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THE ORIGINS OF MAU MAU

D. W. THROUP

The Second World War transformed the economic and political situation throughout Britain’s African colonies.1 This was particularly true in the settler colonies of East and Central Africa, where the economic depression of the 1930s had severely shaken the confidence of the local European communities as the prices they received for their agricultural products plummeted and the terms of trade moved sharply against them. In Kenya, the colonial government had attempted to preserve the fiscal basis of the colonial state by encouraging Africans, for the first time since before 1914, to increase their production for the export market. With lower production costs, unfettered by heavy mortgage debts to the commercial banks, for a short period in the late 1930s African peasant production had appeared to be essential to the economic survival of Kenya. The depression caused the Kenya Government to question the unquestionable, and to ponder whether Kenya really was a ‘White Man’s Country’, as the settlers had so confidently proclaimed. Governor Byrne was keen to promote African interests. The Agricultural and Veterinary departments, which had been concentrated in the settler enclave of the White Highlands, began to operate in the African reserves and experimented with the introduction of more remunerative cash crops, such as coffee, on closely supervised African plots.2

The outbreak of war slowed the pace of this restructuring of the political economy of Kenya. Financially, settler agriculture prospered as never before from the increased demand for their agricultural exports. By 1942 a major transformation had occurred in the world economy, ending the long years of restricted demand for East Africa’s exports and marking the

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beginning of a new era of commodity shortages. Even the domestic market expanded as eighty thousand Italian prisoners of war, captured in Ethiopia, and Polish refugees were billeted in Kenya, while allied troops in the Middle East were fed Kenya wheat, maize and vegetables. The Japanese advance into the Philippines and Java benefited the sisal plantations, Kenya's single most important export crop, by disrupting allied supplies of hard fibres, reducing the quantities available to Britain and the United States from 530,000 tons to 245,000—half of which came from East Africa.3

European prosperity was ensured by the preferential terms guaranteed by the settler-dominated Agricultural Production and Settlement Board, which organized the war economy to benefit European farming interests. The high, guaranteed price for settler produced maize and the new breaking and clearing grants paid to those farmers, who increased their cereal cultivation, produced a dramatic expansion of the acreage of maize cultivated on European land from 80,000 in 1941 to 131,563 at the end of the war, while wheat production rose from 103,000 to 184,500 acres over the same four years.4

The war also brought major political gains for the settlers. One-third of the Administration was absorbed into the armed forces and a mere skeletal force was left in charge. The Kenya Administration had already suffered a decade of severe retrenchment, falling from a force of 136 in 1930 to 112 nine years later. After the new intake of 1932, no one else was recruited for the next three years.5 With the outbreak of war and the military calls upon an already stretched administrative cadre, the Kenya government had to fall back on the utilization of settler manpower within the state apparatus and the incorporation of settler bodies such as the Kenya Farmers' Association as legitimate 'governing institutions' within the colonial state. This was especially true in the economic sector. While only Colonial Service officers could be entrusted to police the reserves, the settlers were, after all, adept in commercial dealings and farming and could, therefore, be trusted to operate the war economy.

It was because of this retreat from the citadels of power by the Colonial Service that the settlers were able by 1945 to become so much more powerful than they had been before the war. It was in the political and constitutional effects of the war that, in the short term, the Europeans found their greatest advantage. The economic consequences of high commodity

prices benefited Africans almost as much as Europeans. The reason why Kenya was to prove almost impossible to control during Mitchell’s governorship was that during the war the settlers had come to occupy crucial positions within the colonial state and it was virtually impossible to dislodge them from these newly secured redoubts.

Mitchell’s Failure to recoup Metropolitan Power

When Mitchell visited the Colonial Office early in December 1944 on his way from Fiji to Kenya, three main issues were discussed. The decisions reached at these meetings provide a key to understanding the priorities pursued during the Mitchell years. The three problems analysed were: post-war African economic development; the Closer Union question; and how the colonial government should reassert its authority over the Kenya state. To varying degrees all three objectives were to prove impossible to achieve; but the quickest reversal of policy came over the issue of settler paramountcy. When he arrived in Nairobi on 12 December 1944, Mitchell soon perceived that it was completely impolitic to attempt directly to reduce settler power back to the position it had occupied in the late 1930s following Sir Joseph Byrne’s six-year onslaught. A more ambiguous approach had to be devised.

The rationale for this temporizing with Colonial Office policy was that the Administration feared any tampering with the newly secured European political privileges would undermine the plans for African social and economic advance which were dependent upon the settler taxpayer and his private investments. Without the acquiescence, albeit largely from ignorance, of the settler communities, the whole basis of progress in the African reserves would be undermined, dependent as they were on European and Asian funding of social welfare and education programmes. Given the ideology of Colonial Development and Good Government, such schemes were also deemed to determine the pace of African political advance. The government therefore had to tax the settler communities to be able to meet African aspirations. The post-war African settlement schemes and the attempt to develop secondary industry both of which were designed to ease the increasing population pressures inside the African

6. N. J. Westcott, ‘Closer Union and the future of East Africa, 1939–48: a case study in the Official Mind of Imperialism’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 10 (1981), pp. 67–88, for an alternative view. For a diplomatic interpretation more sympathetic to my analysis see W. R. Louis, *Imperialism at bay: the United States and the decolonisation of the British Empire, 1941–1945* (Oxford University Press, 1977). See also Cranborne to Gater, 18 June, 1942 and Sir Arthur Dawe to Gater 27 July, 1942 in CO 967/57/46709, in which he contrasted the Kenya settlers to 12th century barons with their ‘... strong bulwarks against the power of the central government’. Dawe commented, ‘Magna Carta year for the settlers was 1923. During that year the settlers delivered a blow at the prestige of the British Government in Kenya from which it has never recovered’. For similar comments from Dawe see CO 822/111/46705, 30 April 1942; and the minutes of the meeting on 10 June 1942, in CO 822/108/46523/32.
reserves which were threatening to destroy the stability of the colonial regime, also required their willingness to be milched. The whole programme for African advance was therefore found to be conditional upon the settlers preserving their war-time political gains. To oust Cavendish-Bentick from his control over the agricultural sector would have produced uproar and seriously impaired, if not irreparably damaged, the schemes for African economic and social progress. A frontal attack on the settler political redoubts would have had catastrophic consequences. Instead, a gradual sapping operation had to be devised. The trouble with this approach, which was frequently used during the Mitchell regime to avoid a direct confrontation with the settlers, was that it was ambiguous, and unless one was a party to government thinking, liable to misinterpretation.  

Cavendish-Bentick, the settler leader, was formally coopted into the administrative structure as Member for Agriculture, thereby diverting settler attention from the gradual sapping of their war-time powers over production and marketing of crops, African as well as European. One dramatic concession which could not be prevented enabled the government to regain much lost ground, whilst the tradition of collective responsibility gagged Cavendish-Bentick, the most intelligent and influential of the settler politicians. Unfortunately, given the inherent suspicions of Kenya’s racial politics, this step attracted all the attention and criticisms of Africans and Asians, and they failed to perceive that in many respects by 1946 the settlers had lost many of their wartime political gains, and that the Colonial Service had once again secured control over the state. The Field Administration grew from 117 in 1945 to 149 by 1950 and reached 213 full-


8. Mitchell to Creasy, 30 December 1944, in CO 533/536/38598 and 18 February, 1945, in CO 533/537/38628. During the war ‘C-B’ had acquired considerable power over the agricultural sector of the economy; serving as member of the East African Production and Supply Council; as a member of its executive board; and on its production, storage and machinery sub-committees; as controller of stock feed and fertilisers; machinery controller; East-African timber controller; and as controller of the Ziwni and Taveta irrigation schemes. He was also chairman of the Kenya Agricultural Production and Settlement Board; and a member of the Highlands Board and the Land Advisory Board. At the same time he was chairman of the Kenya Association, and of the East African Publicity Association. He also served on both the Kenya Legislative and Executive Councils. For a discussion of the Kenya Government’s formal co-option of ‘C-B’ see J. M. Lonsdale, ‘The Growth and Transformation of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1929–52’, forthcoming in Kenya in the Twentieth Century ed. B. A. Ogot (Nairobi).
time officers by 1957. Kenya also saw a considerable expansion in the size of the professional departments, agriculture expanding from 298 in 1945 to 2,519 in 1958, and the Veterinary Department grew from 291 to 892 over the same period. Colonial rule was transformed in the immediate post-war period. Manpower problems ceased to be a major factor facing the government until the outbreak of Mau Mau. The need to mobilize settler manpower had ended.9

The East African melodrama over Colonial Papers 191 and 210 provides an example of misplaced administrative guile; apparent concessions were made to the settlers which Africans and Asians denounced; and attention was diverted from the fact of Colonial Service resistance to settler demands.10 The problem was that the settlers were simply too powerful to resist by a head-on confrontation. Their role in Kenya society as the essential ‘steel frame’ for African progress and milk cow for economic development meant that they could not simply be ignored. They had to be reconciled and led up the garden path. It was not long, however, before the settlers perceived this sleight of hand.

