salaam, it emerges that British officials were faced with difficulties arising from a growing young urban population that would be only too familiar to their post-colonial counterparts. How they chose to deal with the situation often bears a remarkable similarity to policies adopted in post-colonial Africa. This should not surprise us, however, and it brings me to my second aim: to demonstrate that perceptions of urban youth as a social problem that inform contemporary urban policy have their origins in the colonial period. To British officials, the presence of young Africans in Dar es Salaam exposed them to social evils that could lead to a degeneration in their behaviour. African elders, too, took a dim view of urbanization amongst their juniors, lamenting both a decline in behaviour and a loss of authority. African politicians and officials who ascended to power after independence in 1961 were the inheritors of these attitudes.

#### AFRICAN YOUTH IN COLONIAL DAR ES SALAAM

The large numbers of juvenile and young adult Africans in the territorial capital were an enduring problem for Dar es Salaam's administrators throughout the colonial period. Children born to town-dwelling parents were a cause for concern, but the greater problem was the large numbers of youths who left their rural families to come to town. Some came seeking employment. For others, tax evasion provided the initial impetus, as Fryer, the District Commissioner, noted in 1930:

many young natives between sixteen and twenty, tired of being harried from village to village in the district, where they have no separate huts and no means of paying tax, eventually drift into the town and become part of the ever-increasing crowd of defaulters.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever the motive, administrators regarded the move to town as a negative step. 'A few months residence in the town,' wrote Fryer, 'living on their funds and relations, and consorting with the lowest sort of town natives saps their moral strength and they become at worst petty-criminals and at best unemployable hangers-on'. Young Africans were being forced 'into contact with conditions from which they suffer both physically and morally, their whole lives... often [being] affected'.<sup>7</sup>

From the late 1930s, when accelerating rural-urban migration began to place the infrastructure of Dar es Salaam under strain, the problem of urban youth came to be viewed with mounting concern. By 1941, Provincial Commissioner E. C. Baker (author of an earlier social survey of the town) considered that '[d]rastic measures were necessary to deal with the situation':

Children wander into Dar es Salaam, often without their parents knowledge and obtain employment as houseboys or nurses at a starving wage.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Hiffe, *The African Poor* (Cambridge, 1987), 185–9.

<sup>6</sup> Dsm District Annual Report (DAR) for 1930, 8, Tanzania National Archive (TNA) 53.4.

<sup>7</sup> 1931 DAR, 19.

– Twenty out of thirty children who had left or were irregularly attending a Government school at Vikindu sixteen miles from Dar es Salaam were found to be in the employment of non-natives in Dar es Salaam at wages of Shs.3/- to 7/- a month.

– Further, youths who dislike rural activities come to town and, if they are lucky, obtain employment at but a slightly increased rate of pay. Many, however, are unemployed or only semi-employed and all, youths and children alike, gain a preference for town life with its accompanying vices.<sup>8</sup>

Two years earlier, Pike (District Commissioner, Dar es Salaam, 1939–44) had described the descent of urban youth as a structural problem:

they generally start work with Indian employers at about eight years of age for Shs.2/- per month with their food, and the wages increase to about Shs.4/- with food when they are fourteen. After this age, they seldom get permanent employment until they are eighteen and the four most impressionable years of these boys' lives are spent in the company of loafers, petty thieves and card sharpers.<sup>9</sup>

Baker endorsed this view, pointing to the large number of youngsters working as houseboys, 'the wage is fair for a child but when he grows up he requires more wages for clothes and women and unless he is able to obtain them by getting employment in a better class household or some work such as stevedoring his only recourse is to steal'.<sup>10</sup> Three years later, Baker estimated there were in Dar es Salaam 'about 2,000 young scamps, living on their wits and without any form of parental or other control'.<sup>11</sup>

Despite efforts to curb the presence of African youth in Dar es Salaam, the situation deteriorated over time. By 1952, the Labour Commissioner reported that 'there may be as many as ten thousand children and juveniles in Dar es Salaam municipal area who have come into town of their own accord and are not under the care of their parents or any recognised guardian'.<sup>12</sup> 'No effective measures', he continued, 'have yet been devised that will send them home and keep them there'. As the decade progressed the situation was exacerbated with the emergence of the so-called 'school-leaver problem'. Young Africans, having taken advantage of the expanding opportunities for schooling in post-war Tanganyika, came to Dar es Salaam in search of formal employment for which their education fitted them.<sup>13</sup> However, from the mid-1950s, as more school-leavers entered the town, the urban labour market actually began to contract as employers opted for increased productivity. Meanwhile, the presence of large numbers of children of school-age was equally problematic. J. A. K. Leslie, a colonial

<sup>8</sup> 1941 Eastern Province AR, 10.

<sup>9</sup> 'Report on Native Affairs in Dar es Salaam Township', DO Pike, 5 June 1939, 9, TNA/18950/Vol.II.

<sup>10</sup> Baker's amendments to his 1931 report, 10 Jan. 1940, TNA/18950/Vol.II.

<sup>11</sup> PC's conference mins. 1943, 13, TNA/61/702/3.

<sup>12</sup> Labour Dept. AR for 1952, 41. This figure seems exaggerated.

<sup>13</sup> Although most children only had access to four years 'vernacular schooling with an agricultural bias' (see J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* [Cambridge, 1979], 444–5), this did not prevent many from disdaining agricultural employment. See, for example, the Masasi District Annual Report for 1957 (TNA/P4/32), in which the DC complains of young Africans 'who consider that four years at a primary school should give them exemption from all manual labour'. Quoted in Thomas Burgess, 'Mobility and discipline: colonial age discourse in Tanzania', in Mario Aguilar (ed.), *Rethinking Age in Africa* (Trenton, forthcoming).

official who carried out a comprehensive social survey of the town in 1956, concluded that there were as many as 3,600 parentless juveniles in the town.<sup>14</sup> While some of these children were probably under the care of a guardian, many were not.

