SECURITY ESTABLISHMENTS: THE MAKING OF GILGIL TOWN 1897-1970

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Abstract

Gilgil town in Nakuru County, Kenya is often viewed as one of the towns that developed as a result of Kenya-Uganda railway. Its development however, started in 1897 with the camping of an Indian military contingent in the area. Most scholars premise the development of Gilgil town to the construction of Kenya-Uganda railway. This paper therefore analyses the neglected role played by the security establishments in the rise and development of Gilgil town.

Keywords: Indian contingents, 1st and 2nd World War, Jews detention camp, Mau Mau Uprising, National Youth Service and Anti-Stock Theft Unit.

Introduction

This study interrogates security establishments and the rise and development of Gilgil town. The presence of security personnel in the area started with the temporary camping of an Indian military contingent in 1897. Since then, the number of security personnel in the town continued to grow especially with the establishment of permanent military barracks and other security bases. During the First and the Second World War, Gilgil town served as a major staging ground for the African soldiers. This increased the population of military personnel in the town. The population increase in turn led to increased commercial activities in the urban centre in a bid to address the growing need for goods and services. Further, the growing population triggered the need for modern facilities such as hospitals, schools, and tarmacked roads. The setting up of a Jews detention camp in Gilgil town in 1946 placed the town in the world map especially with the internationally reported escape of six Jews detainees from the maximum security facility. The Mau Mau uprising of the late 1940s also played a major role in the development of the Gilgil. African ‘Askaris’ and British soldiers ‘Majoni’ jointly deployed to rout out Mau Mau fighters in Aberdare forest were stationed in the town from
where they launched short and long range military expeditions against the outfit. After independence, a National Youth Service College and a Kenya Police Service’s Anti Stock Theft Unit were established in Gilgil. The two security establishments and the military barracks have played a central role in the development of Gilgil town. Comprehending the role played by security establishments in the rise and development of Gilgil, will make it possible to understand that the town’s continuity is pegged on the presence of the said institutions.

**Indian Military Contingent**

The rise of Gilgil town can be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century. In 1897, about 400 Indian soldiers established a temporary camp at Gilgil. Earlier on, the contingent had been deployed as a part of a force that was in charge of suppressing an uprising led by Mohammed Ahmad Ibin Abdalla that revolted against a European sponsored Egyptian administration in the Sudan. Mohammad Ahmad Ibin Abdalla preached renewal of Muslim faith and began to attract a large following. He advocated for the liberation of the Sudan from the Egyptian administration and soon proclaimed himself the *Mahdi* (the promised redeemer of the Islamic world). The Egyptian administration concerned by the scale of the Mahdist uprising assembled a force of 4,000 soldiers to suppress it. The Egyptian troops were not only defeated but also lost weaponry and ammunitions to the rebels.¹

Over time, European powers became increasingly aware of the situation in the Sudan. They therefore, resolved to directly support the Egyptian administration in the Sudan. Britain contributed a multinational force which was put under an Indian commander William Hicks and twelve other European officers. Deriving their war aspirations from religious themes, the Mahdist rebels once again won victory against the multinational force. After this defeat, British advised the Egyptian government to withdraw and hand over power to the Mahdist. Egypt agreed and Charles Gordon – a British commander – was sent to the Sudan to coordinate the withdrawal. Gordon was unfortunately besieged in Khartoum in 1885, forcing the British to send an expeditionary force under Lieutenant General Sir Gerald Grahames. This expeditionary force included an Indian contingent.²

In 1896, the Mahdist was finally subdued. Eager to use the Indian contingent for its expansionist agenda in East Africa, the British had it moved south. – India was a British colony at the time and therefore Britain used Indian soldiers to safe guard its interests within
its’ sphere of influence. – The contingent eventually camped in the present-day Gilgil area. The contingent commander must have considered a number of factors that were vital for military camping before setting up the camp. For instance, geographical factors such as land forms, vegetation, soil type, air moisture content as well as the availability of water and vast infantry training area. The camping marked the beginning of the security establishments’ presence in Gilgil town. When the railway line reached Gilgil area, Indian traders following the railway workers opted to settle there since they felt more secure with their homeland troops in the vicinity. The traders also saw the troops as a ready market for their goods and services.

