

Scouting Frontiers
Youth and the Scout
Movement's First Century

Edited by

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of seriously considering questions body and gender in world history.⁷² In so doing with regard to Scouting, physical culture and bodily health we can see some fascinating patterns regarding notions of manliness, health and citizenship that were common to many parts of the world c. 1900.

⁷² As argued in Antoinette Burton and Tony Ballantyne (eds.), *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).

CHAPTER TEN

THE LIMITS OF SISTERHOOD: THE EVOLUTION OF THE GIRL GUIDE MOVEMENT IN COLONIAL KENYA

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Girl Guiding began in Kenya in 1920 with the establishment of a European company at Nairobi's All Saint's Church. It took fifteen more years for the Kenya Girl Guide Association to sanction Asian (Indian) and African troops.¹ Government officials, mission educators, and social welfare experts understood that there was a risk in promoting African Girl Guiding and Boy Scouting in colonial Kenya. Seeking greater control over the potentially subversive class of young western educated Africans, they aimed to use the two uniformed youth movements to supplement the conventional school curriculum by teaching political obedience, empire loyalty, social conformity, and proper gender relations. At first glance it might appear that there was little risk in promoting African membership in organizations that explicitly renounced politics while still implicitly allying themselves to the British Empire. Yet the very legitimacy, respectability, and egalitarianism that made Guiding and Scouting appealing to young Africans was also potentially subversive. The Fourth Scout Law declared that all Scouts were brothers, while the corresponding Guide law affirmed: "A Guide is a Friend to all, and a Sister to every other Guide, no matter to what Social Class the other belongs."² Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of both Guiding and Scouting, drafted these laws to reduce class tensions in metropolitan Britain. He never imagined that

¹ *East African Standard*, 22 February 1963; Kenya Girl Guide Association Annual Report (AR), Kenya National Archives (KNA), OPE 2/65/2.

² Agnes Baden-Powell and Robert Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides, or How Girls Can Help Build the Empire*, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1912), 38-41.

Africans would seize on them to challenge racial segregation and demand equal status within the empire.

At first, Kenyan officials and educators had only a dim sense of the potentially subversive nature of Baden-Powell's youth movements when they began to actively promote African Guiding and Scouting in the 1930s. However, they did seek to supervise "native" Guide companies and Scout troops as closely as possible to ensure that Africans did not misinterpret the movements' core beliefs or put them to seditious uses. Not surprisingly, the Kenyan authorities paid much more attention to the Scouts than the Guides because they did not believe that African girls could ever constitute a serious threat to the imperial regime. Assuming that "tribal" women exerted an unwholesome influence on Christian men, their primary reason for promoting African Guiding was to ensure that western educated boys would have equally "civilized" wives.

Moreover, it was also difficult to view African schoolgirls as potentially subversive because there simply were so few of them at the advanced level in colonial Kenya. In 1941, there was only one girl in the first year class of thirty-eight boys at Alliance High School (AHS), one of only two African secondary schools in the colony. J. B. Rosie, an Alliance teacher, argued forcefully that the school needed at least thirty to forty girls to be truly co-educational. Angrily objecting to her male colleagues' tendency to characterize African female students as dull and uninteresting, she noted that most arrived unprepared because they had to devote too much time to "domestic science" classes in intermediate schools. Male students did not have a similar obligation, and home economics grades did not count towards admission to Alliance. A committed Guiding enthusiast, Rosie maintained that African girls were the equals of boys if they had sufficient preparation for AHS and that members of the AHS Guide Company and Brownie pack were "full of life and interest."³

The British governmental, mission, and educational authorities' patriarchal assumptions about the limited capacities of African girls led them to give the Girl Guides far greater leeway in adapting their movement to colonial Africa. Consequently, the Kenyan Girl Guide Association (KGGGA) appeared more egalitarian and less obsessed with defending the informal rules and norms that established white privilege in Kenya (more commonly known as the color bar) than its brother Kenya Boy Scout Association (KBSA). Where the Kenyan settler community worried that the well organized and commercially sophisticated South Asian immigrant community threatened their privileged status in the