Kenyatta and African Politics

The main problem of post-war Kenya politics was that Africans never did see through the rhetoric of the Administration and each apparent concession to the European (over Cavendish-Bentick, 210, the Kipande Affair) was taken at face value. This was not always their fault. African and Asian constitutional leaders were never incorporated into the state structure which, seen from the outside, appeared to be an exclusive European preserve, however chilly the atmosphere might have been inside. Mitchell’s initial willingness to co-opt Mathu, as Member for African Education—a crucial position, given the complexities of Local Native Council finances and their dependence on central government grants, and an appointment for which he was singularly well qualified—ran into the unwavering resistance of Carey Francis, who loathed Mathu.11 Kenyatta’s return and the close relationship which he quickly built up with Mathu seemed to prove Francis correct. Mathu was basically unsound. He was no different from Kenyatta. What Kenyatta said on the stump,

10. Cohen to Gater, 10 September, 1946, in CO 822/114/46523 for the Colonial Office’s determination to resist settler pressure and Davies to India Office 19 May, 1947 in CO 822/132/46523 refuting the allegation that Col 210 represented a retreat from the policy outlined in Col 191.
Mathu said in the Legislative Council, and vice versa: and on this the administration were indeed more correct than much early post-Uhuru historical writing. The gulf was not between Mathu, the government stooge, and Kenyatta, the great leader; but between Mathu and Kenyatta, the constitutionalists, and those ‘wild, uncultured minds’ of the militants, so eloquently denounced by Kenyatta.\(^{12}\)

Mitchell’s initial reaction was invariably one of co-option; and so it was with Kenyatta upon his messianic return from Europe. He was not simply fobbed off, refused a place on the Legislative Council and told to gain experience on the Kiambu Native Council, as has been suggested. He was in fact offered a place on the African Settlement Board and, as an acknowledged authority on Kikuyu tradition, the author of Facing Mount Kenya, was considered as a suitable President of the Kiambu Tribunal when the post became vacant. These were not minor positions. In the government’s eyes they were central posts from which he could assist in policy formulation, and indeed such they could have been.\(^{13}\) But whilst at this stage, 1946/early 1947, the Secretariat was willing to ‘sup with the devil’, albeit with a long spoon, the Field Administration saw him as a threat to their pre-eminence in the reserves. Any concession to Kenyatta would, they argued, be interpreted as a signal for KCA activists, in their guise as leaders of KAU, to begin agitation.\(^{14}\) Although the doctrine of Indirect Rule may never have taken root in the barren soil of Kenya’s acephalous societies, nevertheless, after fifty years of colonial rule, a distinct class of ‘collaborators’ had emerged: a group whose pre-eminent political, social and perhaps most importantly economic position was dependent upon their relationship with the colonial authorities, i.e. the chiefs and their supporters, who were incorporated as the bottom rung of the colonial state. To legitimize Mathu, and even more so Kenyatta was to cut the ground from underneath not only the District Commissioner but the very foundation of British rule, the chief and his headmen policing the maize shambas.\(^{15}\)


15. The effects of the second colonial occupation upon the authority of the chief can be seen most clearly in Murang’a. See KNA DC/FH 1/26, Fort Hall Annual Report, 1947, pp. 1–7, and DC/FH 1/28 Fort Hall Annual Report 1948, pp. 5–6. For the Administration’s views of the effectiveness of the Murang’a chiefs, see DC/FH 4/6, ‘Chiefs and Headman, 1937–54’.
Certain fundamental questions had to be answered: Did the British want to overturn the order established in the 1890s and incorporate the 'young men', the disgruntled political activists? Could it be done without threatening complete anarchy or was it not preferable to sit on the lid of rising African political consciousness and hope that it would subside, rather than explode? Was this not, in the last analysis, a less risky option than 'turning the world upside down', however much this may have been desired by the theorists in Whitehall of the new Labour Government, Creech Jones and Andrew Cohen? Did these academic idealists, as Lord Milverton queried from his fastness in Nigeria, really know what their policies of local government reform would actually entail? It was all very well for London to say that Indirect Rule was obsolete, and that controlled political development should be encouraged amongst the educated new elite; but was this possible? Could the process be controlled? Was it not in fact knocking the props away from British Imperial rule?\footnote{For a favourable view of Creech Jones and Cohen, see R. E. Robinson, 'Sir Andrew Cohen: Proconsul of African Nationalism' in L. H. Gann and P. Duigan ed. A\textit{frican Proconsuls: European Governors in Africa}, (The Free Press, New York, 1978) pp. 353–363; and 'Andrew Cohen and the transfer of power in Tropical Africa, 1940–51' in ed. W. H. Morris-Jones and G. Fischer, \textit{Decolonisation and after: the British and French experience}, (Frank Cass, London 1980) pp. 50–72. See also R. D. Pearce, \textit{The Turning Point in Africa}, especially pp. 132–205. For a critical view of the new orthodoxy see, J. W. Cell, 'On the eve of decolonisation: the Colonial Office's plans for the transfer of power in Africa, 1947', in \textit{Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 8}, May 1980, no. 3. The view from the grass roots in West Africa has been provided by R. D. Pearce in 'Governors, Nationalists and constitutions in Nigeria, 1935–51', \textit{Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 9}, May 1981, no. 3. Contemporary views of the policy can be found in \textit{The Journal of African Administration.} The following are some of the more interesting: Colonial Office African Studies Branch: 'Local Government reorganisation in the eastern province of Nigeria and Kenya', vol 1, no 1, pp. 18–29; 'The member system in British African territories', vol. 1, no 2, pp. 51–8; 'A survey of the development of local government in the African territories since 1947', supplement to vol. iv, 1952; A. Creech Jones 'The Place of African local administration in colonial policy', vol. 1, no 1, pp. 3–6; and the Earl of Listowel, 'The modern conception of Government in British Africa', vol. 1, no 3, pp. 99–105. Ronald Robinson in his Colonial Office incarnation also contributed to this debate; see 'The Progress of Provincial Councils in the British African Territories', vol. 1, no 2, pp. 59–67, and 'Why Indirect Rule has been replaced by local government in the nomenclature of British Native Administration', vol. 2, no 3, pp. 12–19. Mitchell's view is to be found in his diary for 10 November 1947, where he noted: 'We conferred all day, largely on dry, theoretical ideas of colonial self-government totally divorced from the realities of the present day. The C.O. has got itself into a sort of mystic enchantment and see visions of grateful, independent Utopias beaming at them from all round the world, as if there was—yet—any reason to suppose that any African can be cashier of a village council for three weeks without stealing the cash. It is uphill work; but we bludgeoned them pretty severely from both sides; although the West Africans, other than Milverton, are a silent lot. There is really no understanding whatever of contemporary realities in the CO. Creech blathered a good deal...'.}
occurred in Buganda in the late 1940s, the colonial authorities backed the establishment rather than their youthful critics. These problems confronted all the British colonies, and indeed the whole of Africa, in the immediate post-war era. It can now be seen that colonial governments were presented with a choice between short-term stability with a corollary of longer-term dissatisfaction and mounting political trouble; or short-term instability with the result of longer-run security. London wanted the latter; colonial governments opted for the former. The stakes at risk with the short-term instability option were seen as too great. Colonial rule had existed for too long, become too entrenched, to live dangerously. Safety first was the rule.

Just as in the late 1920s, when the KCA had first stretched its muscles and the Administration had hesitated as to their response (should it be co-opted or suppressed?) the late 1940s show a similar process in their attitude to KAU. Whilst it was moderate and politely functioned within the existing social order in the reserves, it was tolerated, even encouraged, by a few adventurous District Commissioners; but by its nature as a vehicle for educated, self-confident Africans, paradoxically often employed by the government—returning askaris, or prosperous peasant farmers and a few traders who had done well out of the high cash crop prices during the war—in fact by its very existence, it posed a challenge to the chiefs. A few could be absorbed, but the number demanding entry into the colonial governing structure in the reserves were out of all proportion to those who could be peacefully co-opted. Only the overturning of the status quo could deal with such 'popularity'. The co-optive capacity of the colonial state, without fundamental restructuring, simply could not cope. It was these people who were to provide the backbone of KAU in Central Province.

Typical of this group were the ex-askaris, most of whom had never been anywhere near the front line. Their horizons had, however, been immensely broadened and they returned home with more money than most Africans had ever collected before. Such men were discontented with life in the village, eager to enter trade, build stone houses and better their lot. The trouble was not just that their advance as traders, etc., was hindered by the settler communities, European politicians and Asian traders, but also that they encountered the suspicions of the chiefs and elders and therefore,


This can clearly be seen in the attempts of the wattle bark traders to gain Government recognition of their association. Geoffrey Ndegwa to senior Agricultural Officer, Nyeri, 24 July, 1944 in KNA Ag. Dept. 4/220.
automatically, of most District Commissioners. Their ambitions were disappointed. Money was wasted in building stone dukas to meet public health regulations, and difficulties were encountered in obtaining the requisite government licences for trading, bus routes, etc. Rather than assisting this new force the government merely watched from the sidelines, if it did not actively oppose.  

These men, however, did not become Mau Mau. Even after they had lost all their money in speculative ventures, they were reluctant to contemplate violence, if only because they were only too well aware of the overwhelming forces the colonial state had in its possession to suppress a rebellion. Instead, these people were Kenyatta and Mathu's chief supporters, the constitutionalist wing of KAU. But in the post-war era, if the government could not even succeed in winning over these men by co-option, then the game was all but lost. The 'wild men', the discontented have-nots with nothing to lose, would inevitably adopt more drastic tactics.

As early as 1947, it had already become apparent that Governor Mitchell's policies had failed. The Governor, however, failed to appreciate the seriousness of the situation and the depth of African, and especially Kikuyu, disillusionment with his strategy both in the countryside and the capital. Although the Labour and Agricultural Departments warned that the social engineering campaign in the Reserves was being pushed too far too fast and that a more cautious approach was required unless the Kikuyu were to be completely antagonized and driven into revolt, the Field Administration and the Governor pushed ahead with grim determination not to be deflected by 'political agitators' like Kenyatta.  

