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Taking a Stand

**Criticisms to British Policy by European Dissidents and the Settler Responses in
Kenya during the Mau Mau Crisis**

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Honors 490 Project

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Kenya in the 1950's was a turbulent colony full of racial, political and economic conflict. Kenya had been within the British sphere of influence since 1886 and was not given its independence until 1963. By the 1920s Africans began demanding more political and economic rights while the settlers called for more control over their African labor and an expanded color-bar. By 1952, the situation had reached a climax, and British officials began an armed conflict with those they termed as Mau Mau, who referred to themselves as the Land Freedom Army. This struggle has been viewed as the catalyst to Kenya's independence. Known around the world as the Mau Mau Rebellion, it impacted the lives of every person in Kenya: Europeans, Africans and Asians. The significance of this deadly conflict is evident from the vast amount of written sources from the 1950's, both African and European. These included government documents, literature, non-fiction and commentary. One thing is clear from these sources: everyone seemed to hold an opinion about their own and others' work. Whether loyal to Britain or critiquing the government and settlers, most writers usually dealt with the causes of the rebellion, the best ways to end the conflict and how Kenya should be governed in the future.

Some of the sources published in the 1950s directly criticized the British government and were sympathetic to the Land Freedom Army. These critics came from both inside the colony, such as Eileen Fletcher, and from Britain, including Fenner Brockway and the Movement for Colonial Freedom. The criticisms published by those opposing official policy challenged the attitudes of the settlers and policies of imperialism, forcing a defense from those advocating the violent suppression of Africans rebels. Kenyan settlers did not take these criticisms lightly. They retaliated in the form of journals, books and memoirs to explain or justify their behavior. The settlers published their own works in direct response of these critics. Together these different types of sources help to understand how the colonial discussions of the day were

formed and what types of arguments each side used.

Mau Mau: An Overview

The colony's newly installed Governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, officially declared the Mau Mau Emergency on October 20, 1952. Measures were taken against the largest ethnic group in Kenya, the Kikuyu, who lived in the highly populated Nairobi area as well as nearby tribal reserves and accounted for the most politically active Africans in the country. The clampdown came after the highly publicized assassination by Kikuyu gunmen of Kikuyu Senior Chief Waruhiu. The government could no longer ignore the settler demands for action against the violence created by the relatively secret Mau Mau "society."¹ Interestingly, it was the assassination of a Kikuyu and not a European that was the catalyst for settler anxiety for their own safety. Most settlers feared violence directed at themselves, though the murders of Africans set some off some of this fear. The government acted against the Mau Mau in many different ways. First, they arrested the high profile leaders of Kenyan nationalist organizations: Jomo Kenyatta, Fred Kubai and Bildad Kaggia.² British regulars were sent in, Europeans became heavily armed and, out of desperation, concentration camps were set up for suspected terrorists.³ This strategy, called Operation Anvil, was created by the colony's military commander, General Sir George Erskine. It involved clearing Nairobi of Mau Mau supporters and placing them in detention camps. In one month, 24,000 Africans were placed in the camps, adding to nationalist grievances.⁴

Robert B. Edgerton explains that many of the Kikuyu grievances were specifically directed against European settlers in Kenya, which became the basis for the grievances the Mau

¹ Rosberg and Nottingham, 276-277.

² Robert B. Edgerton *Mau Mau: An African Crucible* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 70.

³ Edgerton, 69, 91.

Mau fought for. Its members frequently complained of land alienation, unequal justice and educational differences.⁵ Even so, the violence that broke out during the Emergency mostly consisted of Kikuyu versus Kikuyu, such as the Lari Massacre of 1953. Most of the violence between Africans was directed at loyal Africans by the Mau Mau. While the European population continued to define Mau Mau as an organization determined to drive them out, most of the fighting did not involve Europeans. Europeans instead focused on single but rare acts of violence against the white population, such as the murder of the Ruck family in 1953.⁶

Edgerton claims that the Europeans in Kenya chose not to see the condition of Africans living in slums throughout the country. No Kenyan Government official ever brought up or dealt with these problems before the Emergency, showing their lack of priority for such issues. Africans were restricted schooling but needed formal education to get high-paying jobs; Africans could not consume European liquors; members of different tribes serving as police harassed Kikuyu. All of these grievances began to build up into a need for action.⁷ A crime wave spread from Nairobi to rural areas where Kikuyu did not have the luxury of being homeless if one member of the family lost his or her job. It was illegal for a Kikuyu to stay with friends or relatives and the family was forced to move back to the reserves immediately and try their luck there. These grievances aided in the formation of Mau Mau as a nationalist organization, though it was predominantly made up only of Kikuyu.