³ Girls Education Notes by Miss J. B. Rosie, Alliance High School (AHS), 29 July 1941, Church of Scotland Mission Archives, (CSM), ACC 7548/32B.

colony, in 1937 the Kenyan Guide Commissioners granted Indians full and equal membership on the KGGGA's executive committee and local associations. Acknowledging the political repercussions of their position, the commissioners' minutes struck a defiant tone: "The opinion was held by those present that anyone not adhering whole-heartedly to [Asian representation] and objecting to all branches of the Movement being represented on committees such as local associations by the appointment of racial representatives should be asked to resign, as it was strongly felt that such an attitude could only bring harm to the broad view that should be taken by all those connected with the movement in any capacity whatsoever." Similarly, the KGGGA refused to endorse a plan to create segregated youth centers during the Second World War.⁴

Some scholars of Guiding like Janice Brownfoot have taken these sorts of pronouncements as evidence that the movement had a progressive non-racial agenda in advocating the "basic equality of status between men and women everywhere" in addition to its more orthodox commitment to promoting greater opportunities for girls. Brownfoot credits the Guides with "the practical emancipation of many Asian girls and women" in Malaya.⁵ But in Kenya the KGGGA appeared more egalitarian than it actually was.

In Kenya, the informal color bar made European women more privileged and superior to all Africans, regardless of their age, gender, occupation, or social station. Nonetheless, in practice western women still had relatively little freedom or autonomy in colonial society. Excepting the relatively small number of women on settler farms in the "white highlands," most lived a comfortable but circumscribed existence in Nairobi, Mombasa, and a few other semi-urban areas. In addition to the burden of conventional European notions of domesticity, white women in Kenya bore the additional weight of personifying western civilization and racial privilege in a segregated imperial society. Slandering all African men as predatory and sexually ravenous, settlers and government officials insisted that "white women" had to be protected from the African "black

⁴ KGGGA Commissioners Conference Minutes, 2 November 1937, Kenya Girl Guide Association Archives (KGGGA), Commissioners Conference Minute Book, 1937-60; KGGGA Executive Committee Minutes (Excom), 27 October 1942, KGGGA, Minute Book, 1939-43.

⁵ Janice Brownfoot, "Sisters Under the Skin: Imperialism and the Emancipation of Women in Malaya, c. 1891-1941," in *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism*, edited by J. A. Mangan, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 62.

peril." This vicious sexual stereotype thus served the dual role of justifying the color bar and limiting the autonomy of western women.⁶

Consequently, European Girl Guiding was almost exclusively confined to the major churches and a few elite urban bordering schools. While the Guide leadership, which consisted largely of the wives of senior colonial officials, prominent missionaries, and leading businessmen, made emphatic statements about the importance of giving Asian Guides positions of authority, a European woman represented African interests on the their executive committee until the late 1950s. With African servants to take care of their domestic obligations, these women were driven by what Audrey Wipper termed a "spirit of *noblesse oblige*" in expanding Guiding to include elite non-western girls.⁷ Their aim was to promote their vision of "racial understanding," imperial loyalty, and female progress within the safe confines of the movement. However, for most Kenyan Guide officials, inter-racial Guiding meant inviting a few westernized African girls into their fortified and insular world for some non-threatening and carefully supervised social activities.

Integrated Scouting, by comparison, was far more problematical from the standpoint of imperial authority because boys of all backgrounds had more autonomy and responsibility than their female counterparts. This meant that the Kenyan authorities worried that African Boy Scouts would expect to continue to interact with Europeans as equals once they became men. Conversely, women were so universally marginalized in the colony that settler public opinion generally saw no harm in letting European and African girls mix at the occasional tea party or similarly closely supervised domestic activity.