The Indian contingent was later taken in as a protective force for the British Protectorate in Uganda. In 1902, the Eastern Province of Uganda was transferred to British East Africa Protectorate which later became known as Kenya Colony. Following this development, Africans were recruited to beef up the Indian contingent. Approximately 1,050 African Askaris were recruited and some were trained in the Gilgil camp. This saw the number of military personnel increase in Gilgil area prompting development of a trading centre.

Gilgil and the First World War.

The First World War (WWI) also called Great World War was a global war which originated in Europe and spread to other parts of the world. The war lasted for four years, it begun on 28 July 1914 and ended on 11 November 1918. During the war more than seventy million military personnel were mobilised.³

At the beginning of the war, a number of Africans encouraged by the prospect of a modest income volunteered to take part in the war. However, from 1915, the colonial authority began to conscript thousands of able bodied African men. South African and Namibian soldiers fought alongside the white soldiers in Belgium, France and Pakistan. In Africa, British and French troops prepared to seize the four German colonies; Germany East Africa, Germany South West Africa, Togoland, and Cameroon. The Germany East Africa troops sought to disrupt transport in British East Africa especially the railway. More than 200,000 Eastern Africans participated in the war as both soldiers and porters in the two warring sides.⁴

Gilgil served as a staging ground for both white and African soldiers en-route to the German East Africa. Later it became a recruiting and training centre for the Kenya African Rifle (KAR) during the war. Prisoners of war (POW) especially the Italians were also incarcerated in a Gilgil military facility. At the end of the war Gilgil became a final resting place for
combatants who paid the ultimate price. Gilgil Common Wealth War Cemetery (GCWWC) contains a total of thirty four burials of the war. Generally the First World War increased the population of Gilgil town. Soldiers en-route to the battle fronts created business opportunities to the local mercantile. The POWs were used to construct government buildings; they were particularly instrumental in construction of permanent military barracks. The GCWWC has remained a peculiar tourist attraction site that receives both international and local tourists throughout the year.5

Gilgil and the Second World War.

When the First World War came to an end, the Germany, Russian, Austria-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires ceased to exist. National borders were redrawn and a number of independent countries were restored or created. Germany’s colonies were divided among the allied Nations. Further, the League of Nations was formed to serve as a platform to preventing re-occurrence of a global conflict. The League’s efforts, however failed due to a number of reasons among them; an economic depression which renewed European nationalism, weakened member states, and the Germany feeling of humiliation which led to the rise of Nazism. These conditions laid the ground for the Second World War.

The Second World War (WWII) involved more than thirty countries and resulted to more than fifty million military and civilians deaths. It was sparked by Adolf Hitler’s invasion of Poland in September 1939 an action that made Great Britain and France to declare war on Germany. The conflict pitted allied nations against the axis nations. The allied nations involved close to fifty nations – notably Britain, France, Soviet Union, China, and United States of America. On the other hand the Axis nations included mainly Germany, Italy and Japan. The war was not only fought in Europe but also all over the world where the allied and the axis nations had interests. At the end of the six years war, millions of people were homeless, the European economy collapsed and wanton destruction had accrued across the world.6

United Kingdom (UK) declared war against Germany at a time when it controlled to varying degrees many crown colonies and protectorates across the world. It also maintained political ties with independent dominions as part of the British Commonwealth. The UK involved these colonies and protectorates in mobilization of troops as well as production of food for their soldiers. African, Indian, the Caribbean’s Island and other colonial combatants and non-combatants played a crucial role in supporting the allied course in the war. British colonies in
Africa such as Nigeria, Kenya, Gold Coast (now Ghana), Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Gambia served as staging posts and military bases during the war. The British territories contributed both manpower and other materials to Allied Forces. Kenya for example, contributed a significant number of soldiers to fight alongside the British army. The soldiers served in Madagascar and Burma against the Japanese.\textsuperscript{7} The Kenyan colony produced cereals particularly maize and wheat in a bid to meet the war’s food demands.\textsuperscript{8}