The British native policy of indirect rule in Kenya also led to a number of problems between Europeans and Africans. Tribal chiefs, though they were not a traditional part of

⁴ Edgerton, 93.

⁵ Edgerton, 36.

⁶ Edgerton, 74. The Ruck family was killed by Mau Mau January 24, 1953. A family servant eventually confessed to the murder of the young couple and their son. The media used their deaths as a rally cry against Mau Mau and published photographs of the murder scene. The settlers were especially unnerved that even their servants could not be trusted. This occurred the same weekend as the judgment of whether there was enough evidence to bring Jomo Kenyatta to trial. Settlers began to press the government for more action against Mau Mau.

Kikuyu society, were put in charge of reserve districts and exploited their power in order to gain prestige and wealth. Edgerton claims some of the chiefs enjoyed even better standards of living than some Europeans in Kenya.⁸ This was a major cause of the rift between different members of the Kikuyu tribe. Many of the chiefs and the police force, the Home Guard, supported the British Government because of their elevated social and financial status.⁹ With the return from England of the recognized leader of the nationalists, Jomo Kenyatta, the Kenya African Union (KAU) movement was created in an attempt to unite all Kenyans against European domination. The KAU became a large organization, and, as with Mau Mau, was dominated by the Kikuyu ethnic group.¹⁰

One practice of Mau Mau that incited much attention from its European opponents was its use of oathing loyalty. Oathing in traditional Kikuyu culture was believed to have the power to kill anyone who went against it. Though the early oathings were mild, such as professing sole loyalty to a leader, Mau Mau leaders added specific loyalties for its members that carried a death penalty for oath-breakers.¹¹ British propaganda later published so-called authentic oaths that required members to pledge to violate the corpses of Europeans brutally murdered by Mau Mau.¹² This propaganda was a way for the British to gain support for their cause against Mau Mau.

The "Myth of Mau Mau," essentially the propaganda circulated by the British government to portray Mau Mau as an atavistic barbaric cult,¹³ became an accepted Western idea in the 1950s. The British and Kenyan governments attempted to justify their position in Kenya

⁷ Edgerton, 37.

⁸ Edgerton, 40.

⁹ Edgerton, 40.

¹⁰ Edgerton, 49-50.

¹¹ Edgerton, 50, 55.

¹² C.J.M. Alport, "Kenya's Answer to the Mau Mau Challenge," *African Affairs* 53, no. 212 (1954): 243.

¹³ Carl Rosberg and John Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau: Nationalism In Kenya* (New York: Praeger, 1966),

and avoid the sort of negative image the British government had received from its earlier colonial wars in Africa, including the Zulu and Boer wars it waged in South Africa between 1879 and 1902. The propaganda included exaggerated accounts of Mau Mau atrocities, testimony from settlers, and an altered history of Kenyan politics. The “myth” was successful in that its imagery prevailed over the images of the oppressive European population. This atmosphere facilitated discussion among British subjects on the effectiveness and authenticity of British colonial rule.

British methods for stopping Mau Mau and “rehabilitating” members fell under intense criticism in the 1950s. Following the lessons of their victory in the Malayan uprising, the British Government in Kenya created concentration camps to hold detainees. It was widely accepted that those who had taken the oath needed to confess voluntarily in order to cleanse their souls and become law-abiding members of society again. The government divided the captured Mau Mau into groups with the most “hard-core” being placed in work camps, as hard labor was seen as a way to rehabilitate men and women. The government went after both passive and active Mau Mau militants, which resulted in a large number of women civilians from the reserves put into rehabilitation camps. This was a major way for the government to gain ground against Mau Mau, as it was the passive women’s wing that succeeded in getting ammunition and food to the people in the forest. Controversy over the treatment of prisoners in the camps continued until camp guards killed eleven “hard-core” detainees from Hola Camp.¹⁴ This ended some of the controversy, as many Britons decided that the conditions in the camps had gotten out of hand. Outraged citizens formed organizations to learn the real story from Kenya and improve camp conditions. Eventually, after many failures of the British government to do anything effective

320.