The KGGA's expansion program began slowly and, like the European wing of the movement, was focused almost exclusively on elite schools. The Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) and the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) sponsored the first African companies in 1936 at their mission stations in suburban Nairobi. Lady Brooke-Popham, the Kenyan Colony Commissioner and wife of the governor, personally invested the first eight girls of the 1st Kikuyu Company at the CSM's Kikuyu boarding school. Following the standard Guide template for building a company, these girls then became patrol leaders for new Guides

⁶ Ann Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: the Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth-Century Colonial Cultures," in *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*, edited by Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragone and Patricia Zavella, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 381

⁷ Audrey Wipper, "Equal Rights for Women in Kenya?," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, v. 9 (1971), 440.

as the company grew to twenty-five members. Several years later, the mission sponsored a second "open company" to accommodate more students and girls from the surrounding villages. In 1938, three of Kenya's twenty-three companies were African, which meant that there were roughly sixty African guides in the colony.⁸

One year later, the Kenya Girl Guide Association gained a powerful ally in its push to expand African Guiding when Lady Baden-Powell, the World Chief Guide, took over the chair of the executive committee when she and her husband retired to the colony. Lady Baden-Powell's participation helped overcome lingering opposition to diversifying the movement. An intense controversy in South Africa over whether Africans could become Guides led the Girl Guides International Headquarters to caution against allowing Africans become Guide captains in Kenya. Many prominent settlers were equally resistant to expanding African Guiding, much less giving Africans a leadership role in the movement. Nevertheless, the KGGA insisted that it would be "impossible to keep the native behind completely," and insisted that qualified Africans should be allowed to found and lead Guide companies with proper European supervision.⁹ To their credit, the Kenyan Guide leaders rejected the South African Guide Association's decision to respect the Dominion's strict segregationist laws by creating a separate watered down version of African Guiding. Consequently, there were no significant structural differences between African, Asian, and European Guiding in Kenya.

Yet in practice the KGGA's ambitious plans to establish Guide companies in the colony's mission and government schools floundered on a shortage of adequately trained leaders. The mission teachers who ran the three main African Guide companies lacked the language skills to work with girls who had an imperfect command of English. Even the showpiece 1st Kikuyu Company had to shut down for a time when its founding Captains resigned, and government and education authorities questioned whether it was wise to create more African companies when the Guides lacked the means to oversee them adequately.

Fears that unsupervised Africans might misinterpret or subvert the movement led settler leaders to question the wisdom of expanding it too quickly. The segregationist hawk Olga Watkins, who held a seat the Guide

⁸ Kenya Girl Guide Association, "The History of Guiding in Kenya," KGGA Archives; *Kikuyu News*, no. 134 (March 1938); KGGA Annual Report, 1938, KGGA Annual Reports, 1930-43; KGGA Excom Minutes, 2 December 1941; KGGA Minute Book, 1939-43.

⁹ KGGA Sub-Committee Minutes on Native Girls and Guiding, 2 June 1941, KGGA Minute Book, 1939-43.

council, wanted African companies restricted to towns on the grounds that "tribal chiefs" would exploit companies in the native reserves. But the Kenyan Education Director helped carry the day for expansion by arguing that it was important for African girls to imbibe western conceptions of morality, which he defined subjectively as knowing the difference between right and wrong.¹⁰

The Guide leaders also believed that they could further reduce the risk that Africans might put Guiding to unauthorized uses by adjusting it to accommodate African cultural values. This was in keeping with the adapted native curriculum that the Kenyan authorities based on the African American industrial model of the segregated American south.¹¹ While the KGGG leaders rejected Watkins' push to revise the basic Guide tests to conform to "native lore," they recommended that European Guide captains learn to use African languages in running their companies even if their girls spoke English. In theory, adapting Guiding would allow the movement to co-opt and socialize African girls while respecting the hierarchical racial order of the colony. Furthermore, the executive committee mandated that the KGGG's headquarters in Nairobi must approve and supervise all African companies, which would serve a probationary period of three months before qualifying for full Guide status. It also established that would-be African company captains would be supervised by a European and wait a year before being formally warranted as Guide leaders.¹²