Supported in this resolve by the Kikuyu chiefs, the Governor and his District Commissioners were convinced that they 'knew their Kikuyu' and failed to

21. Mitchell's attitude towards Kenyatta, and even the constitutionalist African politicians like Eliud Mathu, hardened during 1947. For his report of his first encounter with Kenyatta see CO 533/543/38086/5 (1945–47) 'Kikuyu Memorials and Petitions', Mitchell to Creech Jones 20 January 1947. By 1949 Mitchell was much more hostile, see CO 533/543/38086/38 (1949) 'Petitions: Kikuyu Central Association–Kikuyu Grievances', Mitchell to Creech Jones 28 February 1949. See also CO 533/540/38032 (1949) 'Legislative Council', Mitchell to Creech Jones 11 December 1948, for his suspicions of the linkages between Mathu, Kenyatta and the Communists; and CO 533/549/38232/15 (1946–47) 'European Settlement: Squatters', Mitchell to Creech Jones for a forthright defence of multi-racialism. Mitchell insisted that if Kenya was to 'develop towards British Christian civilisation' British rule must continue for many years. The alternative was to 'relapse into corruption and barbarism. Just exactly what that means in suffering for the common people can be seen just across our frontier in Abyssinia or in those Central American republics where impatience to secure independence...has led to the termination of the colonial status before the common people had reached a stage where they had any capacity to protect themselves from the local demagogues who succeeded the Spanish officials. The same collapse of civilisation, justice and economic development could no doubt be produced in Africa by the same processes'. For a more favourable view of Kenyatta see Wyn Harris's humorous account of a meeting to discuss the Kenya African Union's petition to the United Nations in CO 537/3591/38733 (1948): 'Petitions to the United Nations', Wyn Harris'[s] minute of of 15 October 1948.
respond to warnings from settlers and moderate Africans that the situation in Central Province and the African locations of Nairobi was out of control. The Colonial Office, therefore, remained ignorant of the increasing Kikuyu unrest and unaware that their co-optive strategy was not being followed in Kenya. In fact the unwillingness of the Kenya authorities to co-opt Kenyatta and the moderates strengthened the position of the militants, until the Government was no longer able to control the countryside or African Nairobi. In 1952 the state collapsed in Kikuyuland under Mau Mau pressure, finally revealing the bankruptcy of Mitchell's post-war policies. Let us analyse these in turn.

The Kikuyu Reserve

In the Reserves the communalist prescriptions of the Field Administration proved to be bankrupt remnants from the era of Indirect Rule. The traditional land authorities among the Kikuyu and the Meru, the Muhiriga22 and the Njuri Ncheke,23 were no longer able to restrain the development of capitalist relations in the reserves. Indeed many of the chiefs and elders—the established elite of Kikuyu society—were in the vanguard of capital accumulation, land expropriation and the whole process of increasing social differentiation. The administration had identified the wrong enemy. Their ideological commitment to 'Merrie Africa' prevented them from recognizing that their allies the chiefs were as involved in trade and commercial farming, dubious land deals and the bribing of Native Tribunals, as their rivals in the Kenya African Union and the Kikuyu Central Association.24 The whole post-war agricultural cam-

22. The Muhiriga were the nine main clans among the Kikuyu, which the Administration believed had allocated land and supervised cultivation in pre-colonial times. In fact real power was held by the leaders of the sub-clans, the nmbari, or even smaller nyumba 'household' groupings, under the loose supervision of a murumati or trustee. For the attitudes of the Field Administration towards indigenous institutions see CO 852/662/1936/2 (1945-46), 'Soil Erosion Kenya'; N. Humphrey, 'Thoughts on the Foundations of Future Prosperity in the Kikuyu Lands', pp. 56-57; and H. E. Lambert and P. Wyn Harris' memorandum on 'Policy in Regard to Land Tenure in the Native Lands of Kenya'. See also L. S. B. Leakey, The Southern Kikuyu before 1903, (Academic Press, New York, 1977) vol. i, pp. 7-8 and 109-113; and G. Muriuki, History of the Kikuyu, (Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1974) pp. 112-116.


campaign as originally conceived, therefore, was doomed to failure, since it completely failed to take account of the changes in African society. District Commissioners were attempting to behave like King Canute in the face of the advancing tide of African individualism, and had as little effect. The particular beliefs of the Administration, had a profound impact on the limited imagination of the men on the ground, and helped to ensure that they played into the hands of the settlers and the chiefs. These subconscious prejudices enabled the settlers and chiefs to hijack Whitehall’s plans for a second colonial occupation, and to use them to suppress their rivals, the African protocapitalists.

The agricultural campaign had been formulated in the Secretariat during the last years of the war when a series of settler-dominated specialist committees had investigated the problems confronting Kenya. Once the Second Colonial Occupation got under way, however, it soon diverged from Whitehall’s strategy and all central co-ordination quickly disappeared. The programme was implemented not by the Secretariat or the headquarters of the technical departments in Nairobi, but by District Commissioners and Agricultural Officers in the Reserves. Although the Colonial Office, the Secretariat, and the district boma may have believed that they were implementing the same policies, the structure of the colonial state ensured that a metamorphosis took place as instructions passed down the line of command. Thus District Commissioners were able to imprint their own prejudices upon the campaign in their locations, and could ignore those proposals with which they disagreed. They could, therefore, extol the peasant as the backbone of society and propagate the myth of Africa’s egalitarian, communalist past, as a useful weapon in their attack upon their African critics in the Kenya African Union.

The emerging African elite posed a double challenge to the political economy of post-war Kenya. They threatened the settlers’ monopoly of influence on the Legislative and Executive Councils and their autonomous domain in the White Highlands, while in the Reserves they challenged the political authority of the chiefs and traditional elders and their allies in the

Administration. These African accumulators, with access to sources of investment outside the Reserves from employment in comparatively well-paid jobs in Nairobi, had been able to transform the peasant option into an alternative to settler commodity production. During the Depression Kikuyu entrepreneurs had momentarily seemed about to undermine the economic base of settler life—the European-owned commercial farms in the White Highlands. Kennedy and Mosley have shown that while the settlers in Southern Rhodesia, with their complete control over the state, had been able to divert resources to sustain European agriculture during the 1930s, in Kenya the tighter reins of the Colonial Office had ensured that the settlers did not always get their way. The Duke of Devonshire's 1923 declaration of African paramountcy effectively precluded settler domination and acted as the moral conscience of the colonial state in Kenya. Settler hegemony, in so far as it existed, had to be conditional; restrained by an unholy alliance between the Colonial Office, the British left and the missionaries. 28

Kenya had been set on the road to Mau Mau in the 1930s, just when the African challenge to the settlers' vision of Kenya as a 'White Man's Country' had been strongest. Why was this? It looks as though the peripheral British official mind had hedged its bets, unwilling to decide between the settlers and the emerging African capitalists. The Kenya Government had attempted to revive settler agriculture through easy loans from the Land Bank, while also promoting African production in order to preserve its fiscal resources. 29 The Government had lacked the courage to ditch the settlers or to cement an alliance with the emerging African traders and commercial farmers. To abandon settler farming and to rely upon the peasant option, as Harold Macmillan was to suggest in 1942, had appeared to be too big a risk. 30 Thus the conflict was set. The Mitchell Government after the war, however, failed to recognize that both settlers and Africans had prospered since the late 1930s with increased commodity prices. The conflict, therefore, was continued at a higher level after 1945, when both sides were stronger. Because of the Government's failure to decide in the 1930s which side it was going to support, settler and Kikuyu accumulators were on a collision course during the 1940s.

As the war ended the Administration reversed its agricultural policy of the previous fifteen years. African commercial cultivators and traders


30. CO 967/57/46709 (1942): 'Sir Arthur Dawe's Memorandum on a Federal Solution for East Africa and Mr Harold Macmillan's Counter-Proposals'.

were no longer encouraged. Instead they were identified as a major source of social discontent in the Reserves. Throughout the first four years of Mitchell’s Governorship the Administration and the Agricultural Department attempted to protect the ordinary African—the poor and middle peasants with less than eight acres—from the depredations of their prosperous neighbours. But, the reality was rather different. The chiefs increasingly usurped the nominal powers of the *Muhiriga* elders and soon dominated the agricultural campaign, which they used to benefit themselves and their supporters. Compulsory labour gangs were used to terrace their *shambas* and to extend their cultivation onto commercial grazing land and into the bracken zone. Despite the miles of terracing which had been dug by July 1947, the ordinary peasant could see little return for his exhausting work.\(^{31}\)

These tensions between the chiefs and their people were particularly bitter in the locations of the new generation of energetic, young chiefs, who had been appointed after the war, specifically to ensure the success of the campaign. Unlike their older colleagues they do not appear to have accumulated reserves of support which could be called upon to legitimize their interference in peasant life.\(^{32}\) The effects of ‘the Second Colonial Occupation’ by mid-1947, had already had a profound impact upon the development of the Reserves, and had helped undermine the communal values which the Administration claimed to be defending. The people had become disillusioned. The returned *askari*, for example, had seen their ambitions thwarted, their new business enterprises fail, and their savings vanish, it seemed to them because of obstruction by the chiefs and the District Administration.\(^{33}\)

Meanwhile the banned Kikuyu Central Association functioned underground, becoming increasingly active after its leaders were released from their wartime detention at Kapenguria. On their return they singled out terracing and the chiefs as their main targets and made strenuous attempts to win the support of the ex-soldiers, who were an important new element in rural life. Their money and contacts outside the locality were valuable

31. KNA Ag 4/392 ‘Central Province District Agricultural Reports, 1948’, especially the Soil Conservation Reports from Kiambu, Murang’a and Embu; and Ag 4/451 ‘Fort Hall Safari Diaries, 1948–51’.
new political assets for the older generation of Kikuyu Central Association stalwarts.  