Over four million non-white men were mobilised into the European armies during the WWII in both combatant and non-combatant role. The colony of Kenya was one of the most important mobilisation, recruiting, and training centres for the soldiers in East Africa. The involvement of the British Colony of Kenya in the war began with the declaration of war on Germany and Italy by the British Empire in September 1939. The colony bordered Italian East Africa to the north. It was feared that the Italians army would advance into Kenya as it had done in British Somaliland. In 1940, the British began to mobilise soldiers and therefore large numbers of soldiers began to arrive in Kenya. Kenyan colony in effect served as a staging ground for the allied forces designated to dislodge Italy out of Ethiopia and Somalia.\textsuperscript{9}

For instance, in August 1944, the 11\textsuperscript{th} East African Division converged at Gilgil barracks for months from where they were moved to Embakasi, Nairobi, and eventually airlifted to Burma for military campaigns against the Japannese.\textsuperscript{10}

Nanyuki, Nairobi, and Gilgil became an important military centre during and after WWII. Gilgil was not only a recruitment and a training centre for soldiers but also an important detention area for prisoners of war (POWs). POWs from Somaliland and Ethiopia were detained at Gilgil, Naivasha, Nyeri and Londiani. Most of the detainees were Italians soldiers who engaged the British Army in Moyale and Kismayu. Gilgil detention camp number 353 held close to 250 detained soldiers, some of whom possessed various technical skills.\textsuperscript{11}

Soldier-detainees therefore, provided both skilled and unskilled labour for civil infrastructural projects in Gilgil town. Most importantly, they constructed permanent bridges over Malewa and Moridat rivers which are still in use though they have been refurbished. They also constructed gravelled roads and bituminized drill parade grounds in Gilgil barracks.\textsuperscript{12} It can therefore be correctly argued that POWs contributed to the development of Gilgil town especially in the construction of infrastructure that formed the base for the current one. POWs were in the hands of the military and therefore by extension their contribution can rightly be credited to the security establishments.
After WWII Gilgil town became an important British post-war demobilisation centre. The centre hosted a number of KAR soldiers, especially those who had fought in South-East Asia. These soldiers, while awaiting demobilization, made the town’s commercial activities to increase. Gilgil also became a final resting place for soldiers who paid the ultimate price in the Second World War. GCWWC contains 224 burial of WWII. The cemetery has become an important tourist attraction site, especially for families and friends of soldiers interred there.

**Gilgil Military Internment Camp**

The League of Nation as discussed earlier in this paper was put in place after the WWI to peacefully solve disputes involving nations in bid to avert a worldwide conflict. Between 1920 and 1948 Palestine, an area under contestation by both Jews and Arabs, was put under British civil administration by the body. This was to serve as a temporary measure as the solution to conflict was being addressed. Majority of Jews detested the body’s mandate viewing it as a move to handover their ancestral land to Palestinian Arabs. Consequently, underground movements sprung up particularly from the Irgun, Lehi and Haganah Jewish religious sects. These movements employed guerrilla tactics against the British forces implementing the mandate leading to loss of lives and property. To counter the underground religious movements, the British administration in Palestine established a concentration camp known as Latroun. In this camp, Jew suspected to have terrorists affiliations, especially Irgun and Lehi fighters, were incarcerated without trial. After several successful escapes from the Latroun detention camp, the British Palestine administration decided to deport underground movement members to Africa, believing that the deportation would serve as a strong admonition to moderate Jewish forces.

Two hundred and ninety one detainees in the Latroun camp were deported to Africa in a British military operation dubbed ‘Operation Snowball’. First the detainees were held in Sembel internment camp in Eritrea, but after a series of successful escapes, they were transferred to Carthage detention camp in the Sudan. In this camp, they also repeatedly escaped and therefore in 2 March1947, they were relocated to Gilgil military internment camp number 119. Gilgil camp was initially a maximum security prison for soldiers – serving long sentences for criminal offences – and Italian POWs. Gilgil detention camp being a maximum security facility was an ideal incarceration centre for Jewish detainees. Overtime, British soldiers administrating the internment camp resented the detainees’ heavy demands and therefore allowed the Hebrew community in Kenya, then numbering about 150 families,
to assist their fellow countrymen. The community established a resource centre where detainees were taught different skills - especially designs and decorations in a bid to keep them occupied. The community also encouraged detainees to engage in diverse Jewish cultural and religious activities.\textsuperscript{17}