With these protective measures in place by 1941, the KGGG began to approve requests to establish companies at most of Kenya's major girls or co-educational mission schools. There are no comprehensive membership figures for this era, but there were about six or seven African authorized companies in the early 1940s. This produces a rough official tally of 100

¹⁰ KGGG Sub-Committee Minutes on Native Girls and Guiding, 2 June 1941, KGGG Minute Book, 1939-43.

¹¹ For a fuller discussion see: Thomas Jesse Jones, (The African Education Commission), *Education in East Africa (The Phelps-Stokes Report)* (London: Edinburgh House, Press, 1924), 80; Kenneth James King, *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race, Philanthropy and Education in the Southern United States and East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 155-7; Udo Bude, "The Adaptation Concept in British Colonial Education," *Comparative Education*, v. 19 (1983), 344.

¹² KGGG Sub-Committee Minutes on Native Girls and Guiding, 2 June 1941, KGGG Excom Minutes, 4 February 1941, 1 July 1941 and 15 September 1942, KGGG Minute Book, 1939-43.

African Guides.¹³ Most of the Guide association's operating revenue came from a grant from the King George Memorial Fund, but there was little money available for African Guiding. African Local Native Councils provided some resources for Scouting and Guiding, but most companies lacked even the most basic material trappings of the movement. The Guides at the CMS school at Kahuhia were one of the few companies to have complete uniforms, but they borrowed them from the mission because the cost of a full outfit of European clothes was well beyond their means.¹⁴

More significantly, the KGGG vastly over-estimated its ability to supervise African guide companies. Even at the best of times the Guide leadership's reach rarely extended beyond Nairobi and the settled areas in the white highlands. Their administrative authority became even narrower during the Second World War when travel was difficult and many prominent European women joined military auxiliary organizations or shifted their attention to welfare activities for the armed forces. Consequently, many of the KGGG's sanctioned companies collapsed due to lack of leadership and oversight. Occasionally, the Guide authorities had to ask Boy Scout leaders, who were often employed in the colonial administration and thus far more mobile, to look in on remote companies.

Yet this did not mean that African Guiding died out during the war. While many of the companies on the KGGG's formal rolls collapsed, African teachers, politicians, and community leaders seized the opportunity to found their own largely unauthorized Guide companies and Scout troops. Where the colonial authorities looked to the two youth movements to discipline and socialize the potentially dangerous generation coming of age under British imperial rule, Africans found Guiding and Scouting attractive because they offered the means to demand equal rights as civilized people by demonstrating their sophistication and respectability. Sometimes African teachers or community leaders simply took it upon themselves to create their own Guide companies without consulting the KGGG. But in others cases more politically attuned Africans co-opted Guiding and Scouting as part of a calculated rejection of

¹³ List of Companies & Packs, KGGG, April 1943, KGGG Annual Reports, 1930-43.

¹⁴ E. Mary Contrell CMS Kahuhia to DC Fort Hall, 19 November 1941, KNA, DC MUR 3/4/13/23.

adapted "tribal" education and, by implication, their inferior status in colonial society.¹⁵

This was particularly true in the Kikuyu reserves of central Kenya where prosperous and educated communities established their own western-style institutions to mark themselves as a modern people and reject the humiliating and exploitive paternalism of colonial authority. The leaders of this movement recognized that Guide companies and Scout troops would help legitimize these independent businesses, churches, and schools. The Kenyan government regarded this movement with deep suspicion but was powerless to act so long as the independents respected the colony's laws and regulations. The KGGGA was only dimly aware of the subversive potential of the Kikuyu Guiding initiative. Therefore recognized Lois Koinange, a member of the politically connected Koinange family, as the leader of the Kiambaa Company, although they did not grant her a formal warrant as a Guide Captain. Nevertheless, the young Koinange was clearly a capable Guider, and in 1943 her company handily won an African Guide rally in Fort Hall District.¹⁶