¹⁴ Edgerton, 199.

about camp conditions, opinion forced the release of all detainees.¹⁵

Criticism of British Policy

While the focus of criticisms of the situation in Kenya ranged from specific laws to overall policy, most dissidents focused on four main points: land confiscation, wages and labor, the color bar, and racial equality on political and social lines. These sources condemned Kenya's racial discrimination, whether political or social, but had different ways of challenging the system in Kenya. These similarities and differences help to distinguish between the critics' motives and purposes. Examining the arguments against British policy in Kenya can help to understand how their rivals formed counter-arguments.

The Movement for Colonial Freedom

The Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF) was a British organization created in 1954 to support equal rights for British colonial subjects and help gain support for the independence of the overseas colonies.¹⁶ The MCF was preceded in 1948 by a lesser-known organization, the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism, which had similar goals but focused more on the cooperation of colonial subjects in many dependent territories to work together to fight imperialism. The activities and influence of the international chairman of the Congress, Fenner Brockway, were vital in bringing about the formation of MCF. As a Socialist Minister of Parliament (MP), Brockway was the driving force of anti-imperialist activity in Britain. Fueled by growing interest in colonial policy in Parliament, Brockway led the MCF's effort to become an influential political organization though it never had an official political policy.

Prior to the MCF's formation, African affairs began to gain attention from left-wing

¹⁵ Edgerton, 203.

¹⁶ Eileen Fletcher, *Truth About Kenya: An Eyewitness Account* (London: Movement for Colonial Freedom, 1956), back cover leaf.

politicians in Parliament who felt the increasingly hostile circumstances in the colonies mandated action toward independence. In 1957, Anthony Wedgwood Benn MP called for more attention for colonial matters, including the creation of a Parliamentary Committee on Colonial Affairs. Steven Howe points out in *Anticolonialism in British Politics* that ten years earlier there would not have been enough parliamentary support for such measures. Howe also argues that the discussions in Parliament were much more direct when dealing with colonialism: "Does not the hon. Gentleman think it is time we dropped the phraseology 'bandits and gangs' when what we are actually concerned with is the desire for these people for freedom and dignity?"¹⁷ This remark was made on June 23, 1954, from the first debate where an entire Question Period within the Parliament dealt with the colonial issue. Not coincidentally, 1954, a year of movement in British activity towards anticolonialism, was also the year in which the Mau Mau Emergency in Kenya was especially severe. Many MCs were no longer willing to ignore violent and racist behavior against colonial subjects.

The MCF was able to gain a strong base of support from many different political groups. The organization had membership from many a broad spectrum of political parties because its aim was not purely political. Howe characterizes the MCF's goal as more moral than political; its first political statement emphasized a goal of a "psychological revolution throughout the colonies."¹⁸ Though the MCF was politically closer to the left, it attempted to avoid associating with one party or another. The organization stuck to its anticolonial policy for all colonies in the Empire and supported all nationalist organization. The MCF continued to flourish until 1964, with the formation of internal disputes on the infiltration of Communists in the organization.¹⁹

¹⁷ Steven Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918-1964* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 257.

¹⁸ Howe, 234.

¹⁹ Howe, 262.

The MCF published pamphlets by its various members to help gain support for its anticolonial policy. One example is *Truth About Kenya* by Eileen Fletcher, a former Rehabilitation Officer in Kenya. A twelve page pamphlet, it included a sizeable amount of information on specific atrocities within Kenya, such as those occurring in the concentration camps, with specific attention to women, injustices in trial, racist and unjust quotes from the Kenyan government and torture. She used specific quotes and examples while still drawing attention to the larger issues at hand; it succeeded in relating the stories to the reader while staying general and broad enough to get a larger point across. Within the pamphlet there was a section explaining the MCF, what it stood for, and how to become more involved. The pamphlets were used as propaganda not only for the cause of anticolonialism, but for the MCF itself to gain more membership.