At Gilgil detention camp, the colonial government took drastic measure to avoid escapes as those witnessed in Sambel and Carthage detention camps. The first measure was to keep detainees busy by offering them vocational and educational courses of their choice. Lectures on literature and natural science were also given to the whole group. The second measure taken by the British was to increase the number of military personnel in the town while decreasing civilian population in what came to be called ‘Keeping Gilgil Military’. For instance, a camp to be occupied by Rifles Guard Company was constructed around the internment camp as well as a police station to the east of the camp. Farms surrounding the town were allocated to Europeans settlers with a history of military service. This was aimed at consolidating security around the town and its environs. However, six internees led by Yaakov Maridor escaped the facility with the help of a South African Jewish rabbi. This escape was reported in leading international media houses among them the \textit{Daily Mail} of England. The much publicised incident put Gilgil town in the international lime light.\textsuperscript{18}

The location of the detention camp in Gilgil made the town important not only in the eyes of the government of the Kenyan colony but also to the United Kingdom. Due to the security reasons, almost all the staff in the detention camps were Britons. A letter dated 27 Sept 1947 written by the special camp commandant to the commissioner of police indicates that the total number of British staff in the camp was thirty.\textsuperscript{19} As an institution, the camp influenced development of Gilgil town for instance; it brought with it more people who depended on commercial activities taking place in the town.

On 12 July 1948, the Jewish exile in Africa officially ended when 262 detainees from Gilgil camp reached Israel territorial waters following the establishment of the State of Israel by the United Nations. The resource centre and classrooms used by Jewish detainees for lectures and practical lessons were surrendered by the military to the provincial administration in Gilgil town and converted to a civilian dispensary. This dispensary grew into a health and eventually became Gilgil sub-county hospital and regional psychiatric centre.\textsuperscript{20}
Mau Mau Uprising

The colonial administration spoke openly of land being its primary interest in Kenya. The chairperson of British East Africa commission once said:

“Kenya had some of the best agricultural land in the world, mostly in the districts where elevation and climate made it possible for Europeans to reside even permanently.”

In the same note, the deputy to the secretary of State for the colonies showed the value Europeans placed on Kenyan land when he stated on 19 March 1945:

“The principal item in the natural resources of Kenya is land, and in this term we include the colony’s mineral resource. It seems to us that our major objective must clearly be the preservation and wise use of this most important asset.”

The colonial authority therefore, introduced settler and corporate productions as the mainstay of the colonial economy. The government forcibly seized land, livestock and other indigenous means of production from certain regions, communities and households on behalf of the settlers. In addition, the colonial authority sought to create, mobilise, and control supply of African labour for capital. The Crown Land Ordinance at first recognised “native rights” in land reserved for the Africans but it was further defined by the creation of “African Reserves” for each of the Kenya’s “tribes” leaving the white highlands for the Europeans. The white highlands consisted of large parts of Kiambu and Murang’a as well areas further north around Nyeri and Nanyuki, and great tracks of land in the Rift Valley.

The Kenyan Africans particularly the Kikuyu ethnic community felt disposed and violated by the colonial government when it began to seize their land. This set the stage for African revolt against the white minority rule which lasted from 1952 to 1960.

By 1945, nationalists such as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya Africa Union (KAU) had been pressuring the British government for political rights and land reforms. When the British government failed to respond, radical activist within KAU formed a militant wing. This militant wing called itself “Land and Freedom Army” but the colonial government identified it as “Mau Mau”. Its own description summarised its principal causes, which were both economic and political. Scarcity of land, especially in central province remained one of its major grievances. The attainment of fertile land was therefore a major objective of the revolt.

The movement was bound by an oath to force the expulsion of white settlers from Kenya. WWII veterans played a significant role in the uprising. The veterans besides demystifying the notion that the whites were a superior race, they taught the militants battle
tactics and weapon handling. Those among them, who were literate, kept the movements records.