The Kiambaa Company was exceptional, and the KGGGA was oblivious to the activities of most of the independents during the Second World War. Petitions to start companies or applications for a captain's warrant offered the only tangible hints of what was taking place in the African reserves. The Guide headquarters seemed particularly bemused with what to do with requests from male African teachers and Scoutmasters for warrants to lead Guide companies that were not on their official rolls. These mixed companies of boys and girls, which violated the strict gender segregation of Scouting and Guiding, suggested that African leaders were not inclined to adhere to the movements' official orthodoxy. The Guide authorities, however, reassured themselves that unauthorized Guiding was the result of simple African ignorance.

In 1944, however, the Guides became more aware of the political implications of independent Guiding when they began to receive applications from Lois and Martha Koinange to start a Guide company at the Githunguri, an independent school the Koinange family hoped to turn into a teacher training college. The Kenyan government made it explicitly clear to the KGGGA that it regarded Githunguri as a direct threat to its monopoly on African educational instruction. The Guide leaders therefore

rejected Martha Koinange's request for a warrant on the grounds that the school was not subject to European supervision and because she had left her previous teaching post at the CMS Kahuhia school without their permission.¹⁷ Yet in blocking Guiding at Githunguri they did not realize that many African teachers and churchmen were busily founding unsanctioned and largely improvised companies in most of the colony's major native reserves regardless of whether they had a warrant or not.

Almost entirely unaware of the scope and implications of independent Guiding in the reserves, the KGGGA returned to its expansionist agenda after the Second World War. The executive committee joined with the Scout leadership in making the case that Scouting and Guiding had a role to play in the new post-war Labour government's ambitious development plans for the African colonies. Under Arthur Creech Jones, a one time socialist critic of British imperialism, the Colonial Office sought to improve agricultural and labor efficiency through a zealously invasive program of social welfare. The Kenyan government initially was only willing to subsidize the Scouts, but the Guide authorities convinced it to provide funding for a professional Guide organizers by arguing their movement played a vital role in promoting "the advancement of African womanhood."¹⁸ Throwing themselves into this transformative project, the KGGGA trained government education and social welfare specialists as Guides and produced articles on Guiding for vernacular language publications aimed at African women. It promoted African agriculture by sponsoring maize growing competitions and helped the East Africa Command start Guide companies in the army barracks to provide "moral education" for African soldiers' daughters.

On paper, these initiatives suggested that African Guiding expanded rapidly in post-war Kenya. But in 1952 the KGGGA had only 884 African Brownies, Guides, and Rangers on its rolls. By comparison, there were almost three thousand African Cub Scouts, Scouts, and Rovers in the colony.¹⁹ Moreover, formal and sanctioned Guiding remained largely confined to elite secondary schools and mission stations. Yet even these recognized companies rarely had the means or opportunity to follow the conventional Guide curriculum. When the Kenyan Guide leaders put on a

¹⁷ KGAA Excom Minutes, 4 February 1941; Sub-Committee Minutes on Native Girls and Guiding, 2 June 1941; Excom Minutes, 5 January 1943, KGGGA Minute Book, 1939-43 & Warrant Application from Martha Koinange, Excom Minutes, 9 May 1944, KGGGA Minute Book, 1943-47.

¹⁸ Guide Colony Commissioner to CSK, 6 December 1946, KNA, AB 14/18/1.

¹⁹ KGGGA Annual General Meeting (AGM), 19 February 1953, KNA, AB 14/18/72; KBSA 1953 Census, KNA, DC KMG 1/1/85.

¹⁵ For a sophisticated discussion of independency see: Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2004), 138-42.