The Plight of the Kikuyu Squatters

It was not, however, in Central Province itself that resistance first raised its head in 1945 or 1946. There the Kenya African Union was still trying to gain admittance to the rewards of the colonial regime. Almost to the end, Central Province remained comparatively quiet. It was in the Rift Valley that trouble first emerged. Indeed, this analysis of the growing economic and political rivalry between the settler powers that be, and African traders and cultivators, who relied upon the Kenya African Union to force open the rewards of the colonial state, applied not only in the Reserves, but even more in the White Highlands, where settler and African accumulators stood face to face.

The Resident Native Labour Ordinance of 1937, which became operative in 1940, was one of the concessions made by the Administration to the settlers because of the wartime manpower shortage. After debating the issue for three years the Colonial Office had finally agreed to the transfer of control over the squatter community to the settler District Councils. The Councils, however, did not really begin to use their power until near the end of the war. Until European farmers who had been away in the armed forces returned home, and the wartime high crop prices had increased their capital resources, the settler community was not in a position to utilize any extra land which could be gained by reducing squatter cultivation and stock rights. All that changed in 1945. Immediately the District Councils passed measures reducing squatter cultivation to one or two acres per family and restricting the size of squatter herds to ten sheep or goats with no cattle. Squatter cattle were unpopular amongst the settlers as one of the strategies adopted by the now more heavily capitalized European farmers was to diversify from maize monoculture, which had been their unprofitable lot for most of the inter-war period, into mixed farming with small dairy herds. If the veterinary

37. See KNA Lab 9/319, 23 March 1945, for details of the Aberdares’ new squatter rules; Lab 9/598 PC, Rift Valley to Chief Native Commissioner 2 March 1945 on the Trans Nzoia Order; Lab 9/304, Wyn Harris to Chief Secretary 12 April, 1945 for the Labour Commissioner’s general reaction to the new orders; and ibid. 21 June 1945, for details of the Naivasha District Council’s Resident Labour Ordinance.
frontier between the reserves and the White Highlands was to mean anything, and since the late 1920s control over bovine pleuropneumonia and rinderpest had been secured by inoculation on the European side of the boundary, then it was imperative that disease-infested squatter stock should be removed as a source of infection for European-owned herds. It is interesting to note that in the one area where sheep farming was the
mainstay of the settler economy, Molo, it was not squatter stock that were forbidden but, instead, sheep and goats, which they were allowed to keep in the European dairy farming areas.  

Within a short period squatter incomes fell drastically, particularly in the Naivasha District Council Area. Here the Labour Department, who looked aghast at the process, estimated that income per squatter family from their *shambas* and livestock fell from 1,400 shillings per year in 1942 to less than 300 shillings four years' later, while wages per thirty-day contract had only increased from eight to twelve shillings. Many squatters, who in Naivasha, Nakuru and the Aberdares District Councils were mainly Kikuyu, refused to reattest under these terms. In 1946, guided by local KCA officials who had operated underground since 1940, they attempted to organize widespread strikes to force the settlers to reconsider their Orders. These began in August 1946, timed to coincide with the visit of Arthur Creech Jones, then Under-Secretary for the Colonies, to Lord Delamere's estate at Soysambu, where there were over three hundred Kikuyu squatter families. The strike rapidly spread throughout the southern White Highlands of Kenya, culminating in a meeting of representatives of squatters from over four hundred farms and Olenguruone at Naivasha early in November 1946. Although the strike alarmed the settlers and to a lesser extent the Labour Department, the movement eventually collapsed early in 1947, because the squatters had no option but to reattest. Many of them were second generation squatters who had been born on the farms on which they worked, their fathers having moved to the White Highlands before 1920 as enterprising Kikuyu, following the Kikuyu tradition of expansion from the overcrowded heartland into new areas, in order to establish their own *githaka*. The first twenty-five years of colonial rule had seemed to offer increased scope for such movement, following the Maasai withdrawal south of the railway in 1911 to 1913. It was not until the 1920s that the colonial regime ‘froze’ the ‘tribal’ boundaries and adopted a policy of ‘divide and rule’. Meanwhile the Kikuyu and other squatters who had left for the White Highlands found themselves increasingly trapped. Their cultivation and stock rights were being reduced, yet they had no option of returning to their original *githaka* in Central Province. By moving to the White Highlands, where

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38. KNA Lab 9/331 details the problems of the Nyanza District Council's attempts to control squatters. In Nyanza the conflicting interests of cattle and cereal farmers, also the plantation interests, resulted in a plethora of local options. See especially 'Resume of the Present Resident Labour Position in the Nyanza Province', 30 September, 1948. For more details of Molo and other local options see Lab 9/304 'Resident Labourers General Correspondence'.


they had been comparatively prosperous until the mid-1920s, they had virtually renounced any claim they had in Central Province, where, because of ever-growing population, the pressure on the land was becoming acute.\(^{41}\) The squatters in 1946, therefore, had no choice but to stay put, unless they were to become landless urban workers, a prospect which few would voluntarily choose since it would cut them off from the traditional African way of life and provide no security for old age. The towns also suffered from the added disadvantages of low wages and high prices.

The choice, however, did not always lie in their hands. Increasingly, the District Councils limited the number of squatters per farm and many farmers were only too willing to turn them off, now that they had sufficient capital to farm more intensively themselves. A gradual stream of squatters began to flow back to Central Province and into the townships of the Rift Valley. Militancy increased and violence grew. Cattle maiming had been part of the 1946 struggle but after their initial defeat this declined; but following the eviction of 4,000 Kikuyu from the Olenguruone Settlement in 1949 and 1950, however, it became widespread once more throughout the Rift Valley. As a concomitant to this squatter, largely Kikuyu, resistance, oathing grew to ensure solidarity against the enemy.\(^{42}\) By 1952 most of the Kikuyu in the White Highlands had taken the Mau Mau oath of unity.

\begin{center}
\textit{Olenguruone}
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Olenguruone played a crucial role in encouraging the spread of militancy in the Rift, especially in the Njoro-Molo area, which became an alternative focus of discontent to the Naivasha-Soysambu region.\(^{43}\) It was at Olenguruone in 1944 that a new oath was introduced to ensure Kikuyu unity, which was applied not only to men, like the traditional oath, but to the women and children as well. This oath of unity, a development from the KCA oath, was the foundation of the early Mau Mau oaths. The long drawn-out struggle at Olenguruone between 1941 and 1950 provided inspiration for the Kikuyu communities, both in the Rift and in Central Provinces. Close ties already existed between Samuel Koina Gitebi, the Olenguruone leader, and the squatters at Soysambu where he had organized a KISA school in the mid-1930s. Gitebi also had contacts with the KCA leaders in Limuru, an area which had been the original home for


many of the people at Olenguruone. He himself had joined the Limuru branch of KCA in 1928, and both Soysambu and Limuru acted as staging-posts for the Olenguruone messengers on their way to Nairobi or Gatundu to see KAU leaders and Kenyatta.44

The Kenya government and the Colonial Office were both well aware that Olenguruone was crucial to the future of their policy, but they badly misread the situation. In particular Andrew Cohen in the Colonial Office took a very hard line.45 If the Kikuyu were allowed to disregard the cultivation rules imposed by the government, then not only would the Olenguruone settlement scheme fail but, as the prototype for the much larger settlements planned after the war, in particular at Makueni, the failure of the government to enforce its will on the Olenguruone mal-contents would endanger the viability of all the other planned areas.46 Olenguruone, Whitehall and Nairobi agreed, had to be made to work, or, if this was impossible, which by late 1946 it already seemed to be, then Draconian measures would have to be taken and an example made of the trouble causers. This, however, badly backfired. By throwing out the Olenguruone Kikuyu, who claimed to have been given githaka land rights in 1941, the word of the government appeared to be untrustworthy. By finally expelling them in 1949 and 1950 with nowhere to go, the government spread the seeds of militancy throughout the fertile soils of Central Province and the White Highlands.47 Martyrs were created. These Kikuyu did not passively acquiesce in their fate. The various Mau Mau Nyimbo dealing with Olenguruone testify to the effect their opposition had amongst the discontented elements of Kikuyu society.48

The expulsions from Olenguruone coincided with the further tightening of the controls on resident labourers. The post-war era, in the eyes of most squatters, showed all too clearly the dominant position of the settlers in Kenya. Compared to the settler politicians KAU was evidently incapable of protecting the interests of its people. The constitutionalists had failed; the militants, the men of violence, could fare no worse.