In early 1950s, Mau Mau began to wage war against European settlers in their farms—particularly those near the forest edges. The movement which mainly operated from the safety of Mount Kenya and Aberdare’s forest, employed guerrilla tactics against Europeans and therefore they attacked mostly at night. The group targeted isolated white settlers farms imposing immense loss in terms of crops and livestock. The uprising led to death of notable European settlers. This led to an intense campaign by the British government to capture the ‘rebels’. For instance in Gilgil two well-known European settlers (Charles Fergusson and Richard Bingley) were killed. This was followed by a thorough search of weapons on the town’s business premises where 76,748 rounds of mixed ammunition and two pistols were recovered in the premises of an Indian trader.

Mau Mau actions were mainly concentrated in the then Central Province and parts of the Rift Valley because white highlands were hived from the two provinces. Oath-taking sessions began to be reported in Central Province and parts of the Rift Valley as well as in urban centres. After serious outbreaks of disorder among the Kikuyu community, which culminated in the killing of Senior Chief Waruhiu, the Governor declared a state of emergency on 20 October 1952. The colonial government tasked KAR (the colonial government army), British soldiers, and the home guards to neutralise the movement. The government at the same time banned political parties and detained their leaders.

The British government mobilised its military and rapidly moved in to occupy territories thought to have the highest concentration of Mau Mau activities. Several battalions of KAR were mobilised to deal with the Mau Mau uprising. For instance, three battalions of KAR were recalled from Uganda, Tanganyika and Mauritius. In total, five KAR battalions were mobilised to deal with the revolt. Most of these battalions camped in Gilgil and Nanyuki from where they were routinely deployed to the primary zones of Mau Mau operations such the Aberdare (Nyandarua) range and the forests around Mount Kenya. To beef up KAR, a King’s Regiment which was formed in 1948 in Britain was sent to Kenya in 1952 for its first overseas mission. Elements of the regiment Christened ‘The Black Watch’ were based in Gilgil until 1961 when they moved to Nairobi. While at Gilgil, the regiment was tasked to rout out the African fighters who operated in the then dense Aberdare forest. The campaign against Mau Mau lasted for four years while the state of emergency continued up to 1960.
The high concentration of military personnel in the Gilgil town during Mau Mau campaign and the emergency period influenced the town’s development in terms of increased commercial activities as well as physical buildings in the barracks. The peaceful environment that came with presence of security personnel made the business community to continue investing in the town’s commercial sector despite the state of emergency. This was not happening in many urban centres due to uncertainty brought about by the uprising.

Establishment of National Youth Service College (NYS)

NYS was established by an act of Parliament (Cap 208 Laws of Kenya) on 1st September 1964. Its establishment was aimed at helping youths to discover and develop their potential. The service therefore endeavoured to create a pool of skilled, disciplined and organised human resource to undertake national development programmes. It also aimed at alleviating youth unemployment in both the formal and informal sectors by providing skills necessary for employment.31

The first NYS institution, Gilgil Field Unit, was established at Gilgil in a former British military camp called Giffard. The Field Unit changed into a training college in 1968 as evidenced by a letter written by the unit to the director of NYS on 23 September 1968.32 NYS recruits drawn from all over the country undergo five to seven months basic training at the College in Gilgil. Basic training mainly involves physical exercises, parade drills and a paramilitary programme. Correspondence exchanged between Gilgil field Unit’s administration and the Director of NYS indicates the numbers of recruits trained increased gradually. For instance, the number rose from 500 to 700 in 1966 and 700 to 880 in 1977.33

After basic training, the NYS graduates are deployed to various outposts in the country for a two year service to the nation before taking courses in various technical fields. These technical courses offered in different NYS schools range from basic artisan level to diploma. The courses include Hospitality, Fashion, Enterprise and Technology, Building and Construction, Engineering, and Driving.

Apart from being the only college that offers basic training for NYS recruits, the Gilgil facility is home to two Schools: one for hospitality and another for construction. The duration of each course depends on its curriculum: diploma courses take three years, certificate ones take two years while the artisan ones take a year. Gilgil NYS College therefore has personnel throughout the year. It also has a substantial number of employees who make sure the college undertakes its mandate as required.34
Like both military and police personnel, civilian and uniformed NYS staff alike have immensely contributed to the development of Gilgil town. Apart from consuming the town’s goods and services they have also bought and developed plots. For instance, Ngomongo Estate in Gilgil town is mainly owned and occupied by NYS staff.