¹⁶ KGGGA Excom Minutes, 27 October 1942, 20 September 1943, KGGGA Minute Book, 1943-47.

demonstration camp for a visiting official from the Guide's international headquarters in 1948, they found to their mild embarrassment that none of the fourteen girls who took part had ever been camping before. The Guide authorities spent a great deal of time debating whether they should water down their rules and requirements to make them more accessible to "tribal" peoples, but in reality the stunted development African Guiding had nothing to do with the mental capacity of African girls. It was an indictment of the sorry state of African education in post-war Kenya.²⁰

Unauthorized Guiding, by comparison, was far more vibrant and energetic. In the Kikuyu reserves, African teachers, churchmen, and community leaders either took over sanctioned companies or flooded the KGGGA with petitions to start new ones. They convinced the association to reduce the probationary period for a warrant by pointing out that potential African Scoutmasters only had to wait a fraction of the time. Some of these Guide leaders were trained by Martha Koinange at Githunguri, who was hardly deterred by the KGGGA's rejection of her appeal to start at a Guide company at the school.²¹

The Guide authorities were generally willing to bend their rules to accommodate such requests, which made them far more open-minded than the Scouts. When they finally became aware of the "lapsed" or "unorthodox" companies operating on their own in the Kikuyu and Embu reserves they had to turn to the Director for Education for information the Kikuyu independent schools. While the KBSA was troubled by unauthorized Kikuyu Scout troops, the Guide executive committee members were inclined to believe that proper supervision was all that was needed to bring their wayward companies back into the movement's orthodox confines. They therefore did not ask the government for help in shutting them down and resolved to ask the Scouts for helping in keeping track of rural African companies.²²

The KGGGA's relatively tolerant stance on independent African Guiding reflected a number of realities in post-war Kenya. First, the Guide leadership genuinely believed its own inclusionist rhetoric and assumed that the independents' deviation from established Guide orthodoxy was simply the result of misunderstanding or ignorance. While this was unquestionably naïve, the elite European women who sat on the executive committee lacked the means and sophistication to keep track of African

²⁰ Treasurer's Report to Excom KGGGA, 3 February 1948, KGGGA Minutes, 1947-8.

²¹ Colony Commissioner to CSK, 6 December 1946, KNA, AB 14/18/1; KGGGA Excom Minutes, 14 March 1950, KGGGA Minute Book, 1947-50.

²² KGGGA Excom Minutes, 15 September 1949, 13 June 1950, 8 August 1950, KGGGA Minute Book, 1947-50.

companies in the reserves. Few spoke an African language fluently, and those who did were often the wives of mission and district administrators who faced regular transfer. It fell to Betty Brooke-Anderson, the Guide's Colony Commissioner, to sound an alarm that the Kikuyu Guide companies had adopted an explicitly anti-imperial and nationalistic tone. She termed this "dangerous propaganda" a potential "source of actual danger and embarrassment."²³

Thus, the Guides stumbled on to the up swell of anger and desperation in the Kikuyu community that erupted into what the British called the Mau Mau Emergency. Nurtured in overcrowded squatter settlements, urban slums, and the Kikuyu independent schools, the revolt erupted in the early 1950s with violent attacks by poor and landless young men on wealthy chiefs and businessmen who were closely allied to the colonial regime. The rebels also murdered white settlers when they could catch them, but in essence Mau Mau was a Kikuyu civil war between the handful of Kikuyu elites who prospered under British and the vast majority of common people who did not.