The Growth of Militancy in Nairobi

This increasing disillusionment with constitutional progress and KAU

45. CO 533/557/38678/1 Cohen minute 14 July 1947.
47. When the van carrying some of the convicted Olenguruone squatters broke down at Karatina, it was immediately surrounded by inquisitive crowds. After this incident the route to Yatta was changed to avoid Kikuyu areas. DC/NKU/6/2 21 January 1950.
was also becoming evident in Nairobi and Central Province. Nairobi Africans lived in appalling conditions in the African areas of Pumwani, Kariakor and Shauri Moyo. In 1947 the Nairobi Municipal African Affairs Officer acknowledged that over 16,000 Africans in the city had nowhere to live and were sleeping on verandahs and in buses. Wartime inflation was also particularly severe in Nairobi, which by 1948 had overtaken Mombasa as the area with the highest African cost of living in Kenya; and it was in the capital that Africans most frequently encountered the glaring social and economic gap between their own poverty-stricken position, which in many respects appeared to be deteriorating, and the Europeans' prosperity.49

The capital naturally provided the most sophisticated analysis of African politics, militant as well as constitutionalist. Francis Khamisi, Jimmy Jeremiah, Tom Mbotela were the most prominent members of the Nairobi Advisory Council and the Municipal Council, but their hold over the mass of the population was slight. Amongst poor Africans, earning fifty shillings a month or less, these prosperous government servants, clerks and traders were increasingly seen as belonging to a different world with different interests.50

The Government's policies also failed in Nairobi. At the end of the war under pressure from the constitutionalist leaders of the Nairobi branch of the Kenya African Union—Khamisi and Awori—the Administration had attempted to increase African participation in local affairs. This 'local government', of course, was purely advisory since the real power remained with the settler controlled Nairobi Municipal Council. But by turning to the African elite, the Administration weakened its ties with the 'old fashioned' tribal associations, through which it had controlled the African locations in the past. Misled by their own mythology of 'de-tribalized' urban Africans, the Administration came to view Nairobi Africans as being fundamentally different from those in the Reserves. Ironically the African elite also failed to recognize that the only way to preserve control over locations like Pumwani and Shauri Moyo, was through a modified system of Indirect Rule, based on the tribal associations.51

49. For the standard account of the Kenya economy after 1945 see M. McWilliam, 'The managed economy: agricultural change, development and finance in Kenya', D. A. Low and A. Smith (eds) History of East Africa vol. 3, (Oxford University Press, 1977) pp. 251–289. For conditions in Mombasa see KNA Lab 9/1817, 1835 and 1836, and for meetings of the Nairobi African Advisory Council see MAA 2/5/223 and MAA 8/22 'City African Affairs Officer: Correspondence 1947–50'. See also MAA 8/102 and Hindi ya Muafrika 6 May 1948; MAA 8/106 and Mumenyererei 12 April, 1948 and MAA 7/491 on 'Administrative Policy; Urban Areas Nairobi, 1945–7'.


New arrivals to the city did not transcend their 'political' past, but sought out friends and relations to guide them in the alien environment. Men from neighbouring locations and districts, who spoke the same language, clung together in the new hostile world. Tribal solidarities were of crucial importance in Nairobi. Those already in employment housed and fed their associates, helped them find jobs and establish themselves. Thus the city's refuse disposal gangs were dominated by Meru tribesmen, while the Kiambu Kikuyu provided a high proportion of street hawkers and kiosk owners. When a Nairobi African became unemployed, fell ill or died, he was looked after by friends from his location or district. Whatever the Administration or the African elite believed, for most Africans, the ties of kinship and locality were as important in the alien world of Nairobi as they were in the Reserves.  

Tom Askwith, the Nairobi African Affairs' Officer, therefore, had been correct to conclude that a modified network of chiefs and village headmen offered the only real way to preserve control over African Nairobi. Yet despite its suspicion of 'detrivalised' Africans the government overruled Askwith and introduced a more democratic system. Although twelve members were originally nominated, and after 1946, elected by the tribal associations, these formed only forty per cent of the Advisory Council. One-third of the members were chosen from specific interest groups, transcending tribal divisions, such as traders' or craftsmen's groups or from minorities, such as the Moslems or women, who formed only thirteen per cent of Nairobi's African population. Another eight members, over one-quarter of the council, were elected by the various African estates or locations, in a fully democratic ward system. Gradually the government planned to increase their members at the expense of the tribal associations' representatives.  

This system had been forced on a reluctant Askwith by the liberals in the Secretariat and the Kenya African Union elite, led by Khamisi, Mbotela and Awori. By 1947 it had resulted in a serious weakening of the Field Administration's knowledge of African opinion in the locations. Instead


54. *ibid.* MAA 7/491, F. Khamisi to Askwith 10th September, 1945; Notes on Meeting in Secretariat 28 November 1945; and K. G. Lindsey to Chief Native Commissioner 8 December 1945. See also KNA MAA 8/22 'City African Affairs Officer: Correspondence, 1947–50', T. G. Askwith to the Mayor, 1 September, 1948, enclosing report on the Nairobi African Advisory Council.
of directly receiving complaints, their perception of African life was distorted by the prism of the elite-dominated Advisory Council. With only one policeman to every thousand inhabitants and no patronage network under the control of government nominees, the Administration’s authority in the locations was minimal. The situation was particularly bad in Shauri Moyo, Kariakor and Pumwani, the three most overcrowded and badly constructed slums, where well over half Nairobi’s Africans lived. In these areas the African Workers’ Federation and their Offisi ya Masikini—the Office of the Poor—exerted considerable influence, while the ‘street corner boys’ of the Forty Group and the other semi-criminal gangs, made up of the city’s unemployed, ensured that during the long hours of darkness Nairobi’s African locations were a ‘no go’ area for the police.

The arrest of Chege Kibachia, the leader of the African Workers’ Federation, in August, 1947, and the shooting by the police of the strikers at Uplands a fortnight later, brought Nairobi to the verge of a general strike. Both Tom Mbotela, the constitutionalist Kenya African Union leader, then the Assistant Superintendent of African Locations, and the Municipal African Affairs Officer, warned the Secretariat in October 1947, that the government had virtually lost control over African Nairobi, which was firmly under the domination of Kikuyu street gangs. Despite the Administration’s strenuous efforts in 1948 and 1949 to reassert control, under pressure from the settler controlled Municipal Council, this situation continued. Although municipal bye-law 212 enabled the police to arrest and deport to the Reserves hundreds of unemployed vagrants, they soon drifted back, and the city’s crime rate continued to rise.

The Forty Group and various small district groupings of Kikuyu youths articulated this disenchantment with the constitutionalists. By October 1947 Mwangi Macharia from Murang’a, an activist in the Forty Group,

was already declaring at meetings of the Nairobi branch of the African Workers Federation that men like Kenyatta and Mathu, who had been educated in Europe, should not be trusted by workers. Their interests were entirely different and they would not hesitate 'to sell the workers down the river'. What was needed, he asserted, were real workers' leaders, men who sprang from the same class and who would really serve them. This was part of Macharia's campaign to ensure that W. W. W. Awori was not appointed president of the African Workers Federation in succession to the detained Chege Kibachia, but it reflected the growing disillusionment of the African masses with the failures of KAU and the constitutionalist path.

The dissatisfaction received an ideological backbone with the return from India of Makhan Singh. Singh attempted to instil Marxist class politics into the growing Kenya trade union movement. The moderate leaders of the East African Indian National Congress, such as Patel and Rana, were mocked, as were their African associates Mathu, Khamisi and Mbotela. It was from Singh that Kaggia, Kungu Karumba, Macharia, Fred Kubai and Paul Ngei took their lead, mobilizing the trade union movement to seize control over the Nairobi branch of KAU, from where they undermined the position of the constitutionalists. As early as 1950 their triumph in Nairobi was complete and Kenyatta's leadership was coming under attack.

The militants' control over the capital's slums was demonstrated during the General Strike of May 1950. Large mobs had attacked the police sent to arrest the strike leaders and armoured cars had to be used to suppress resistance. Under the direction of Fred Kubai and Bildad Kaggia, who were both members of the Mau Mau Central Committee, the Muhimu, as well as trades union leaders, Nairobi became a centre of oathing and Mau Mau activity. It was from the capital that the campaign in Kikuyuland and the Rift Valley was controlled. The radicals with their supporters in the trades union also captured control over the moribund Nairobi branch of the Kenya African Union in June 1951, which they used to launch an attack upon the remaining moderates in the leadership at the National Congress in November that year. The capital, therefore, provided the militants with a secure power base among the urban poor from which to

61. James Ombwayo and subsequent speeches at the Nairobi branch meeting of the African Workers' Federation, reported by Special Branch to Director of Intelligence, MAA 8/109, 16 December, 1947, for attacks on Kenyatta and Mathu.
64. KNA Lab 9/87, 'Labour Troubles Nairobi, 1950', for a detailed account.
harry the advocates of constitutional politics. They used Nairobi’s central position in the colony’s transport network to establish firm linkages between the urban militants and the leaders of radical opposition to the chiefs and the Administration throughout Kikuyuland.67

This spate of militant activity, however, alienated the non-Kikuyu elements in the Nairobi African population, as well as the Kikuyu moderates. Often exploited by Kikuyu landlords, who owned most of the accommodation in the African locations, and subject to the tyranny of the Kikuyu street gangs, the Abaluhya, Luo and migrant workers from the coast became disillusioned with the actions of the Kikuyu militants. By 1952 the Kikuyu had made themselves almost as unpopular as the Administration with the non-Kikuyu elements in the population, so that when the fight to the death between the Kikuyu and the settlers began in October 1952, they remained neutral observers, waiting on the sidelines to see who would win before they decided to join the contest. This was one of the reasons that Mau Mau failed to become a truly nationalist movement.