NYS as an institution has played a major role in the development of Gilgil town. For instance, some of its supplies are drawn from the town, especially perishable goods such as vegetable, fruits and meat. More so, parts of its supply contracts are reserved for local people in the spirit of giving back to society which hosts a corporate firm or an institution. A letter from County Education office to the Director of NYS shows that Gilgil Training College donated ten acres of land for construction of a primary school. This school is funded and run by NYS and enrolls pupils from the local area without discrimination. No special preference is given to children belonging to NYS personnel or their relatives. Recently, a day secondary school funded by NYS has been established. The clientele of the secondary school is similar to that of the primary school.

NYS servicemen in collaboration with Gilgil town community youth organisations have initiated various projects for the community. To ensure food security for town residents, urban agriculture sacks have been set up to facilitate growing of vegetables, especially kales, tomatoes, and onions. Several fish tanks have also been constructed to supplement the residents’ diet. NYS routinely engages in leveling of access roads and pathways in and around the town. The NYS is also involved in vector control activities in residential areas in a bid to ensure disease free zones. These activities have helped to reduce malaria and other vector borne disease among the residents.

NYS Gilgil has a disaster response unit. For instance, in case of a fire incidence in the town, NYS firefighters respond fast with their fire extinguishers and other fire fighting-equipment. Their ambulances are also at the disposal of the town residents, particularly during emergencies. NYS trainees also conduct disaster response and other basic life skills workshops and seminars. The forums are largely aimed at enlightening the local people on disaster preparedness. NYS employees and trainees have been donating blood yearly to the local government hospital. The fore mentioned activities are a clear testimony that NYS has directly and indirectly influenced the development of Gilgil town to almost the same extent as their KDF and NPS counterparts.
Establishment of Anti Stock Theft Unit (ASTU)

Accumulation of livestock in traditional African pastoral societies made sense because it was the most important form of saving. The larger the herd of cattle one possessed, the more he was able to cope with emergencies without seriously depleting the size of the herd. The value placed on livestock led to cattle raids, where pastoral communities attacked each other so as to increase the numbers of their livestock. Traditionally, cattle raiding were cultural practices which were regarded as a sport among the pastoralists. The raids were controlled and sanctioned by elders and were conducted using sticks, spears, bows, arrows and clubs. Raiding was glorified in pastoral communities and distinguished raiders were heroes who were respected by their peers and their community generally. Raids were staged as a means of reciprocity for poor families to acquire livestock and restock, particularly after droughts or epidemics. Sometimes animals accrued were used as bride price. This enabled young men who were ready for marriage to raise enough cattle to pay bride price, which ranged from 50 to 100 head of cattle.

European settlers had to deal with livestock raids, especially where local people eyed their livestock. Ethnic boundaries were entrenched and thus inhibited pastoralists’ territorial expansion as well as crossing over to another community’s reserved area. A good number of European settlers had a military background, and were therefore able to protect their livestock from raiders. They also employed Africans as livestock herders and in some instances armed them with guns.

After independence, cattle raids intensified especially with the illegal acquisition of modern firearms. Over time cattle raids ceased from being a cultural practise and became economic activities that involved commercialization of stolen animals with players from outside the pastoralist system. Rustling turned into a form of organised crime where a community forcefully raids another using guns leaving behind wanton destruction of property and loss of lives. The rising demand for meat in urban areas contributed to increase of livestock rustling. As a result Kenya Police Service (KPS) established a unit initially called Stock Theft Unit (STU) in 1967, through an act of parliament. The unit was stationed in Gilgil and to fight the cattle rustling menace among pastoral communities. STU was later renamed Anti-Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) possibly to correspond with the task the unit was undertaking. KPS is divided into several formations dealing with specific tasks. ASTU was established as a special police unit charged with the responsibility of fighting livestock rustling and related crimes. Apart from being a specialised rapid response unit that tracks cattle rustlers, ASTU is
also a paramilitary outfit that can be deployed during civil disorder and multi-agency armed forces campaigns. Initially the unit shared the same compound with 5 KAR. From Gilgil, the unit could easily deploy to cattle rustling hotspots such as Isiolo, Turkana, Baringo, Samburu, Pokot, and Elgeyo Marakwet districts among others. Paxton Donald – the first commandant of ASTU – led the unit from 1967 to 1973.