As with the rest of white Kenya, Mau Mau caught the Guide leadership entirely by surprise. Many of their most committed African members were devout Christians who fell on the "loyalist" side of the conflict. Along with the Scouts they faced harassment and attack by the guerillas and their supporters. Consequently, rural Guiding largely shut down in the early years of the Emergency as committed Guides retreated to fortified government camps for safety. When they did gather for activities or outings it was often under the watchful eye of their armed fathers.²⁴ Yet there is strong evidence that many Guides and Guide leaders also supported the Mau Mau fighters. Risking loyalist attacks and arrest, many Kikuyu, Guides included, played a double game of supporting the government during the day and the rebels at night. Like most imperial authorities, the Guide leaders were only partially aware of the scope of this civil strife and were shocked when the government security forces arrested African Guiders for suspected Mau Mau activities.²⁵

²³ Colony Commissioner KGGGA, to Director of Education, 26 March 1949, KNA, AB/15/9/42.

²⁴ Fort Hall District Training Report, 15-20 September 1952, KGGGA, Colony Trainer Reports, KGG AGM, 19 February 1953; KNA, AB 14/18/72, KGGGA Executive Committee Minutes, 16 February 1956; KGGGA Minute Book, 1955-60.

²⁵ KGGGA Commissioners Conference Minutes, 24 February 1956, Report on Guiding in RVP, February 1956, KGGGA, RVP File, 1953-58; KGGGA AGM, 25 March 1958, KGGGA, National Council Meetings, 1952-63.

Yet the Emergency was also a boon to both the Guide and Scout associations. Promising to help inoculate Kikuyu youth against the infection of Mau Mau, both youth movements won substantial increases in their government subsidies. Not surprisingly, the Scouts won the bulk of these funds, but the KGGGA's three-thousand-pound annual grant finally gave it the means to hire a professional Guide trainer. The Guides also took an active role in the government's campaign to "rehabilitate" the tens of thousands of suspected Mau Mau sympathizers that it detained without trial in fortified villages in the Kikuyu reserves. Capitalizing on the assumption that diehard Kikuyu women were at the core of revolt, the Guide association won additional state support to develop a curriculum for sufficiently reformed inmates of the "family settlement villages" that aimed to transform them from subversives into proper wives and mothers. Similarly, the KGGGA trained female wardens at the infamous Kamiti Prison, where the government locked up the most dangerous Mau Mau suspects, in Guiding.²⁶

In addition to its anti-Mau Mau activities, the KGGGA also lent its support the Kenyan government's attempt to convince more moderate African and Asian leaders to accept a new multi-racial constitution as a substitute for universal suffrage and national self-determination. Granting political representation to communities instead of individuals, the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution and the 1958 Lennox-Boyd Constitution allocated seats in the Legislative Council to Africans, Indians, Arabs, and Europeans based on their level of "civilization." In short, they guaranteed the settlers a safe parliamentary majority. The Guides' vision of inter-racial socialization, as opposed to integration, meshed neatly with the government's multi-racial agenda. The KGGGA had no racially mixed companies, but it sponsored closely supervised rallies and camps that brought African, Asian, and European Guides together. Similarly, the KGGGA's correspondence course for aspiring Guide captains included a lesson entitled "Our Main Races and How to Meet Their Needs." It required candidates to learn about the key religious and social institutions

²⁶ Note on Boy Scouts and Girl Guides by Assistant Secretary Ministry of Education, Labour and Lands, 1 September 1954, KNA, OPE 1/5/64/1; Colony Commissioner to CSK, 30 August 1954, KNA, AB 14/18/78, Mary Shannon to Training Commissioner, 21 April 1955, KGGGA, Commissioner for Training Correspondence; KGGGA AGM, 25 March 1958, KGGGA, National Council Meetings, 1952-63.

of other communities so they could train their Guides to live in a multi-racial society.²⁷

Once again, although the Guide association's close cooperation with the state suggested that official Kenyan Guiding was vibrant and well established, in reality the movement was on the decline in the late 1950s. The KGGGA's annual census showed a steady drop in formal African membership as unauthorized Guiding increased with the relaxation of Mau Mau controls. Most of these unsanctioned companies were not as overtly political as the independent Kikuyu groups of the late 1940s, but they still provoked the Guide leadership by mixing boys and girls and tinkering with the movement's other core beliefs and institutions.²⁸