Politics in Central Province and the Growth of Opposition to Terracing

Central Province itself remained moderate. Although James Beauttah, one of the few of the KCA old guard to support the younger generation of militants, was the provincial vice-president of KAU, outside Murang’a he had little influence. Central Province KAU was much more under the control of Kenyatta, Mathu and Gichuru than it ever was of Beauttah.68 But by early 1950 their grip over the local organizations was beginning to slip. This decline stemmed partly from Kenyatta’s failure as a leader. He had proved himself incapable of delivering the goods to those Kikuyu who wanted to be incorporated into the colonial political and economic order. Asian traders still controlled the economy, whilst the Second Colonial Occupation subjected all Africans to increased governmental control and the Local Native Councils and chiefs seemed to be mere puppets of the Europeans. This discontent stemmed from various tensions inside the province, often of a parochial nature. While it is possible in the Rift Valley and Nairobi to perceive one major cause for increased militancy, the political structure of Central Provence was far more complex. Although the underlying problem was the impact of the ‘Second Colonial Occupation’69 and enforced ‘modernization’ on Kikuyu

67. *ibid.*
68. See John Spencer, ‘James Beauttah: Kenya patriot’ (unpublished staff seminar paper, History Department, University of Nairobi) for details of Beauttah’s career; and KNA DC/FH 1/24, pp. 4–5; and DC/FH 1/26 pp. 2–4; and DC/FH 1/30, pp. 1–2 for the District Commissioner’s comments on his political activities.
69. By 1952 Agricultural Department staff in Central Province numbered 44 Europeans and 3,506 Africans. See KNA Ag 4/310, L. H. Brown, Provincial Agricultural Officer. For an insight into how the second colonial occupation affected African peasants see Ag 4/451 ‘Fort Hall Safari Diaries, 1948–51’.
traditional society, this took several forms, varying not only from district to
district but from location to location. Part of this diversity was a reflection
of the continuation of 'the white man's madness': that traditional
African explanation for the constantly changing emphases of development
dependent upon the whims of the District Commissioners. But, although
Africans in Murang'a therefore were primarily concerned with soil conser-
vation and terracing, whilst in Nyeri the issue was more that of cattle
dipping, the sheer scale and comprehensive nature of the post-war
modernization schemes ensured that it was less simple than that, and that at
key moments dipping became an issue in Murang'a and opposition to
terracing mounted in Nyeri. Throughout all this Kiambu maintained
an ambivalent attitude, preserving modest progress rather than undulating
from 'triumphant advance' to the depths of complete crisis.

The essential ingredient in these variations was not the role of the Dis-
trict Commissioner and his district team but that of the chief. Chief
Ignatio of location eight in Murang'a provides an outstanding example.
From 1945 to mid-1947, when Desmond O'Hagan was the District Com-
missioner, Murang'a was in the government's opinion the most outstand-
ing district in Kenya, and in Murang'a the great success story was Ignatio's
location. Vast acreages were terraced under the traditional ngwatio
system of communal labour, controlled by over two hundred African agri-
cultural instructors and assistant instructors. But the very intensity of the
soil conservation campaign undermined the stability of Ignatio's control
over his people. The peasants who actually did the physical labour
soon perceived a tremendous weakness in the Agricultural Department's
reliance, obsession is perhaps the more appropriate word, on terracing
slopes. The issue first came to the fore as a topic for discontent in
Murang'a not only because of the intensity of its campaign but also because
of the geographical nature of the district, where over ninety per cent of the
land was on slopes of over fourteen per cent. The problem was that the
Agricultural Department relied on short-based interval terracing. This
was adopted because the initial construction of the terraces required far less
labour than the building of the more sophisticated broad-based interval
terraces. But in Murang'a short-based interval terracing proved largely

70. KNA Ag 4/512 'Provincial Agricultural Officer, 'Fort Hall's monthly reports 1940–49;
Ag 4/451 'Safari Diaries, Fort Hall, 1948–51; Ag 4/392 'District Annual Agricultural Reports
1948', and Ag 4/107 'Annual Reports Veterinary Department, 1942–53'; and Ag 4/113, 'South
Nyeri Monthly Agricultural Reports, 1938–49'.
71. KNA DC/KBU 1/36 'Kiambu Annual Report 1945'; pp. 4 and 15; and Ag 4/410.
72. KNA DC/FH 1/26, pp. 1–6; and MAA 8/108 and 'Daily Chronicle' 16 October
1947. See also CO 537/3588/38696, minute by Wyn Harris, January, 1948.
73. Ignatio's location 8 until July, 1947, headed the Murang'a soil conservation league. See
KNA DC/FH 4/6 'Chiefs and Headmen, 1937–54'; and Ag 4/451 'Murang'a Safari Diaries,
1948–51', especially entries 2–6 March 1948, and 6–10 July 1948, which should be compared,
as by July Ignatio was beginning to reassert control.
ineffective. By 1947 the peasants had perceived that they had become enmeshed in a vicious circle. Each rainy season a large proportion of the newly-dug terraces were destroyed, and by 1947 more labour was being required to preserve the terraces already built than was being used to construct new terraces. Although half the district was now terraced, even when the whole area had been protected, the demands on African labour two mornings a week would hardly diminish. Their task appeared never-ending.  

In the Taita Hills, where the slopes were even steeper than in Murang’a the Agricultural Department and the Administration had perceived from the onset of the campaign that the demands posed on the peasantry to maintain short-based interval terracing would be excessive and they had pressed instead for the construction of broad-based terraces. Although these initially required far more labour, and therefore progress in protecting large acreages was considerably slower, they were able to withstand the run-off following heavy downpours and survived the rainy seasons intact. Labour intensive though they were in the short run, over the longer term they were more effective and did not require the same continual exactions from the African community.  

Most Murang’a Africans did not perceive in 1947 the advantages of broad-based terracing, although a few who had worked in the White Highlands and had witnessed the mechanical terracing on European farms by the soil conservation unit favoured this technique. Most, however, became completely disillusioned with the colonial government’s campaign. There seemed to be no point whatsoever to all their hard labour. Their dissatisfaction with the government varied directly with the commitment of their chief to the campaign. It was therefore in location eight that tension mounted. By his all-out exertions in favour of terracing, Ignatio largely destroyed his bonds with his own people. Instead of acting as their intermediary with the Administration, he appeared simply to be the enforcer of European wishes and therefore became discredited in their eyes. It was into this scene of potential conflict that Kenyatta stumbled in July 1947.

74. KNA MAA 8/105, especially editorial from Radio Posta on 10 and 16 October 1947; and MAA 8/106, letter complaining that chiefs’ wives did not have to terrace the land, in Mumenyereri, 29 September 1947. See also report of meeting in location 13, Murang’a, which praised Chief Parmenas for caring about the well-being of his people, unlike other chiefs in the same issue.

75. This was pointed out by Benjamin Mang’uru, the secretary of the Githunguri branch of Kenya African Union in Mumenyereri, 3 November 1947. See KNA DO Taveta 1/102 Agr 11/1 for K. M. Cowley’s memorandum on agricultural productivity in the Taita District, November 1948. Cowley emphasized that ‘nothing short of a complete revolution is required’. In Taita the Agricultural Department reached the conclusion that broad-based terracing and the incentive of high priced cash crops were essential to gain African cooperation at least two or three years before their colleagues in Kikuyuland.

76. KNA MAA 8/106, B. Mang’uru’s letter in Mumenyereri, 3 November 1947.
O'Hagan, the previous District Commissioner, had refused by administrative fiat, to allow Kenyatta to enter Murang’a. Any such visit, he believed, would merely stir up trouble; a quantity of which the local Kenya African Union leaders, James Beattah and Andrew Ng’ang’a, were quite capable of generating on their own without any outside assistance. Walter Coutts, the new District Commissioner, however, had a more liberal conception of the role of British rule.77 Whereas O'Hagan was a safety first man, who believed in crushing any incipient opposition with a hard hand as soon as it raised its head and in unwavering support of the chiefs, Coutts wanted to co-opt the economically ambitious supporters of the Kenya African Union, and to replace the chiefs gradually with elected Local Native Councils of progressive Africans. He was in fact a convinced disciple of the new doctrine of controlled political education through local government. He therefore decided to remove the ban on Kenyatta, who thereupon seized the chance to address a mass meeting in Murang’a township, with disastrous consequences for all concerned.

The meeting, on Sunday 21 July 1947, exemplified the problems Kenyatta had to deal with, and the reports of the meeting provide a fascinating study of how his words were interpreted by the Administration and the militants to suit their own presuppositions.78 One aspect of the terracing campaign was already giving rise to discontent and therefore government concern. This was the use of women to dig terraces. Discussions had already been held in the Secretariat to consider whether female labour should be banned, and a circular letter to all District Commissioners was being drafted. The overwhelming problem, however, was that over seventy per cent of terracing was actually done by Kikuyu women. To exempt them from ngwario service would therefore destroy the foundation of the soil conservation campaign. The circular letter had not therefore been issued, pending further discussions between the Secretariat and the Field Administration, although Britain’s commitment to International Labour Regulations, in the opinion of the Secretariat, was an irrefutable argument which would soon require compulsory female labour to be ended.79

Kenyatta began by enthusiastically praising the terracing campaign and the progress which had been made in Murang’a. Such work was essential,

77. Contrast KNA DC/FH 1/25 and DC/FH 1/26 with DC/FH 1/27 for the effects of Kenyatta’s visit. This idea was suggested to me by Mr O’Hagan in the course of three interviews in Nairobi in April and June 1981.
79. CO 852/19936/2.
The origins of Mau Mau

he declared, if the fertility of Kikuyuland was to be preserved. The initial statement in praise of soil conservation was subsequently ignored by the Administration, although the militants were to use it to attack Kenyatta. The real problem sprang from what Kenyatta said next, which was to urge that women should not be forced to undertake terracing— the very issue which was preoccupying the Secretariat! The next day soil terracing in Murang’a, until then the outstanding success of post-war development, around which important visitors to the colony, such as Creech Jones, were always taken, ground to a halt. Within twenty-four hours Murang’a passed from being the centre of success to the major problem area of the Administration. Terracing figures fell overnight to less than one-tenth of their previous levels. Kenyatta, of course, got all the blame, and Coutts for one never forgave him.