For colonial officials the most disturbing aspect of urbanization amongst young Africans was the fear of disorder. As early as 1924, Dar es Salaam's District Commissioner was complaining, 'juvenile elements in the population represent the greatest difficulties; the breakdown of tribal custom and former control is responsible for a great lack of discipline'.<sup>15</sup> These sentiments were echoed in a report the following decade:

A most disquieting and unsatisfactory feature in the native population is the lack of discipline amongst numbers of youths...especially in the vicinity of the more developed areas of the Territory tribal discipline has broken down in so far as these youths are concerned and chiefs and elders find the situation beyond them. The youths should properly be finding wives for themselves and cultivating land on their own behalf or working as wage-earners, but instead they tend to drift away from their homes to the townships, where they become loafers, without any anchorage, liabilities to the Territory rather than the assets they should be.<sup>16</sup>

Exposure to town life was leading to African insubordination: the 'native' no longer knew his proper place. According to a 1925 editorial in the *Tanganyika Times*:

The native is quick to discover our weaknesses and to play on them. Many people would be exceedingly angry, as well as sore and humiliated, if they knew how many of their acts in the daily domestic and social strife were recorded and ridiculed and caricatured in the villages at night for the edification of a delighted crowd of natives.... That they are growing more insolent can easily be seen by the attitude of nearly every type of native servant in Dar es Salaam.<sup>17</sup>

Concern about insubordination was not restricted to the European population. Throughout the British colonial period district officials received complaints from Africans about the uncontrolled tide of youngsters flowing into the town. More generally, many Africans shared the European view of the urban arena as an environment in which profligacy and demoralization abounded. In a society that remained overwhelmingly agricultural, anti-urbanism was a widely held sentiment. Among educated Africans, it was reinforced by western antipathy towards the process of urbanization. Such attitudes are immediately apparent in the pages of *Kwetu*, an African newspaper published in Dar es Salaam in the 1930s and 1940s. As Anthony has observed, '[a]lmost all the letters which dealt with Dar es Salaam in a typical issue of *Kwetu* viewed the city in negative terms'.<sup>18</sup> The town was the

<sup>14</sup> Derived from Leslie's 29 per cent estimate of those aged between 6 and 15 in the urban population; J. A. K. Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam* (Oxford, 1963), 244. The situation on the Copperbelt was much the same. In Ndola, Epstein found small groups of boys 'wandering about all over town' whose 'independence... was encouraged by conditions in the towns to the extent that boys of eight or nine were no longer under parental control'. A. L. Epstein, *Urbanization and Kinship: The Domestic Domain on the Copperbelt of Zambia, 1950-56* (New York, 1981), 149. <sup>15</sup> 1924 DAR, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Report of the Committee on the Supply and Welfare of Native Labour in Tanganyika Territory, 1938, 10. <sup>17</sup> *Tanganyika Times*, 9 May 1925, 2.

<sup>18</sup> David Henry Anthony III, 'Culture and society in a town in transition: A people's history of Dar es Salaam, 1865-1939' (PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1983), 187.

location for drunkenness, for foul language and disreputable behaviour, and for hooliganism and crime.<sup>19</sup> Eryeza Tabula, writing to *Kwetu* in 1942, portrayed the Tanganyikan capital as an unruly place in which the sensitivities of the respectable citizen were under siege:

In the town of Dar es Salaam there are many locals who go unpunished; they are swearing at each other casually in the streets or in the houses. Many people urinate freely all over, at places where it should not be done; drunks are tottering about the streets, at dawn the noise of drunkards never decreases, those sleeping are disturbed by the shouting. Moreover, time after time women are assaulted at random in the streets by Wahuni [delinquents/hooligans], but in other towns... I haven't seen such things. Has Dar es Salaam no laws?<sup>20</sup>

'Town life', Robert Lukyaa had succinctly observed three years earlier, 'is deadly'.<sup>21</sup>

A large part of the problem was seen to be the high levels of un- or under-employment. Repeated calls were made by 'respectable' Africans to clear the town of those without work. 'On more than one occasion', observed Baker in 1941, 'I have been asked in *baraza* to clear... ne'er-do-wells from Dar es Salaam lock, stock and barrel'.<sup>22</sup> Invariably, the prescribed fate of such 'undesirables' was to be sent to the rural areas to cultivate. This was the desired solution of H. E. Reuben, writing to *Kwetu* in 1940, who observed that 'it is out of the question for people to sit in towns doing nothing, eating the livelihood of those who have work. It is evident that people of this kind bring famine into the world...'.<sup>23</sup> The substantial increase in the number of urban residents without formal employment that occurred over the following decade led, in the late 1950s, to demands for forced employment schemes. In 1957, the *Tanganyika Standard* reported that *Liwali* Mponda had encouraged the administration to introduce 'African productivity schemes':

[In] the hope that the time wasted by the number of Africans roaming about the trading centres and big towns would be spent in increasing production and those who were not employed would return to their respective districts and join in the shamba development.<sup>24</sup>

The following year a meeting of traditional African rulers recommended the introduction of compulsory labour related 'closely to the needs of the Native Authorities' in order to 'teach the habit of discipline' to 'unemployed loafers' in the towns.<sup>25</sup>

Antipathy towards the process of urbanization amongst sections of the African population was, as may be expected, echoed in individual preferences. Dar es Salaam was above all a 'young man's town'.<sup>26</sup> In his 1931 survey, Baker had noted:

the old men usually dislike the town atmosphere and prefer to retire to the plantations where living is cheaper and where they can lead an existence on tribal

<sup>19</sup> *Kwetu*, 8 Feb. 1939, 13 (cited in Anthony); Francis Athman to *Kwetu*, 22 Feb. 1940; M. F. Kassam to *Kwetu*, 13 Jan. 1942. <sup>20</sup> *Kwetu* (supplement), 8 Mar. 1942.

<sup>21</sup> *Kwetu*, 3 May 1939, 4. <sup>22</sup> Baker to C. Sec., 12 Mar. 1941, TNA/61/688/5.

<sup>23</sup> H. E. Reuben to *Kwetu*, 3 Jan. 1940, in TNA/23574/Vol.II.

<sup>24</sup> *Tanganyika Standard*, 20 Sept. 1957, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Mins. of Second Convention of Representative Chiefs of Tanganyika, 6–8 Jan. 1958, TNA/225/80070.