Sources

One of the most vocal critics of British policy in Kenya was Fenner Brockway. He wrote many pamphlets and books on his experiences in Kenya dealing with the Mau Mau Emergency, including *African Journeys*, which details one visit and his reactions to the social and political conditions there. A shorter pamphlet, "Why Mau Mau? An Analysis and Remedy," concisely voices four criticisms against the Kenyan Government and European society. Instead of focusing on the atrocities of Mau Mau itself, he looked into the causes and the Government's attempt to solve the problems from the inside.²⁰ Brockway understood the causes of Mau Mau to be in the frustrations that European domination created for Africans. These include social, economic and psychological frustrations. Brockway is an interesting figure in the debate between British and Kenyans in that he did not side completely with Africans or Europeans. He

²⁰ Fenner Brockway, *Why Mau Mau? An Analysis and Remedy* (London: Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism, 1953), 1.

attempted to hear all sides of the story and did not assume giving power to Africans was the solution to the problems, though his sympathies do lay more with Africans. During his visit to Kenya he met with Europeans, African and East Indian groups so as to equally understand the viewpoints of all the ethnic groups within the colony.

British policy in the reserves focused on installing British culture and society in place of African culture, allowing for the breakdown of the tribal system. Social frustrations resulted from what Brockway considered to be a poor substitute for the Kikuyu's traditional culture.²¹ Brockway singled out the Kikuyu tribe as especially affected by this situation and explains the larger number of Kikuyu involved in Mau Mau with this evidence. Specifically, the British policy of appointing chiefs as heads of reserves was disastrous to the Kikuyu social structure. "The Chiefs are servants of the Government, not spokesman of the people."²² Brockway explained that this injustice had no traditional basis and was a major reason for the amount of inter-ethnic killing associated with Mau Mau. The British succeeded in dividing the ethnic groups against each other.²³ This would assume that Brockway felt the British were consciously attempting a divide and rule policy in order to stay in power. While Brockway praised the virtues of traditional Kikuyu society, he denounced the practice of female circumcision. Showing he never completely disassociated himself from the "myth," Brockway was never able to accept this as anything except a barbaric custom, as he explained in *African Journeys*.²⁴ Though he covered many points, Brockway used this section of the pamphlet to establish the disproportionate ratio of Africans killed to Europeans killed. He attributed this to the social frustrations created when a society is forced to give up its traditional culture and does not put

²¹ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 2.

²² Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 2.

²³ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 3.

²⁴ Fenner Brockway, *African Journeys* (London: Gollanz Ltd, 1955), 94-95.

something else in its place.

Brockway saw the confiscation of Kikuyu land and British laws restricting African land use as an economic frustration adding to the complaints of the African nationalists.²⁵ In this section Brockway specifically compared the situation of the African with the European in order to create a sense of empathy: "Land hunger in Kenya is equivalent to unemployment in Britain - unemployment without benefits, children's allowances or other special services."²⁶ He attempted to connect the European reader to the African on a basic, human level. Though many people in Britain did not understand the significance of land hunger in Kenya, they certainly understood the impact of unemployment on a family. A major question in the land debate was to whom the land belonged before the Europeans colonized Kenya. Brockway admitted that the land was empty when the Europeans settled in the Highlands, but only because of the impact of four diseases that had shrunk the size of the Kikuyu population. He asserted that the land still belonged to the Kikuyu.²⁷

In addition to land alienation, another criticism posed by Brockway was the restrictions on African farms. European farmers were allowed to grow cash crops, while Africans were restricted to subsistence farming. Africans were then forced to work as squatters on European farms to pay their taxes to survive. "The name should be 'serfs' rather than squatters."²⁸ Brockway made an effort in this section to cite specific cases of exploitation by European farmers, such as the Blundell farm, and even compared them to slave owners: "Many of these farmers...are considerate to their labourers. So were many English landlords to their serfs in medieval times. So were many American masters to their slaves in the last century. But this

²⁵ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 4-5.

²⁶ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 3.

²⁷ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 4.

²⁸ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 5.

does not make either serfdom or slavery tolerable in these times.”²⁹ Brockway showed here that he was not as concerned with the past as he is with the present; though the conditions in Kenya were the same as they have been for many years, they were not appropriate anymore. He was attempting to extinguish any arguments to his proposal and ideas.