The Kikuyu militants, however, interpreted the speech in a completely different manner, emphasizing Kenyatta’s praise for terracing and ignoring his attack on female labour. For them, Kenyatta was simply too moderate, a supporter of government policy just like the chiefs, whereas they wished to seize the issue to stir up real trouble and encourage direct attacks on the chiefs. This they soon succeeded in doing. Ignatio went in fear of his life, and several attempts were made to kill him. He lost all control over his district, remaining isolated for the next few months in his boma, fearing to venture out amongst his people. Although he subsequently reasserted control and outwardly location eight became a centre of ‘progress’ once more, his hold was never as secure again, and with the outbreak of Mau Mau the location become one of their strongholds in Murang’a.

Ignatio was too much of a government man, with too tight a grip over his people, to be able to act as a neutral intermediary between them and the government, a function which the chief was increasingly required to perform after 1945. The trouble was not simply that he was a government stooge, a ‘collaborator’, but, even worse, that he firmly believed in what he was doing, an apostle of modernization who set about improving his own smallholding, applying manure, enclosing his land, dipping his cattle, and building terraces. It was in such areas, where the Second Colonial Occupation was most strongly felt, that Mau Mau won its main support as well as its fiercest enemies.

82. ibid. and see Radio Posta, 16 October 1947.
83. Mau Mau in Nyeri, for example, was strongest in North and South Tetu and Othaya, where superficially the Government’s terracing and veterinary policies had been most successful. Ironically even Dedan Kimathi, the Mau Mau leader, had once worked for the Tetu Dairyman’s Cooperative, which, epitomized the Government’s post-1948 betterment strategy, until he absconded with the funds.
In these areas Mau Mau was indeed a Kikuyu civil war—a civil war based to a considerable extent on social class and differing perceptions of colonial rule. Effective chiefs, because of their commitment to the modernization campaign and their position in the colonial order, were necessarily on one side, supported by the Elders and the staunch Christians; whereas those knocking on the doors of the colonial state, often mission educated clerks and ex-askaris, along with the poor, incapable of supporting their families on minute, fragmented shambas, went into opposition—although they themselves were divided into constitutionalists and militants, largely along social lines. This division after 1952 merged into that between the passive wing and the forest fighters.84

The conflict was reduced in certain locations by the ambivalent behaviour of the chiefs. In Murang’a, the outstanding example of a chief who united his people behind him rather than dividing them against him was Parmenas Githendu of location thirteen.85 Parmenas had been a prominent figure at Church Missionary Society Kahuhia in the 1920s, a hotbed of the early KCA, and in 1931 he had been selected as the Murang’a man to accompany Kenyatta, the outsider from Kiambu who was not entirely trusted by the KCA heartland of Murang’a, to give evidence to the Joint Select Committee in London. Befriended by Margery Perham, like Kenyatta, he was far more sophisticated and educated than most chiefs. Unlike Ignatius, for example, he spoke English and had contributed a brief autobiography to Perham’s book, Ten Africans. As a chief, he preserved close relations with the KCA and the independent schools movement in his location. But by 1947, the local administration dismissed him as a lazy drunkard who had failed abysmally to encourage soil conservation in his location, and who had encouraged the independent schools in their campaign against Capon and the Church Missionary Society.86

To the Administration Ignatius appeared as outstanding, whereas Parmenas was a complete failure, totally discredited, and in 1948 he was dismissed. But as events were to prove, when the crisis occurred Parmenas, by conciliating rather than alienating the constitutionalist wing

84. For another attack on Chief Ignatius see KNA MAA 8/105, Radio Posta, 31 October 1947; and 22 November 1947, for allegations against Chief Muhindi of Nyeri. Other cases of chiefs under attack are MAA 8/132, Chief Native Commissioner to Attorney General, 25 November 1947, for Chief Makimei of Uplands; MAA 8/68 for Chief Waruhiu; and MAA 8/106, Mumenyereri, 9 October 1947, and 1 December 1947, for denunciations against several Murang’a chiefs. See also MAA 8/68, Wyn Harris to Mitchell, August 1948, for the Chief Native Commissioner’s views on the campaign. For the Christian response see KNA (Murumbi Archive, Muthaiga) KEN/33/1, Rev Martin Capon, the Rural Dean of Mount Kenya, who supplied the Elector’s Union with much of their information about Kenyatta’s ‘subversive activities’.

85. A brief autobiographical account of Parmenas is to be found in M. Perham ed. Ten Africans (Faber, 1936). For the Administration’s view see DC/FH 4/6 ‘Chiefs and Headmen, 1937–54’; DC/FH 1/27 pp. 5 and 17; DC/FH 1/28, pp. 22–3; and DC/FH 1/29, pp. 18–9.

86. ibid.
of KAU and the local independent schools and churches, ensured that the militants made far less progress in location thirteen than in location eight where Ignatio's zealous commitment to administration policy provided fertile ground for opposition.

Political Passivity in Embu, Meru and Ukambani

The politics of Central Province needs to be analysed on such a locational level, since the role of the chief in interpreting and implementing policy was of crucial importance to the formation of dissent. Unlike Nairobi and the Rift Valley, where the broad outlines of African discontent, especially amongst the Kikuyu, can be discerned, Central Province provides a series of locational peculiarities where the response of the people differed according to their perceptions of the government's programme.

This differing perception perhaps provides an explanation for the lack of involvement of the Meru, Embu and Kamba peoples in Mau Mau. In the first two districts the colonial regime had experimented with African peasant coffee production since 1937. Although during the first decade little was actually achieved, it did provide the bedrock for economic diversification in the late 1940s and early 1950s. After 1946 the Agricultural Department in Meru and Embu encouraged African coffee production on a much wider scale.87 Broad-based interval terraces were dug instead of the short-based terraces elsewhere in Central Province, as these were a prerequisite for being allowed to grow coffee—a high value cash crop. This not only entailed far less labour on preserving the terraces once they had been built but enabled a tangible reward to be secured for undertaking soil conservation work. By 1952 forty per cent of Meru households and twenty-five per cent in Embu were cultivating coffee or other cash crops, adding considerably to their income.88 Coffee cultivation, however, was not introduced in Kikuyuland until much later. From 1950 onwards, broad-based terracing was introduced and quickly became more popular than short-based terracing as the peasantry soon perceived that in the long-term it involved far less labour, but the concomitant introduction of high value cash crop production as a reward for terracing by 1952 still lagged far behind the levels in Embu and Meru. In South Nyeri, for example, less than two per cent of households were cultivating

88. ibid. and KNA Ag 4/328 'Annual Reports Agriculture Central Province, 1951'. Chogoria, Meru and Chuka locations had some 2,600 households growing Arabica coffee by 1951, and 3,700 by 1952. By the end of 1952 there were some one million coffee trees in Embu District. See Ag 4/410, especially Embu Agricultural Annual Report, 1952, Appendix II; The annual report of the Coffee Officer, Embu, 1952.
coffee and in Murang’a the proportion was only half a per cent.\(^89\) As a consequence the Kikuyu, unlike their neighbours, could see no reason for the white man’s madness and his insistence on terracing, which often destroyed their most valuable crop, wattle, which provided the wealth of many political activists.\(^90\)

The reasons for Kamba non-involvement were different again, and stemmed from the failure of the Administration to mobilize them into soil conservation and destocking after 1945. The real force of the post-war development policies was not felt in Machakos until after 1950, by which time their impact on the Kikuyu was already considerable. As a consequence discontent in Machakos did not begin to reach dangerous proportions until 1954, and in Kitui, where the modernization campaign never got off the ground, conditions remained tranquil. By 1954, however, Machakos was nearly boiling over and the Administration came very close to losing control, just as they had two years earlier amongst the Kikuyu.\(^91\)

According to this interpretation, the Kikuyu cause was not the unusual atavistic response of one tribe to progress but a typical response in specific circumstances. The ‘Second Colonial Occupation’ was accepted in Meru and Embu, and rejected in Kikuyuland; as African peasants in the former, over quite a broad cross-section of society, could see clear financial gains from their labours. Unfortunately, the carrot did not play such a major role among the Kikuyu, and the only motivating force there was the stick. But, paradoxically, the impact of post-war development was strongest amongst them. The Kikuyu reaction to this forced modernization therefore took place before the programme had really been applied to Ukambani, and their defeat provided a deterrent to Kamba militancy a few years later.

**The Kiambu Paradox**

The quiescence of Kiambu compared to Murang’a and Nyeri during Mau Mau can also be explained in these terms. There, the high value cash crop was not coffee but the pineapple, which by 1952 was being produced in large quantities for the Nairobi market and for Kenya Canners at Thika.\(^92\) The effect of this very high value cash crop, much more profitable than coffee, was more limited in its pacifying effects because European settlement had produced a far greater disruption of Kiambu society than in

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89. KNA Ag 4/410, ‘Nyeri District Agricultural Annual Report, 1952’.
Meru and Embu, where virtually no land had been alienated. Indeed, of all the districts of Central Province far more land had been lost in Kiambu than anywhere else. The effects of this, and the return in the early 1950s of squatters, many of whom had come from Kiambu originally, counteracted the prosperity generated by cash crop production. For example, the Olenguruone malcontents had originally come from Limuru, where their githakas had been alienated to European settlers. Such people had nothing to lose in a full-scale revolt.