<sup>26</sup> Nicholas Westcott, 'Life in Dar es Salaam during World War II', *Daily News*, 21 Dec. 1979, 4.

lines. No effort has been made to incorporate them in modern town civilisation and they appear to be somewhat bewildered at the rate and nature of modern progress...<sup>27</sup>

Young Africans, on the other hand, were curious and quick to learn. Over thirty years later, these preferences remained intact. Leslie found that in 1956 '[a]lmost the only sample tested in which a majority admitted to liking this life in town was a sample of 50 children; their elders almost to a man denied any liking for the urban as opposed to the country life'.<sup>28</sup>

African elders were especially concerned by the manner in which an evolving urban society undermined the deference they customarily expected as their due.<sup>29</sup> This phenomenon was frequently remarked upon by colonial officials. Baker noted in 1931 that parental control – 'the essence of tribal life' – had been weakened and 'in the case of many urban natives had disappeared altogether'.<sup>30</sup> There was in the town 'a section of the native population which is devoid of any sense of responsibility whatever ... composed of unmarried youths between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five years'.<sup>31</sup> More senior African residents of Dar es Salaam had lobbied Baker for a council of elders 'to deal with matters affecting the African population and work for the creation of a consensus of public opinion by which people and especially young men might be controlled'.<sup>32</sup>

By this time, even in the rural areas surrounding the town, Native Authorities exercised diminishing control over youth. 'There is no doubt', wrote the District Commissioner in 1936:

that the situation of the Territory's capital within the district does act as a disturbing influence on the tribal life and organisation of the Wazaramo, particularly in the case of those Native Authorities bordering the township, and it is not uncommon to hear native elders complain of a lack of obedience amongst their sons who have become acquainted with the diversions and detribalised life of the township.<sup>33</sup>

Two decades later, Leslie found that the 'hold of the tribe' had been further weakened by urbanization. 'In the rural village society', he noted, 'the child, more than any other member of the community, is firmly kept in its appointed place'. In town, on the other hand: 'Again and again ... crops up the phrase "freedom from responsibility"; it is also a sense of freedom from supervision and from discipline; the decline of whatever discipline the tribe in town was once able to exert'.<sup>34</sup>

According to Baker, the diminishing respect paid to African elders was partly a function of their conservative instincts and unresponsiveness to 'modern' influences. The youthful employee, for instance, who previously would have served an apprenticeship in his village, could become 'proficient in an occupation which his father did not understand and was unable to practice...[and] too often tended to despise the older generation as old fashioned and unintelligent'.<sup>35</sup> In Dar es Salaam itself, Baker remarked, 'the younger generation considers that it is more competent to deal with present

<sup>27</sup> E. C. Baker, 'Memorandum on the social conditions of Dar es Salaam', 4 June 1931, 69, copy in SOAS archive. <sup>28</sup> Leslie, 'Survey', 256.

<sup>29</sup> For example, the 1939 *Kwetu* editorial complaining of young trouble-makers '[n]o longer subject to the influence of their parents' (quoted in Anthony, 'Culture', 159–60).

<sup>30</sup> Baker, 'Memorandum', 6. <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 70. <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 71. <sup>33</sup> 1936 DAR, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Leslie, 'Survey', 243. <sup>35</sup> Baker, 'Memorandum', 6.



day affairs than [the elders] are and openly scoff them as inefficient and out of date'.<sup>36</sup> This contempt was in part associated with a western education. L. O. I. Mbawala, a correspondent to *Kwetu* in 1942, observed: 'There is a rumour in this country that schoolboys are despising not only their elders but also uneducated Africans... Our school boys are fleeing from our fathers' *bomas* and try to avoid any racial customs'.<sup>37</sup> According to another, more sympathetic correspondent, the problem was often one of both too much and yet not enough education, a little knowledge becoming a dangerous thing:

[T]oday the number of unemployed youths is shocking.

Several of these youths went to school with the intention of rendering their future secure, but through no fault of their own, but because of lack of finance on the part of their underpaid fathers, they had to leave or were ousted from school before completing their education. Now Business Firms do not accept services of these youths because they are unqualified, and as the little education they got is all bookish and they cannot use their hands to do any handicrafts. What can these youths be expected to do? They cannot be expected to be farmers since they were not trained in that line. They have already been initiated in profitable undertakings so what will they be given to do? Nothing? But they are people in need and as such in desperation they will turn to what will appear to them to be the easiest means of satisfying their wants, namely theft, pick pocketing, robbery, bank holding [sic], etc. It is true that they will have to abye [sic] these felonies but in course of a time they will become inured to the punishments inflicted on them and belittle same and grow to like their trade, while it is also very true that society will suffer intolerably.<sup>38</sup>

Education and the allure of urban life were together responsible for the growing disinclination to engage in agricultural work on the part of the young. As early as 1931, Baker observed, 'a generation ha[d] arisen which, through lack of practise or distaste, is under the impression that it is physically unable to till the soil and considers that such an occupation is only fit for old men who have not advanced with the times'.<sup>39</sup> As we have seen, the favoured solution to the perceived problem of idle urban youth was that they should be returned to rural areas. However, repatriations from Dar es Salaam, which occurred with increasing frequency from the late 1940s, did little either to encourage a more positive attitude towards agricultural labour or to stem youth migration to town. By the late 1950s, the problem had been further exacerbated by the expansion in schooling. Some officials criticized rural education as 'breeding discontent, putting too much emphasis on book-learning as opposed to crafts or husbandry, and producing people who wrongly despised the agricultural worker'.<sup>40</sup> '[D]iscontented with the hard manual work and dullness of rural life',<sup>41</sup> young Africans were making their way to Dar es Salaam in ever-increasing numbers.<sup>42</sup>

Compared to the drudgery of rural life, Dar es Salaam represented the chance for material advance. The spectacle and excitements offered by the

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 69.

<sup>37</sup> *Kwetu*, 18 Sept. 1942, 3.

<sup>38</sup> 'An Ambitious Black' to *Kwetu*, 26 Mar. 1942, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Baker, 'Memorandum', 48.

<sup>40</sup> *Tanganyika Standard*, 26 June 1958, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Leslie, *Survey*, 243.

<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere in Africa the move from the land was also associated with the demoralization of young Africans. See S. Heap, 'Jaguda boys': pickpocketing in Ibadan, 1930–60', *Urban History*, 24 (1997), 3, 324–43.

town also proved a powerful magnet to curious young Africans. The leisure activities available to urban residents were without parallel in the territory: cinemas showed western, Indian, and later home-produced films to African audiences; competition football was well established by the early 1940s;<sup>43</sup> and gambling was a popular pastime among African youth. The multitude of bars and clubs (both legal and illegal) and the regular *ngomas* (organized dances) provided opportunity for revelry. Here the latest trends in music and dance could be enjoyed, and the latest fashions flaunted. While these aspects of urban society attracted African youth, their elders saw such distractions as being responsible for and symptomatic of a degeneration in behaviour. In 1931, Rufiji elders in the town bemoaned the influence of films on impressionable youngsters and asked that a cinema catering for an African audience be closed.<sup>44</sup> Football also became associated with bad behaviour. Fierce rivalries developed by the 1950s between the supporters of teams such as Young Africans and Sunderland,<sup>45</sup> and incidents of football hooliganism occurred.<sup>46</sup>