Brockway began his section on psychological frustrations with an example of the degree to which the color bar existed in Kenya. In the entire city of Nairobi there was not one restaurant or hotel that would allow an Indian, a European and an African to eat together.³⁰ He asserted that the Africans’ psychological frustration came almost exclusively from racial discrimination and the color bar.³¹ Though he cited many instances of racial discrimination, he specifically focused on the problems of segregated schools. Not only did it breed racist children, but in the process African children were not given the same quality of education as European children who received the bulk of the state funding for education.³² In Brockway’s words, “the humiliation of the colour bar cause the deepest wounds of bitterness.”³³ It was not the extreme cases that were problematic; the everyday repetition of discrimination was the problem.

Most of Brockway’s previous criticisms dealt with the societal problems in the country, but he also criticized the government’s policy in Kenya. “In practice, it [the government] has treated every member of the Kikuyu tribe as a potential terrorist.”³⁴ He cited the government’s policy to arrest anyone and screen him or her as Mau Mau, regardless of proof against them. A common cycle for a suspected Mau Mau was to be arrested, have all property confiscated, then, landless, be forced to work for a European landowner as a squatter.³⁵ He felt this did not help to

²⁹ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 6.

³⁰ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 7.

³¹ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 7.

³² Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 8.

³³ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 9.

³⁴ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 9.

³⁵ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 10.

solve the violence problem and created more psychological and economic frustrations. Also, he criticized the government for closing the independent schools and denying the education of children. "It has thus made most Kikuyu feel that they are regarded as an enemy of the people and has strengthened rather than diminished sympathy for Mau Mau."³⁶ Because Brockway was against the violence of Mau Mau, his main criticism in this section is that the government not only failed to stop Mau Mau, but fueled the movement.

In *African Journeys* Brockway described Mau Mau in terms of the myth propagated by the British government: "it cannot be denied that many of the practices of Mau Mau represent a reversion to a primitive barbaric mentality; this has shocked, perhaps most deeply, those of us who have co-operated in the political advance of Kenya Africans."³⁷ This dualism between African proponent and Mau Mau critic made Fenner Brockway a complicated person to categorize as either African sympathizer or European advocate. In the very next paragraph Brockway put the previous statement into context by remembering the barbaric actions of the "civilized" Westerners. "The atom bomb on Hiroshima killed 1,000 infants for each one killed at Lari. More immediately relevant, the Government in Kenya has been executing fifty Africans a month."³⁸ This conflict in his writing was never resolved. It can be determined that he did believe in African political rule and a more equal society for Kenya, but he also bought into some European prejudices toward African culture and society.

P.F. McGill was a Roman Catholic missionary in Gatitu, Ruiru, who claimed to have influence in the most peaceful area in Kenya during the Mau Mau Rebellion. He attributed the peace to the strength of the Roman Catholic Church, but also made many criticisms toward the settlers and the Kenyan Government. Because of the region he worked in, his short article

³⁶ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 11.

³⁷ Brockway, *African Journeys*, 169.

referred almost exclusively to the Kikuyu ethnic group instead of the African population as a whole. His main criticism was that the settlers were cruel toward the Kikuyu, causing reactionary violence, something with which he did not associate the majority of the Kikuyu. He felt that the majority of the Kikuyu were against the violence of Mau Mau. Throughout the article McGill wavered between the role of a benevolent paternalist and that of an African sympathizer. He believed in their ambition to do more with their lives but still wanted the European population to stay politically dominant. Though reformist in calling for more land for Kikuyu and a dissolution of the color bar, he never espoused equal political rights for Kikuyu.

McGill described Mau Mau as an organization that began with good intentions but had gotten out of hand: "The aim was to unite the people to obtain a measure of self-government, more land and better pay...If crime and anti-Christian propaganda had been kept out of the Society every Kikuyu would have joined."³⁹ McGill's understanding of Mau Mau was revolutionary for his time. Even Brockway, with his much more radical view of African's political future in Kenya, did not go so far as to claim early Mau Mau was a peaceful organization. McGill claims that Mau Mau was an early nationalist rebellion, an independence movement. Instead of blaming Mau Mau for the problems, he identified the loyalists in the Home Guard as the source of violence. "Most of these men hope to make the best of the Emergency, and do not wish to see an end to it."⁴⁰ This was a heavy accusation against loyal Kikuyu and their effectiveness in helping the Government. Based on this article alone it is not clear how the public responded to this viewpoint or if McGill's support diminished after its publication. Based on the strong negative settler reaction to Brockway's favorable opinion of Africans it could be assumed that McGill would have had a similar reaction, but McGill may

³⁸ Brockway, *African Journeys*, 169.