Kiambu society can be divided into three groups, the respective strengths of which are difficult to assess because they varied over time. There were the loyalists headed by Chiefs Waruhiu and Magugu and the committed members of the Presbyterian Church. But Kiambu was also the stronghold of the KAU constitutionalists, whose main leaders—Kenyatta, Mathu, Gichuru—were all Kiambu men. These two groups were the ones who benefitted most from Kiambu’s proximity to Nairobi and its transformation into a lucrative market garden area for the city, with a fall-back in years of over-production and the threat of lower prices in the fruit and vegetable canning factory at Thika. The conflict between these two groups was not between ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ but between two factions who wished to maximize their access to the European economy and state apparatus. The chiefs and their supporters, by definition, were entrenched; KAU supporters were demanding equal access and co-option.

Until the 1950s the militants, the have-nots, were weaker in Kiambu than elsewhere in Kikuyuland. It was not until the mass exodus of squatters from the Rift from 1950 onwards that militancy grew. Part of the explanation for this acquiescence was that Kiambu, unlike Murang’a and South Nyeri, exported its ahoi, the landless have-nots of Kikuyu society, outside the district to Nairobi, where the militants captured control over the local KAU machine in 1951. As a result the tenor of political dispute in Kiambu was more restrained during the 1940s at least, limited to constitutionalist paths.

Kenyatta’s Political Decline

Kenyatta’s leadership, however, even here, was largely discredited by 1949. On his return from Britain, Kenyatta had initially appeared to be capable of uniting the constitutionalist and militant wings of KAU. He


was the undisputed leader: the man who knew the ways of the European even better than Mathu. Moreover he had quickly recemented his links with Kikuyu society. His marriages to the daughters of Chief Koinange and Chief Muhoho consolidated his position in the Kiambu establishment.

With his power base secured in mid-1947 Kenyatta launched a widespread campaign to secure funds for Githunguri Teachers Training College, and for the next year, until mid–1948, monthly meetings were held at Githunguri where representatives of all Kikuyu riika reported how much they had collected from their age mates in the previous four weeks.95 These monthly gatherings often raised £2,000, but little progress was made in rebuilding the school. Gradually discontent grew; the Githunguri teachers threatened to go on strike as they had not been paid for nearly six months, and the government waited with glee for Kenyatta and the Kenya African Union to be totally discredited.96

This did not happen because Gichuru and Mbiyu Koinange intervened. In June 1948, Kenyatta was summoned to a gathering of thirty prominent Kikuyu at a secret meeting at James Gichuru’s house, where his administration of the school was strongly criticized.97 After this Kenyatta was a spent force, a mere figurehead amongst the moderates, whilst the militants openly attacked him. Kenyatta realized that his position was slipping badly and that his attempts to reassert his influence were failing. In consequence he took to excessive drinking as solace for his lost political opportunity.98

By 1949, he was a completely discredited force, discarded in all practical respects by his supporters, but clinging to his position as President of the Kenya African Union because any attempt to oust him by the moderates would damage KAU’s already waning support, whilst playing into the hands of the militants by enabling them to rally round as supporters of Kenyatta and to use his residual mystique, which remained amongst the masses, even though his practical influence was slight. Equally, the militants could not ditch Kenyatta as to do so would remove the protective smoke-screen which he provided, and expose them to the full wrath of Mathu and the Gichuru faction. Neither side, therefore, could afford to get rid of him, much as they would both have liked to do so.99

96. CO 537/3591/38733, Mitchell to Cohen 18 October, 1948; KNA MAA 8/106, Mumenyereri, 5 April and 26 April, 1948; and MAA, Radio Posta, 27 January 1948.
97. KNA MAA 8/102, Director of Intelligence to Chief Native Commissioner, 16 June 1948.
99. For a temperate statement of the radicals’ opinions of Kenyatta, see B. Kaggia Roots of Freedom, pp. 79–82. W. W. W. Awori’s view is to be found in KNA MAA 8/109, in a report of the Director of Intelligence to Wyn Harris, 21 October 1947. Following Chege Kibachia’s detention, Awori and H. S. Gathigira tried to take over the AWF as a rival political movement to Kenyatta’s KAU. Awori had been the vice-president of KAU until Kenyatta and his KCA cronies ousted him.
Given this assessment, the question arises as to how far the Administration understood this power struggle inside KAU and Kenyatta’s position. At least two possible explanations exist for his arrest on 20 October 1952, as the organizer of Mau Mau. The first, and machiavellian, interpretation—which I do not believe but for which there is a surprising amount of evidence—is that the Administration knew exactly what they were doing when they arrested Kenyatta. They knew that they were creating a martyr, one more prison graduate, and that was exactly what they wanted to do. The Special Branch for the last five years had been providing sophisticated analyses of KAU political divisions. They saw Kenyatta as essentially a moderate man, not fanatically anti-European; a man who could perhaps later bind together the wounds of a divided country: but a man who, because of his moderation, had lost control over the movement. If this interpretation, which the Special Branch was constantly providing to the Chief Native Commissioner, had been accepted, it is possible that the Mau Mau Emergency should be seen not only as a pre-emptive strike to remove from circulation the militant threat to colonial rule but also as a device to rehabilitate him in the eyes of politically conscious Africans and to create a martyr to the cause of Kenya’s freedom who would subsequently prove as moderate and susceptible to ‘reason’ as Nehru had in India.

This interpretation is supported not only by certain evidence from the Special Branch but also of a few settler leaders who were furious with the Administration for arresting Kenyatta. What they said in public to their settler audiences about him as the evil genius behind Mau Mau bore little resemblance to their view of him as a moderating influence, which they expressed in private. Ewart Grogan, for one, saw the arrest as a tremendous error of judgement. The question is: Did the colonial Kenya government agree with this interpretation of Kenyatta’s position and were they playing a double bluff? Alas, despite the charms of such a move by the British, one must confess that it appears to be too far-fetched and the more probable explanation for Kenyatta’s arrest was rather more prosaic.

Despite what the Special Branch was telling them in private, the Secretariat refused to believe that Kenyatta was not responsible for Mau Mau. Because of the structure of the colonial state, the Secretariat relied overwhelmingly on the reports provided by the provincial administration:

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members, like themselves, of the elite administrative cadre. These reports blamed Kenyatta and KAU as the cause of all discontent in the reserves. Compared to the sophisticated understanding of KAU factionalism provided in the Special Branch reports, their assessment was very simplistic. Little knowledge was shown as to the deep divisions within KAU, which was viewed as a purely monolithic movement, united behind Kenyatta’s all-encompassing evil leadership. The source of this information was often simply the prejudice of the District Commissioners against African politicians, or went one stage further back to the chiefs, who saw them as a threat to their positions.

The prejudices of the Secretariat in favour of the all-knowing District Commissioner, the man who knew ‘his’ people, plus the fact that the interpretation offered coincided with the Secretariat’s and Mitchell’s personal dislike for the emerging class of African politicians, ensured that this view of Kenyatta was favoured and the Special Branch’s was ignored. Consequently they rehabilitated Kenyatta by making him a martyr by chance rather than by design. Fortunately for British interests, the rehabilitated Kenyatta was to prove himself as confirmed a moderate as the Special Branch had always suggested he was.

Only those two wily politicians Kenyatta and Macmillan recognized in the 1940s that until the British selected and supported a Kenya Governor who had the courage to sacrifice the settlers and to incorporate the emerging African elite around Kenyatta and his faction inside KAU, long-term political stability was impossible. Mitchell, despite his vast experience of East Africa, had not even begun to understand the problem. In 1942, however, Harold Macmillan when he served briefly as Under-Secretary for the Colonies had been willing to grapple with settler hegemony. After only a few months at the Colonial Office, and unencumbered by any previous knowledge of Africa, he had reached from impeccably conservative premises the radical conclusion that settler farming was inefficient and uneconomic and proposed that the European farmers in the White Highlands must be bought out and the Kikuyu allowed to settle on collective farms in the Rift Valley if a peasants’ revolt within ten years was to be

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103. This was still the version offered by F. D. Corfield in The Origins and Growth of Mau Mau. See CO 533/543/38086/38, for Mitchell’s explanation to Creech Jones, 28 February 1949.


105. Mitchell’s dislike of ‘political agitators’ was intense and often vented. See CO 533/540/38032, Mitchell to Creech Jones, 11 December 1948; and CO 533/549/38232/15, letter of 14 April 1947.
averted.\textsuperscript{106} This went too far for the Whitehall establishment. The cautious Colonial Office chose instead to ‘sand-bag’ the settlers from behind and to sap their strength by using their overweening ambitions to pull them down. The settlers, however, captured Mitchell and multi-racialism failed. It was the Mau Mau rebellion which foreclosed the settler option once and for all, and enabled Macmillan and Kenyatta in the early 1960s, with the help of Macleod, Blundell, Mboya and MacDonald, to reach an arrangement which satisfied the Kikuyu elites (both loyalist and Kenyatta-ite) and the British.\textsuperscript{107} Ironically this solution bore an uncanny resemblance to Macmillan’s 1942 plan. As Prime Minister and prison martyr in the early 1960s, Macmillan and Kenyatta were able to secure a political solution very similar to the one they had both advocated, from their different sides of the colonial fence, in the 1940s, and to ditch their intransigent allies.