All of this threatened the respectability of an emerging African urban bourgeoisie. In 1931, Baker observed the presence of hooligans whose ‘amusement after dark [wa]s to annoy the respectable members of the community by acts of discourtesy, assaults or petty thefts’.<sup>47</sup> ‘Respectable’ Africans also frequently complained about gambling in the town. In 1936, the president of the Tanganyika African Welfare and Commercial Association (TAWCA) complained of school boy gamblers.<sup>48</sup> Six years later, the gaming activities of *wahuni* were being singled out by M. F. Kassam in the pages of *Kwetu*.<sup>49</sup> This was the least of their sins, however. In the course of an *ngoma* celebrating *Idd* at Mnazi Mmoja, Kassam complained that *wahuni* had assaulted women, thrown stones at the police, and stolen from ‘ordinary citizens’. ‘What about the elders who were empowered by the District Commissioner’, he asked, highlighting the toothlessness of African officials, ‘do they not observe these disorderly events in the town’?<sup>50</sup> The revelry associated with *ngomas* was a frequent cause for complaint amongst, in Erica Fiah’s words, the ‘peace loving Africans of Dar es Salaam who are taxpayers’.<sup>51</sup> The unrest associated with *ngomas* in the town led to an announcement in March 1942 proscribing them at any place other than Mnazi Mmoja.<sup>52</sup> And with dancing went drunkenness. Baker observed a ‘disturbing feature’ of township life was the tendency of youths under 18 to patronize the *tembo* (palm wine) clubs.<sup>53</sup> ‘These boys’, complained L. O. I. Mbawala the following year, ‘can be found chiefly in the Dancing Halls, the “Pombe” [traditional beer] clubs etc.’.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Tanganyika Standard*, 4 Apr. 1941, 18.      <sup>44</sup> Baker, ‘Memorandum’, 98.

<sup>45</sup> Which, under their current club names Yanga and Simba, has continued up to the present.

<sup>46</sup> See *Tanganyika Standard*, 19 Sept. 1952, 19; and Hakimul Ilala to DC, Dsm, 24 and 28 Sept. 1955, TNA/540/3/39A, for examples of football hooliganism.

<sup>47</sup> Baker, ‘Memorandum’, 70.

<sup>48</sup> TAWCA (E. Fiah) to PC, EP, 31 Mar. 1936, TNA/22444.

<sup>49</sup> *Kwetu*, 13 Jan. 1942.      <sup>50</sup> Original in Swahili.      <sup>51</sup> *Kwetu*, 21 Aug. 1939, 12.

<sup>52</sup> *Tangazo* (Announcement), 5 Mar. 1942, TNA/540/27/11.

<sup>53</sup> Baker to C. Sec., 16 July 1941, TNA/12356/Vol.II.

<sup>54</sup> *Kwetu*, 18 Sept. 1942, 3.



## COLONIAL URBAN POLICY

While anxieties arising from the process of African urbanization were frequently expressed before 1939, they were not matched by any concerted policy aimed at addressing the situation in Dar es Salaam.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the principal characteristic of the colonial administration of the town between the wars was simple neglect. Housing was overwhelmingly provided by Africans themselves, rather than by the municipality or employers. Other infrastructure in the African township was meagre: roads lacked all-weather surfaces and street lighting, sanitation was poor and access to running water severely limited. Meanwhile, the African population was relatively loosely administered, and the police presence in the African areas was negligible. Though officials frequently berated this state of affairs, they lacked any means of increasing municipal revenue or of attracting increased funds from a cash-strapped central government with which to effect improvements.

From the early 1940s, urban policy slowly scaled the colonial agenda. It was stimulated both by an emerging metropolitan strategy towards urban Africa, as well as changing conditions in Dar es Salaam itself. The wider shift in British colonial urban policy found its first expression in Lord Hailey's *African Survey*, published in 1938. Hailey lamented colonial failure to address the evolution of urban African society and counselled the necessity of developing effective policies.<sup>56</sup> From the early 1940s, in Tanganyika and elsewhere, the change of attitude was evident in a growing acceptance of an African urban presence. Meanwhile, in Dar es Salaam, the symptoms of inter-war neglect were compounded by an accelerating rate of rural–urban migration. The increasing urban population led to widespread un- and under-employment, to serious overcrowding and to a rising cost of living. A group of particularly energetic colonial officials – notably Baker and Pike – formulated proposals to rectify the situation in the early 1940s. However, the Tanganyikan government remained unwilling to shoulder the financial and administrative burden that these more comprehensive urban policies entailed, and few of their proposals were adopted in full. Even in a more positive policy environment, the tendency towards colonial inertia was difficult to overcome.

Improving economic conditions in the late 1940s eased the pressure on urban infrastructure and perhaps encouraged this tendency. However, when the economic situation began to deteriorate again in the early 1950s, old problems re-emerged with a vengeance. The ever-mounting flow of young Africans now making their way to the town confronted an urban environment in which both unemployment and the incidence of crime were growing. Although delinquency in Dar es Salaam was not particularly serious, Leslie's 1956 survey suggests that insubordination was widespread.<sup>57</sup> The emergence

<sup>55</sup> See Burton, 'Wahuni', ch. 2, for a detailed discussion of colonial urban policy in Tanganyika.

<sup>56</sup> Lord Hailey, *An African Survey* (London, 1938), 544.

<sup>57</sup> This phenomenon was not confined to Tanganyika. Epstein describes a case involving a youth accused of stealing £10 being heard by the African Welfare Officer in Ndola: 'The lad sat in a chair, his legs up, sprawling unconcernedly, and when he was addressed by the African Welfare Officer he responded with a mumbled "ee", omitting the customary "mukwai" of respect and good manners – seemingly the epitome of a young *tsotsi* in the making', *Urbanization*, 149.

of African nationalism at this time brought an added political dimension, with officials anxious lest urban youth be too easily swayed by the promptings of TANU activists. In reaction to these circumstances, and in line with British colonial policy elsewhere, increased attention was paid to urban problems in the closing years of colonial rule. But with the expansion of the town, these problems had become ever more intractable. Officials too often resorted to piecemeal measures which had negligible impact on the situation. At independence in 1961, the TANU government was faced with a substantial, and growing, young urban population for whom the economic outlook was bleak.

#### CONTROLLING AFRICAN YOUTH

In their attempts to assert control in Dar es Salaam, British colonial administrators took initiatives aimed at restricting the number of young Africans exposed to the corrupting urban environment. They also attempted to address more specific problems associated with the presence of large numbers of young Africans in Dar es Salaam. The challenge they posed to public order was one cause for concern. Another was their distorting influence on the urban economy.