In 1969, the government bought a 200-acre piece of land from a white settler, Carllight, who was a dairy farmer. ASTU was then relocated to this expansive area and permanent buildings were built. The first phase of permanent buildings was put up by Tara Singh Sohan Singh in 1970. The expansive land allows para-military training as well as training in horse riding. The land also serves as a centre for breeding horses which are used specifically for police related duties such as crowd control. On the other hand, since 1988, ASTU has been organising an annual horse competition. The competition is a three day event that attracts horse lovers from all over the country. The event also attracts both local and foreign tourists. Tourist firms have picked the event as a major item in their calendar and usually advise their clients to visit the country during the event. The event includes horse jumping, cross country, and rifle range competition.

KPS personnel have served in United Nations Peace Operations (UNPOs) duties since 1989. The slots for UN missions are distributed equally in all KPS departments, and therefore a number of ASTU officers have served in these foreign missions. On coming back home, a number of them invest in Gilgil area. For instance, Teachers Estate is situated between ASTU and Kenyatta Barracks; the 2000 plots measuring 50x100 feet initially owned by Nakuru Teachers Housing Cooperative have been bought and developed by police and military personnel. This Estate has greatly influenced the population as well as development of Gilgil town.

ASTU has initiated several projects aimed at inculcating a good relationship with the host community. The unit administers two major academic institutions in Gilgil town: Utumishi Primary School and Utumishi Academy High School. The two institutions were specifically tailored to cater for education needs of the children of police personnel. This is why they are located inside a security camp. Unlike civilian parents, uniformed parents can be deployed away from their families for several months. At such time their children, need close supervision by the KPS. The primary school which is both day and boarding enrol students from all over the country. It enrolls children of both service personnel and civilian in a ratio of 70:30. The primary day section is offers educational services to children from the local
population. The high school is a national institution which admits students from all over the country in a similar ratio to that of the primary school. Both institutions employ most of their support staff from the local community. They also buy their supplies and services from Gilgil town and hence contribute significantly to the economic growth of the town. On the other hand, ASTU’s dispensary offers medical services to the local community. For instance, in 1980, a new out-patient wing was opened in the ASTU dispensary to specifically cater for civilians living nearby. The diagnosis and curative wing receives 300 to 400 patients weekly. The unit has also designated an area where town residents can fetch chlorinated water using water bowsers especially during dry seasons. In a bid to perform its secondary role as a security establishment, ASTU supports civil authorities in maintenance of law and order in the town and also assists during disasters. This has made Gilgil town a secure and peaceful environment suitable for investment. The town has therefore attracted wide range of investors.\textsuperscript{44}

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the centrality of security establishments in the rise and development of Gilgil town. Although no singular factor can be wholly attributed to the rise and development of a town, the study has established that security establishments have played a key role in the rise and development of Gilgil town. To start with, it is the Indian military contingent that first established a temporary camp in Gilgil area and thus opening the area for urban settlement. Indian traders following the railway workers opted to settle there since they felt more secure with their homeland troops in the vicinity. The traders also saw the troops as a ready market for their products. Secondly, the First and Second World War saw the number of military personnel increase in Gilgil area. During the two global wars, Gilgil was not only a mobilisation, training and staging centre but also a choice detention camp for POWs. After the two wars, Gilgil became not only a demobilisation centre but also a final resting place for the soldiers who paid the ultimate price. Thirdly, both the military incarceration camp and the Mau Mau uprising also made the population of security personnel increase in Gilgil town. This in effect meant more demand for goods and services which translates to an increase in commercial activities and hence the development of the town. Fourthly, the establishment of ASTU and NYSC in Gilgil town after independence further increased the population of uniformed personnel. The two security institutions not only depended on the town for their supplies but also initiated a number of programmes aimed at
developing the town. From the foregoing it can rightly be argued that military being the first to establish a footing in Gilgil, opened the area for modern settlement. The continued presence of several security establishments in the town – for over a century now – plays the main role in the development of the town. The stand taken in this paper is that without security establishments the development of Gilgil town would not have attained its present status. Security establishments therefore not only stand as the most conspicuous landmarks in Gilgil town but also serve as important economic bastions.

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