Even more problematically, the Guide leadership's close connections to the colonial regime meant that they were almost entirely unprepared for the end of the British rule in Kenya. For all of their rhetoric of multi-racial egalitarianism they never gave an African woman a seat on the executive committee until they realized that independence was looming. The KGGGA's foot dragging alienated the very westernized young women who should have been their closest allies. Emma Njonjo, the sister of a future attorney general, was a rising light in Kenyan Guiding during the early 1950s, but the Guide authorities lamented that she became unmanageable after returning from course in Domestic Science at University of Bath in Britain. The Guides concluded that she had been "got at" by anti-imperial groups, but in reality her assertiveness reflected her generation's growing impatience with the paternalism and restrictions of Kenyan colonial society.²⁹

African Guides became even more unwilling to defer to their European superiors in the late 1950s and early 1960s as it became clear that multi-racialism had failed and full independence was imminent. Guide leaders grumbled that their African girls had become "flippant, giggly and inclined to be cheeky." African Guides refused to drill, get of bed on time, or defer to authority. Experienced African Guide leaders like Annabelle

²⁷ Minutes of Overseas Committee, GG, 28 June 1951, PRO CO 859/229/5/50; Commissioners Conference Minutes, 12 February 1954, KGGGA, Commissioners Conference Minute Book, 1937-60; KGGGA Training Certificate Correspondence Courses, n. d., KGGGA, Commissioner for Training Correspondence.

²⁸ KGGGA Executive Committee Minutes, 23 February 1959, KGGGA Minute Book, 1955-60; Rift Valley Guide DC to Colony Commissioner, 31 May 1956 & J. M. Nganga, SM 27th Rift Valley to Colony Secretary KGGGA, 24 January 1958, KGGGA, RVP File, 1953-58.

²⁹ Colony Secretary to Guide DC Embu, 23 January 1953, KGGGA, Embu File, 1955-61.

Kinyanjui who once seemed meek and compliant suddenly became "very uncooperative and not a bit helpful." Stung, European Guide leaders suddenly discovered that their African sisters disliked being called by their first names and asked "why we treat them like children." Even more troubling, African Guides broke the movement's fundamental ban on associating Guiding with political parties by attending election rallies in uniform.³⁰

The Kenya Boy Scout Association faced similar problems, and it appeared that neither youth movement, which were rooted deeply in British imperialism, would survive the transfer of power. Yet the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts thrived in post-independence Kenya. This was due in part to Baden-Powell's emphasis that both movements had to support the established political order. African majority rule largely came as a shock to the Guider leadership, but those that remained in Kenya deftly gave way to the same young African women who had seemed so cheeky and ungrateful just a few years earlier. African Guiders, for their part, were happy to take control of the movement. Just as they Africanized other colonial institutions like the *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (Women's Progress) organization, the Red Cross, and the Young Women's Christian Association, they recognized the Guide movement's usefulness in supporting their demands for a role in the male-dominated process of nation building.³¹ Guiding thus retained its elite status in the early days of independence, but the demise of the colonial regime and its implicit color bar finally allowed the association to live up to its egalitarian rhetoric in the succeeding decades by becoming a truly popular movement.

³⁰ Guide DC Kabete, Report on Limuru Camp, January 1959, KGGA, Kiambu File, 1952-62; Colony Commissioner to Guide DC Nyeri, 23 January 1960, KGGA, Nyeri File, 1956-63; Guide DC Kiambu to Colony Secretary, 28 January 1960 and 27 September 1960, KGGA, Kiambu File, 1952-62; Colony Commissioner to Ministry of Education, 2 October 1961, KNA, MK 2/1/166.

³¹ Wipper, "Equal Rights for Women in Kenya?" 431-2.

SECTION III: EVOLVING FRONTIERS