#### *Dealing with delinquency*

The growing number of crimes committed by young offenders first came to be regarded with special concern by the administration in the early 1930s. Crime figures from 1928 and 1929 revealed a 'disturbing increase in the incidence of juvenile crime'.<sup>58</sup> However, it was the emergence of gang activity in the 1930s and early 1940s that caused particular concern. Baker noted the presence of 'particularly impudent' groups of youths in 1931, who were known collectively as the *kompania ya sinzia*, *kuwevi sinzia* being Swahili for the method used by thieves who stole whilst one of their number distracted the victim. An editorial in *Kwetu* later that decade complained of gangs of young trouble-makers: 'Among them', the editorial observed, 'will be found a fair percentage of tax-dodgers, street ruffians, pickpockets, as well as our best athletes... Most of the petty thefts are committed by them; they are suborned by weaker men to fight out their differences with other people, and they rob our children'.<sup>59</sup> They also victimised Indian residents of the town, snatching jewellery from women and children, mugging lone pedestrians in the early evening and shoplifting. In 1938, 66 Indian retailers wrote a letter to the *Tanganyika Herald* complaining of 'being harassed in broad daylight in our shops as well as in streets, by five or six gangs of loafers'.<sup>60</sup> Four years later, the Superintendent of Police warned of:

the problem of unemployable youths, who with some precocious youngsters as hangers-on, band themselves into small groups and pester the bazaar and native residential areas. They are mentally unoccupied and by being semi-sophisticated are ripe for any mischief that presents itself from stone-throwing to shoplifting.

<sup>58</sup> *Report on the Question of Imprisonment in Tanganyika* (Dsm, 1932), App. D.

<sup>59</sup> *Kwetu*, 21 Feb. 1939 (quoted in Anthony, 'Culture', 159–60).

<sup>60</sup> *Tanganyika Herald*, 11 May 1938.

They are most difficult to control and by their association with bad influences present both a social as well as a police problem which will have to be faced.<sup>61</sup>

One response to the problem of crime among youth was institutional. In their 1932 report, members of the committee on imprisonment, troubled by evidence that 'frequently children are deliberately employed by thieves and rogues',<sup>62</sup> had recommended that a reformatory be established to 'reclaim' convicted juveniles and to prevent them entering the 'schools of crime' that many took the prisons to be. An Approved School was eventually opened at Kazima, near Tabora, in 1938.<sup>63</sup> By the early 1950s, Kazima was dealing with a daily average of around 200 offenders ranging in age from 8 to 18.<sup>64</sup> '[A] good deal of trouble' was taken over discharged inmates from the school on their return to Dar es Salaam.<sup>65</sup> Often they were helped to find employment to prevent their returning to crime.<sup>66</sup> These initiatives met with some success. The Commissioner of Prisons noted with satisfaction in 1949, 'I cannot overemphasize how impressed I am with the ex-Approved School boys keenness, good outlook and above all, their spirit of independence and confidence in themselves'.<sup>67</sup>

Kazima's achievements filtered down to African parents. In 1944, Asmani Juma Muna, a government clerk living in Dar es Salaam, sought to have his son committed to Kazima:

My son Ramadhani Athmani Juma, who is about 15 years, is leading a very notorious conduct. He has the habit of being away from home... I have instructed him so many times and even punishments but no sign of changing. Moreover I have taken up the same case with the local *Jumbe* [headman] Mohamed Sultani who alternatively took the real advice on this boy but merely he despised of and ran away as a rascal young chap.

...He is my real son, a son amongst others. For his bad example I am afraid he may scandalize the rest and turn up my happy family to be dark one. There is immigration of the school children of such boys, I heard, to somewhere, I here too would take consul to recommend for him.<sup>68</sup>

The following week Muna's son was sent to Tabora. Records survive of another anxious parent requesting the removal of his offspring to the school. In 1950, Dominico Sakatu, a junior Municipal Health Office employee, wrote to the District Commissioner:

My son is a problem having been thrown out of schools in Dar es Salaam and Ufipa... I have made up my mind to take him to Kazima School, Tabora. Rashid, a fellow worker of mine had some troubles with his son and Thomas Plantan too... [They sent their sons to Kazima.]

Mr. Rashid is back and making wonderful progress at his new school. The two sons of Plantan are still there and have begun to improve in class-work and character.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Supt. of Police to PC, EP, 20 Feb. 1942, TNA/61/3/XVI.

<sup>62</sup> *Report on Imprisonment*, App. D.

<sup>63</sup> For the emergence of similar institutions elsewhere, see Iliffe, *African Poor*, 188.

<sup>64</sup> Prison ARs, 1950-53.

<sup>65</sup> Report of PCs' conference, 1943, Public Records Office (PRO) CO/691/184/42397.

<sup>66</sup> See Supt., Kazima to DC, Dsm 14 Feb. 1947; and note dated 3 Mar. 1947, TNA/540/22/3.

<sup>67</sup> Cmmr. for Prisons to C. Sec., 31 Aug. 1949, TNA/28692.

<sup>68</sup> Asmani Juma Muna to DC, Dsm, 12 Jan. 1944, TNA/540/22/3.

<sup>69</sup> Dominico Sakatu to DC, Dsm, 27 Nov. 1950.

Offloading troublesome sons appears not to have been uncommon among educated Africans living in Dar es Salaam.

Whilst Kazima and its successor at Malindi, located on the outskirts of the capital (opened in 1958), may have taken some credit for the relative lack of juvenile crime in Dar es Salaam in the 1950s, an equally important factor was likely to have been the introduction of a probation office in 1950, established in part as a means of punishing young offenders without exposing them to prison life. In 1953, it dealt with 97 probationers under the age of 21. By the end of the decade, this had increased to 221.<sup>70</sup> The close supervision under which offenders were placed surely had an impact on young offenders, although it is impossible to know how great this was. What was clear was that juvenile crime, which in the 1930s and early 1940s threatened to become a serious problem in the town, had by this time declined in importance.