³⁹ Revd. Father P.F. McGill, "The Way Ahead for Kenya," *New Commonwealth* 28 (October 28, 1954): 447.

have had security against adverse reactions because of his success as a peaceful leader in the community and church.

Philip Bolsover wrote a small pamphlet, *Kenya: What Are the Facts?*, though his exact affiliation with the publisher, The Communist Party, was not stated. He used this pamphlet as a way to both inform and persuade the reader. In the pamphlet the Europeans are regarded as invaders of Kenya and the Africans as victims of imperialism. "They [the Africans] are the conquered."⁴¹ He also shows that what the Africans were doing in Kenya was an understandable and normal reaction to British imperialist methods, a situation no different from the Irish one. The author's main argument is that Mau Mau was a nationalist movement that only resorted to violence because that was the only venue open to voice frustrations against the system.⁴² Mau Mau was fighting two main struggles with the British government: an economic one and a political one. As Bolsover was writing for the Communist Party, he referred to the problems in Kenya as an African one, in line with the Party's declaration of nationalist movements as class struggles and not ethnic or tribal based.

Bolsover's definition of the economic struggle, like other critics, focused on land alienation.⁴³ "Land was just taken from the Africans and either given or sold at a negligible figure...to Europeans."⁴⁴ The loss of land, along with imposed taxes, forced Africans to hire themselves out as laborers or squatters. As squatters on European farms Africans earned less than was required to keep up a decent standard of living. This led to economic struggles and growth of resistance to European domination.⁴⁵ Bolsover asserted that it was the economic struggle of the lower class that led to the revolution, with better wages as a main goal of this

⁴⁰ McGill, 447.

⁴¹ Philip Bolsover, *Kenya: What are the Facts?* (London: The Communist Party, 1953), 3.

⁴² Bolsover, 4.

⁴³ Bolsover, 4.

class war.

Bolsover defined political struggle for Africans as the fight against European dominated government and the forced exclusion of the African from politics.⁴⁶ Bolsover's argument for the inequalities in political activity focused on the amount of government funding African and European institutions received. In education the Government spent fifty times more on European education than African. Health care was over seven times in favor of the Europeans.⁴⁷ Interestingly, Bolsover only focused a few sentences on the social inequalities between Africans and Europeans in Kenya. He was much more interested in proving that economic differences existed between the two groups. Because he was writing for the Communist Party, his argument tried to prove the existence of a class, not ethnic, war in Kenya.

Captain Ernest Law did not tell about his experiences in Kenya to aid the African cause; he told his story to show the unacceptable way the British government dealt with their colonies. In this respect his goal was different than other critics of the Mau Mau situation. He was not trying to persuade the reader to join in a fight but rather take notice of how government practice impacted colonial people. John Stoneham wrote Law's story in his larger work on criticisms of the Government, *Gangrene*. Law was a Chief Officer in the Kenya Prison Department. While in that position he spoke out against inhumanities against Mau Mau detainees and was imprisoned for five months.⁴⁸ The author focused the first chapter of Law's story on the problems he faced trying to get a British MP to respond to Law's situation. Eventually the Colonial Under-Secretary was forced to respond to his persistence. Stoneham commented on this statement and its timing:

⁴⁴ Bolsover, 4-6.

⁴⁵ Bolsover, 5.

⁴⁶ Bolsover, 7.

⁴⁷ Bolsover, 7.

'The Government of Kenya and the Prison Service in Kenya is perfectly capable of keeping its own house in order and is doing so. Our contention is that the organization of the Prison Service is right and is what it should be and that safeguards against abuse are effective.' That was at 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday 24th February 1959. On the following Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. eleven Africans were being beaten to death, illegally, by wardens at the Hola Detention Camp. They were acting, apparently, with the full approval of the Governor, the Kenya Government, the Colonial Secretary, and the Under-Secretary who had given such bland assurances to the House of Commons just the week before.⁴⁹

This kind of evidence exhibits the author's point more than any story of cruelty from the colony because he effectively shows the hypocrisy of the Government. The reader never knows the author's stance on the Mau Mau situation at all; the focus is completely on the Government's way of dealing with problems of colonialism.