### *African youth as a socio-economic problem*

Although colonial measures appear to have met with some success in combating delinquency, other initiatives aimed at urban youth were not so successful. From the early 1940s, it was clear to officials that the excess of young surplus labour in Dar es Salaam was having a depressive effect on African wages. According to Baker, '[t]he salary paid by the large section of the non-native town-dwellers is based on the smallest wage which the youngest and least efficient child labour will accept'.<sup>71</sup> While the Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance of 1940 had restricted the use of child labour, many children in town remained employed as domestic servants, and large numbers of youths were just above the legal age of employment (which was 14). In addition, many employers simply broke the law, continuing to use under-age employees who more readily accepted poor working conditions and low rates of pay. In March 1943, the Labour Commissioner, Hickson-Mahoney, estimated that there were over one thousand children employed by Indians (at Shs.2/- per month or over).<sup>72</sup> Pike favoured the extension of the Women and Young Persons Ordinance to domestic service. Baker too, was 'convinced that were the employment of juvenile servants prohibited the social condition of the urban African would be very much improved'.<sup>73</sup> He also advocated the introduction of an urban minimum wage. This would not only facilitate the control of children in the town, but could also have positive consequences for the wider urban economy:

The effect of a minimum wage would be that no one would employ child labour on account of the expense and the children who at present roam about the town would be repatriated to their homes. Probably too, the more attractive terms offered would stabilise adult labour and so lessen the amount of casual labour employed. At any rate the regular labourer would be certain of drawing a more or less adequate pittance.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Prison ARs for 1953 and 1959.

<sup>71</sup> Baker's suggestions for PC's conference agenda to C. Sec., 20 July 1943, TNA/61/702/3.

<sup>72</sup> Hickson-Mahoney minute, 11 Mar. 1943, TNA/28685.

<sup>73</sup> Baker to C. Sec., 3 Sept. 1941, TNA/30134.

<sup>74</sup> Baker to C. Sec., 29 Sept. 1941, TNA/30134.

A minimum wage was not implemented for another fifteen years. However, all forms of employment of children under twelve – including domestic service – was prohibited in a 1943 amendment to the Employment of Women and Young Persons Ordinance.<sup>75</sup> In addition to providing protection for a section of the community vulnerable to exploitation, it was hoped this would also facilitate the removal of unaccompanied juveniles found in Dar es Salaam. Within three years, though, further restrictions on employment were being demanded for the legal definition of the age of a child to be raised and for the total prohibition of employment of all children ‘in domestic service away from their homes’, not just those under twelve years of age.<sup>76</sup>

Around the same time attempts were made to constrain the mobility of African youth. ‘The Wazaramo’, observed Baker in 1943, ‘continually complain that their children run away to Dar es Salaam without permission and without taking leave of their parents’.<sup>77</sup> Efforts were made to buttress the elders’ authority. Native Authorities in Eastern Province were granted permission to prohibit any person from coming to the town without obtaining a permit.<sup>78</sup> But without allocating increased resources to controlling unregulated movement into the towns, such ploys were unlikely to be effective. Whilst this measure may have discouraged initial movement, once an African had left his home district lack of a permit did not constitute any offence against territorial law. By the mid 1950s, it appeared to be failing completely. In his report on detribalization, Molohan lamented ‘the lack of tribal and parental discipline in the child’s home area is one of the main causes for children running away from their homes to the towns’.<sup>79</sup>

An extension of schooling in Dar es Salaam District was also recommended in the early 1940s. Educational needs in Uzaramo district had up to this time been poorly served. Just four government or mission schools, along with numerous – but tiny – Koranic schools, were struggling to cope with the requirements of a population, which by then had grown to almost 190,000. It was decided in 1942 that ‘a ring of schools near the township boundary’ should be erected ‘in order to deter children from entering the township by affording them educational facilities near their homes’.<sup>80</sup> In the town itself, it was hoped the introduction of compulsory education would have a civilizing influence on the urban miscreant. Schooling would:

instil into children those virtues of character so lacking among the youth of Dar es Salaam today; obedience, discipline, self control, cleanliness and a respect for the property of another. From a merely utilitarian point of view, when children can be kept off the streets for at least part of the day, this can be a great asset to the Community.<sup>81</sup>

As with other grand schemes of the early 1940s, however, there were never enough resources devoted to education in Dar es Salaam to establish compulsory school attendance. In 1952, 75 per cent of children in the town continued to receive ‘no schooling at all’.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>75</sup> No. 4 of 1943. <sup>76</sup> Minutes of the PC’s Conference, June 1946, Item 24.

<sup>77</sup> Baker’s suggestions for PC’s Conference Agenda to C. Sec., 20 July 1943, TNA/61/702/3.

<sup>78</sup> Baker to C. Sec., 6 Oct. 1943, TNA/61/443/1; see also PC, Dsm to Political, Rufiji, Morogoro and Bagamoyo, 21 Dec. 1943, TNA/61/443/1.

<sup>79</sup> M. J. B. Molohan, *Detribalisation*, (Dsm, 1959), 42. <sup>80</sup> 1942 PAR, 24.

<sup>81</sup> Pike, ‘Report’, 12. <sup>82</sup> Social Development Dept. AR for 1952, 5.

By the early 1950s it was clear that government initiatives of the previous decade had had little effect. However, there was now some divergence of opinion between both different internal government departments and between Dar es Salaam and Whitehall as to the difficulties posed by urban youth. Social welfare advisers at the Colonial Office shared the concerns of Tanganyikan labour officers about 'youths...who are seemingly without parents and guardians and roam the streets and get into mischief'.<sup>83</sup> In 1952, the Colonial Social Welfare Advisory Committee recommended that 'positive steps...be taken to look after children as they become detribalised'.<sup>84</sup> By contrast, both social welfare officers in Tanganyika itself, and, perhaps most significantly, Governor Twining, were more complacent about the situation, placing their faith in tribal structures for the care and control of young Africans. Twining disdained governmental intervention in Dar es Salaam, arguing this would further undermine tribal cohesion and responsibility.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, in the 1960 UN report, the Tanganyikan Commissioner for Social Development argued:

The social security provided by the traditional tribal system is particularly effective in the case of orphaned or otherwise handicapped children, with the result that abandoned children are almost unknown, except occasionally in the larger towns. No special legislative or other provisions have therefore become necessary in this respect.<sup>86</sup>

Such an interpretation of the situation pertaining in the territory betrays signs of either fiscal convenience or wilful ignorance. In his 1956 survey, Leslie found that 29 per cent of children between the ages of six and fifteen had no parents in town.<sup>87</sup> Admittedly most of these 'parentless' children would – nominally at least – be under the charge of town-dwelling relatives. However, officials – including the Governor – felt that these relatives had negligible interest in the 'practice of disciplinary authority' and that children in such a position were particularly exposed to the temptations and vices of town life. Leslie identifies a further 9,000 children of broken marriages who were also (a maximum estimate) potentially more vulnerable than most. While none of these children could be described as 'abandoned', they were the very section of the community whom Colonial Office officials had earlier singled out as needing attention. By the mid 1950s, in an attempt to meet these needs, the Social Development Department had set up boys clubs in towns throughout Tanganyika aimed at 'character training based on a recreational approach'.<sup>88</sup> The Dar es Salaam club reportedly contained 'some of the toughest boys in town' who could let off steam at their twice weekly meetings through boxing, football and physical training, or through camping trips to the Kisarawe hills.

The situation in Dar es Salaam required more than a bi-weekly schedule of juvenile sports, however. Ironically, a combination of both action and inaction with regard to recommendations made a decade earlier was contributing to the problem. Thanks to the shortage of school places, boys who

<sup>83</sup> Labour Dept. AR for 1952, 41.

<sup>84</sup> Cttee mins, PRO/CO/822/675.

<sup>85</sup> Twining to Sec. State for the Colonies, 18 Mar. 1952, PRO/CO/822/675.

<sup>86</sup> Report to UN on the administration of Tanganyika for 1960, para. 414.

<sup>87</sup> The proportion was 34 per cent in Kariakoo, the heart of the African quarter. Leslie, *Survey*, 244.

<sup>88</sup> *Sunday News*, 9 Dec. 1956, 4.



did not make the grade were leaving school after Standard VI, aged eleven, four years before they could legally obtain work. They found themselves 'thrown on the streets...and for three or four years they are at a loose end with nothing to do but learn the "tricks of the trade".'<sup>89</sup> Molohan's investigation into detribalization in 1956 uncovered the same problems in respect of urban youth that had characterized the situation in the 1940s: the exploitation of child labour and its impact on adult wages, the difficulties of apprehending and removing unaccompanied children from the town, and the corruption of youth and descent into delinquency. These remained some 'of the greatest problems with which the urban administrator is faced'.<sup>90</sup>

Molohan's recommendations also had an air of familiarity. He counselled that employment (including domestic service) of all children residing in the town without their natural parents should be prohibited and that compulsory education should be introduced for all boys and girls living in the town.<sup>91</sup> Pike's educative goal of the previous decade had an added urgency among the town's future citizens in the new era of African urban stabilization, a fact singled out in a speech by Governor Twining in 1958:

Unless there are sufficient places in schools for children to occupy they will not only be deprived of the opportunity of education but otherwise might become self-educated in the undisciplined life of the highways and byways of the towns and provide us with yet another problem of gutter-snipes.<sup>92</sup>

With the advent of a policy of urban labour stabilization in the late 1950s, the socialization of future citizens was all the more imperative. As with other aspects of urban growth in Tanganyika, however, the administration was ill equipped to deal with the situation. Leslie estimated that in 1956 there were some 13,000 African children aged between six and fifteen in Dar es Salaam.<sup>93</sup> In the same year there were just 4,500 places at primary school and a mere 560 in middle school.<sup>94</sup> The Tanganyikan government either lacked the resources or chose not to allocate them to urban youth.

Molohan's principal recommendation upon which action *was* taken – the containment of the urban population – indicated an awareness of the weakness of the colonial administration. He counselled that the powers of repatriation should be used extensively against unaccompanied youth in the urban areas.<sup>95</sup> In fact, this merely represented the continuation of government policy. Lacking the power to dissuade Africans from coming to the town through the action of Native Authorities or through propaganda, the urban administration had been targeting so-called 'undesirables' for removal from town since the early 1940s. By the mid 1950s, *wahuni* raids, in which large numbers of Africans were removed from town on the basis of age, lack of formal employment, place of residence and/or criminality, were a regular occurrence.<sup>96</sup> During 1954, for example, 1,230 Africans were repatriated as undesirables.<sup>97</sup> Young Africans represented one of the main targets. In discussing the ordinance which empowered district officials to enforce

<sup>89</sup> Quarterly Police Report, Dsm Dist., 1 Oct.-31 Dec. 1954, TNA/90/1011/Vol.1.

<sup>90</sup> Molohan, *Detribalisation*, para. 104.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* paras. 104 and 143.

<sup>92</sup> Gov. Twining's speech at the opening of Ilala Boma, 20 May 1958, TNA/540/27/11/A. <sup>93</sup> Leslie, *Survey*, 249. <sup>94</sup> Molohan, *Detribalisation*, para. 142.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* para. 106.

<sup>96</sup> See Burton, 'Wahuni', ch. 9.

<sup>97</sup> Quarterly Police Reports in TNA/90/1011/Vol.1; and PAR for 1954, 12.

repatriations in 1952, Page-Jones, the minister for local government, singled out 'natives of an age "which according to native custom should render them subject to control"'.<sup>98</sup> 'The Ordinance', he pointed out:

was introduced in order to give the Administration powers to deal with the problem created by the drift towards towns from tribal areas of Africans, many of them quite young, who are attracted by the prospects of employment and good living, and also of emancipation.

One can only speculate on the proportion of youths that were ejected from the town. It is clear, though, that repatriation was in the end the principal initiative aimed at controlling urban youth.<sup>99</sup>

#### THE CULT OF THE COWBOY

While repatriation policies may have had a positive impact on urban crime, the colonial administration was powerless to prevent the growing independence of African youth. By the time Leslie conducted his survey of Dar es Salaam in 1956, the social, cultural and economic currents that young Africans were exposed to in the capital had resulted in the emergence of a distinctive sub-culture in contradistinction to the position of youth in 'traditional' African society. Perhaps influenced by the hysteria that accompanied the emergence of a rebellious youth culture in the West after the Second World War, Leslie may have overdrawn the picture. However, new forms of identification and association were clearly emerging among youth in Dar es Salaam that had implications for both African and colonial authority. As such, Leslie is worth quoting at length:

In a town like this where most are young or middle-aged, and male, there has grown up... the cult of the cowboy, the African equivalent of the English teddy-boy. The young man from the country, or the young man from the town, soon acquires the idioms of tough speech, the slouch, the walk of the 'dangerous man' of the films; the ever-popular Western films teach him in detail the items of clothes that go with the part... With such an outfit... goes – as with the outfit of the teddy-boy – an attitude of mind; it is the revolt of the adolescent, in age and in culture, against the authority of elders, of the established, of the superior and supercilious. Outré dress is its most innocent form. It often takes others, the almost anti-religious movement of which one still hears echoes, which called itself the *Mabantu*, which challenged the authority of the Sheikhs; the groups and the gangs who occasionally defy administrative authority, and in their lifelong struggle to avoid paying tax are waging an unceasing though usually personal and defensive battle of wits with the *Jumbes* and the police; and rowdyism at dance halls. The cult of cowboy clothes is the safety-valve of the dangerous mob element which is likely always to be part of Dar es Salaam. They are unformed *Hitlerjugend*, as yet, their uniform jeans and wide hat, their march gun-on-hip cowboy slouch, waiting for a *Fuehrer* to give respectability to their longing to be admired, to be feared, to have a place in the sun.<sup>100</sup>

For some colonial officials, these 'unformed *Hitlerjugend*' found their *Fuehrer* in the shape of the TANU leader, Julius Nyerere. In 1957, the Chief

<sup>98</sup> Memo no.68, 6 May 1952, TNA/21616/Vol.III.