Solutions to the Problems in Kenya

In addition to presenting the criticisms of British policy in Kenya, writers also proposed solutions to the problems in Kenya. There was very little consensus among them. All understood that there were problems within the society but the solutions they offered differed severely. Even though some had well-meaning intentions they failed in devising reasonable and effective solutions; one of the strongest proponents of African equality suggested rehabilitation camps for the Mau Mau, an aspect that turned into one of the most inhumane attempts to control Mau Mau. Most of the authors did consider other people's solutions and argued why only their proposition was feasible.

In *Why Mau Mau?* Fenner Brockway lists many specific changes he believed needed to be made in order to solve the problems in Kenya. Most importantly, he felt the country needed self-government based on complete adult suffrage for all races. Kenya must become a multi-racial society "socially, economically and politically."⁵⁰ He did not feel that the Europeans should be completely excluded from government; Brockway advocated a compromise between

⁴⁸ John Stonehouse, "Kenya's Inhumanities," *Gangrene* (London: Calder Books, 1957), 93.

⁴⁹ Stonehouse, 94.

all ethnic groups living in the country at the time. He wanted equality for everyone, as “those of us who are British must always remember that we are the immigrants, the invaders...it is therefore our obligation to adapt ourselves to African interests...rather than demand that the African population adjust themselves to ours.”⁵¹ Most interested parties did not see this type of solution as feasible as the situation was past the compromise stage.

In one of the more interesting conclusions of this research, Brockway, leader of European pro-African political organizations, posed the most inhumane solution for Kenya. Hindsight does make this conclusion easier to come by and Brockway may not have understood the implication of his suggestion, but he still proposed very severe penalties for persons associated with Mau Mau. He included two proposals. First, he suggested segregating Mau Mau activists for a long period and banishing Jomo Kenyatta.⁵² The separation was necessary to prevent fear among the loyal Africans and to avoid more inter-ethnic violence. The detainees could then return to live in society when they had been rehabilitated. Rather hypocritically, he believed the decision to banish Kenyatta would only stand for a short time, citing Nazi war criminals that were allowed back into Germany as a similar situation. He felt that banishing Kenyatta would be a compulsory action fulfilling the need to enact a punishment on someone. Secondly, Brockway suggested a multi-racial round-table conference to draw up social, economic and political reforms.⁵³ He naively believed that after the Emergency the Europeans, Asians, Arabs and Africans would be able to sit down together and negotiate through compromises for a better Kenya.

P.F. McGill was convinced that nothing could be solved in Kenya without a firm base in

⁵⁰ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 15.

⁵¹ Brockway, *Why Mau Mau*, 20.

⁵² Brockway, *African Journeys*, 184.

⁵³ Brockway, *African Journeys*, 185.

religion, yet he understood the economic and social situation well enough to know that religion alone would not solve all problems. He also called for more secular education because the “people have got the idea that Government wants to keep the masses uneducated.”⁵⁴ McGill did not believe that the Government wanted to keep the African population suppressed but rather had been misunderstood by the general population. Unlike other critics, McGill does not agree with the “villagisation” idea because it was a foreign way of life for the Kikuyu. One of the more interesting aspects of his solution was in his emphasis on the need for strong Kikuyu mothers. He believed women could have strong positive roles in society and made excuses for their large role in Mau Mau: “In joining Mau Mau she was blindly obedient.”⁵⁵ According to him, their lack of education and subservient role caused them to associate with Mau Mau. While the era this was written in excuses a portion of his sexism, McGill showed his lack of understanding of the importance of the female role in Mau Mau. He did believe that with proper Christian education the woman could become the cornerstone of Kikuyu society in the future. Though some of his language had a discriminatory tone, McGill believed in ending the color bar, equating the social standards of Africans and Europeans and giving more land to the Kikuyu.

Philip Bolsover used the demands of the Kenya African Union (KAU) to show the direction Britain needed to take to survive as a nation itself. “If we condone the oppression of another nation we undermine the very foundations of the liberties won by bitter struggle in Britain; we strengthen the enemies who, if victorious in the colonies, would turn with greater power to cripple liberty at home.”⁵⁶ Bolsover called for the immediate removal of troops in Kenya and the support for the demands of the KAU. The KAU demands that he supported called

⁵⁴ McGill, 447.