<sup>99</sup> The same was true in colonial Ibadan: Heap, 'Jaguda', 342.

<sup>100</sup> Leslie, *Survey*, 112/3.

Secretary complained to Whitehall of ‘the problems of spivs and hooligans in the towns, particularly in Dar es Salaam and Tanga, from whose numbers undoubtedly come the majority of the thug element which so obviously supports TANU’.<sup>101</sup> The same year, Leslie noted a class of ‘hooligans who are as apt to political intimidation as they are to tax evasion, petty thieving or any other town nuisance: but they are only conforming to the norm, and they are neither more nor less loyal to TANU than the more reputable sections of society’.<sup>102</sup> In the end, though, TANU leaders proved less than loyal to their erstwhile allies among disaffected young Africans in the capital. Once British officials had indicated a willingness to cede power, African politicians’ condemnations of the shortcomings of urban youth were as vociferous as those of their colonial predecessors. Indeed, one of the early acts of the ‘responsible’ TANU-dominated government, installed in late 1959, was to introduce schemes aimed at removing un- and under-employed Africans from the capital.<sup>103</sup> TANU politicians were the successors of the African correspondents to *Kwetu*, who bewailed the activities of errant youth, as well as of colonial officials, from whom they inherited the task of asserting control over young Africans who were increasingly disinclined to defer to authority, whether parental or governmental in kind.<sup>104</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Concern about the impact of urbanization among Tanganyikan youth formed part of a wider colonial discourse on social change in African society. Anxieties arising from the erosion of ‘tribal’ customs and constraints were not confined to the urban areas. Rural youth too, were exposed to novel ideas and influences, which undermined the positions of chiefs and African elders that officials were keen to uphold.<sup>105</sup> Developmental aspects of colonial rule thus stimulated tensions throughout African society. As early as 1932, Revd.

<sup>101</sup> C. Sec. to W. A. C. Mathieson, CO, 11 Nov. 1957, PRO/CO/822/1795.

<sup>102</sup> Leslie, *Survey*, 270. <sup>103</sup> See correspondence etc. in PRO/CO/822/2962

<sup>104</sup> Burgess (‘Mobility’) mistakenly credits the activities of the TANU Youth League with the rehabilitation of African youth in the eyes of African elders – a ‘distancing on the part of youth from the taint and stigma of criminality’ – citing the vigilante behaviour of TYL sections in Tanga and elsewhere whose actions were ‘a very public statement of young men’s respect for law and order’. Other evidence challenges this. Susan Geiger (*TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955–1965* [Portsmouth, NH, 1997], 118) quotes one former TANU activist in Moshi, who recalled: ‘Colonialism didn’t particularly harm me, but I knew that independence would remove trash from the town. By trash, I mean people who don’t know how to wash themselves and their clothing and to look after their welfare’. Urban ‘trash’ was as likely to mean young rural immigrants as not. Also, the TANU leadership were themselves increasingly anxious about the urban ‘surplus’ population, and after independence a series of campaigns were launched against the ‘unproductive’ poor. See, for example, *The Nationalist*, 22 Oct. 1964, which reports TYL assistance in the rounding-up of 353 ‘loafers’ in Dar es Salaam. In this respect, the fact that in the late colonial period TYL vigilantes targeted ‘drunks, prostitutes *and the like*’ is telling. (The quote is from the correspondence of the deputy governor cited by Burgess – emphasis added).

<sup>105</sup> In Masasi district, for example, the District Commissioner complained in 1957 of a ‘horde of young ‘spivs’ ... roam[ing] the district like packs of jackals, stealing, scrounging, drinking, and generally making a thorough nuisance of themselves’. Quoted in Burgess, ‘Mobility’.

R. M. Gibbons, a government advisor on 'native affairs', observed that Tanganyika was 'rapidly developing all the Social Problems of *civilised* countries'.<sup>106</sup> However, it was in the towns especially where 'traditional' regulatory mores and customs seemed most under threat.

Equally, concerns over urbanisation and unruly youth in Africa were not simply a product of the colonial situation. They were, as Revd. Gibbons' comment above indicates, informed by earlier responses to these phenomena in western societies.<sup>107</sup> In nineteenth-century Britain, anxiety over the demoralizing impact of the urban environment on the working classes was widespread. Urban youth was seen to be particularly vulnerable. Colonial reactions to similar phenomena in Dar es Salaam were conditioned by metropolitan experience. Imported vocabulary was one indication of this, with officials bemoaning the presence of African 'urchins' and 'spivs' on the streets of Dar es Salaam. In the colonial context, though, the spectre of urbanization was thought all the more threatening, occurring amongst a backward people who were ill-equipped to weather the vicissitudes of town life.

Nevertheless, mass urbanization in Tanganyika, which British officials and African elders disparaged but were in the end powerless to prevent, was a consequence of colonial rule. Dar es Salaam, representing as it did the principal concentration of wealth, of population, and indeed of 'modernity', acted as a magnet (and/or a refuge) to Africans, and especially young Africans, from the surrounding areas. Urban life provided greater independence for African youth, a freedom which led to behaviour disapproved of by their African and European seniors. In Dar es Salaam officials were able to treat the most extreme expressions of this youthful independence, juvenile delinquency, with a certain degree of success through the establishment of an approved school and an urban probation scheme. However, despite stricter labour legislation, an expansion of schooling which tended, if anything, to exacerbate the phenomenon, and – in the last resort – an ever more coercive response to rural–urban migration, the colonial state was unable either to stem the youthful tide entering Dar es Salaam, or to restrict the greater independence of mind which appeared to be resulting from this process.

<sup>106</sup> *Report on Imprisonment*, App.C. Emphasis added.

<sup>107</sup> See Burton, 'Wahuni', 24–8, for a comparison of metropolitan and colonial attitudes to urbanisation. For western responses see also, A. Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820–1940* (Manchester, 1985); G. Stedman-Jones, *Outcast London* (Oxford, 1971); A. Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Harmondsworth, 1968).