⁵⁵ McGill, 448.

⁵⁶ Bolsover, 12.

for political, social and economic equality in the colony.⁵⁷ In this case the Communist Party supported the dominant African party and called for the end of the nationalist fight.

Pro-British Views

British settlers in Kenya were criticized frequently during the years of the rebellion. As shown in previous references, they were attacked for their labor practices, their land ownership and the cultural color bar they demanded. To defend their way of life, many settlers wrote commentaries explaining their situation. Most of these documents were answers to the criticism settlers received about their lives in Kenya from outside sources. Focusing on similar topics as the critics, the settlers were able to defend themselves through publication during the 1950s. Other sources published during the 1950s, such as the magazine *Kenya Today*, used its popularity to help calm British settlers' fears of the rebellion. By reporting the losses of the Mau Mau and efforts of loyal Kikuyu toward victory, *Kenya Today* was a tool for the reestablishment of "normal" Kenyan society. Speeches by government officials during this time helped to spread the "Myth of Mau Mau" and keep the public informed of the atrocities supposedly committed by the Mau Mau. These sources together helped to form the defense against criticisms from Britain and uphold the type of society and culture that the settlers wanted in Kenya.

Many settlers, in responding to criticism, attempted to turn attention away from the potential causes of the rebellion and shift it toward the violent nature of the Mau Mau. Though some were critics of the way in which the Government was dealing with the situation, their condemnation of Mau Mau violence and the overall "uncivilized" nature of the Rebellion united the settlers. With the possible exception of the Communist Party, all the critics abhorred violence and looked for a way to find a peaceful way for everyone to live in Kenya. The settlers,

⁵⁷ Bolsover, 12.

in focusing their arguments on the violence and the “myth,” kept their guilt at a distance. By making the Africans out to be violent, primitive people who were looking for an excuse to drive the Europeans out of the country, some of their guilt was alleviated.

While attempting to fit Africans into a mold of violence and barbarism, no pro-British source failed to mention the loyal Kikuyu. As a group, many of the sources claimed Africans were inferior and deserved much worse treatment than they were receiving, but individually settlers upheld the African guards, the loyalist informers and the unwilling oath-takers. In an attempt to portray the leaders of Mau Mau as liars and crooks, the settlers claimed that most members of Mau Mau were forced to take the oath against their will and were secretly supportive of the British policy in hopes that they could go back to their “normal” lives. These Africans were written off as uneducated and “duped” into believing Mau Mau. This was a selective way of looking at Africans, as they never failed to mention the faithfulness of the loyal Kikuyu while simultaneously confirming that the entire ethnicity was primitive and socially “below” as Europeans. The authors chose selectively how to portray the Africans in different situations to suit the need of the description.

Sources

One settler who focused much of his book on answering criticism was Christopher Wilson. In *Kenya's Warning: The Challenge to White Supremacy in Our British Colony*, Wilson attacked the credibility of his critics along with their information. Covering a wide range of topics from labor to self-government, his attitude was very defensive and used racist comments as justification for his argument. With the retrospective knowledge that the settlers would lose their minority rule just nine years after this document was written, one could look at Wilson's comments as fears for what was to come. But Wilson was very confident of the success of the

British settlers and the “inevitable” downfall of Mau Mau. Regardless of this confidence, he used racist evidence for his argument and rarely made a significant point without it. With a chapter devoted entirely to the present portrayal of the settler in British colonies, Wilson seemed to have devoted his book to the re-analyzation of “the settler as a villain” depicted by the critics to “the settler as a hero” image.

Wilson used a “general belief” of the settler as a basis for the formation of his analysis. Beginning with division of labor on farms, he set the stage for the misconceptions of the “genuine” settler.⁵⁸ Wilson admitted that the Africans do most of the physical labor on the farm, but stressed the amount of mental work the settler does: “Anyone who has had to rely on Africans for manual labor knows that without constant supervision and encouragement they get you nowhere. Theirs may be the major part of the physical work, but the mental effort needed to keep the work going is all the white man’s, and it can be exhausting...”⁵⁹ Interestingly, in defending the settler on issues of labor, he blamed the European visitor to Kenya for the image the settler has inherited. He claimed that British travelers were the cruelest to Africans and started the bad image for the British in Kenya, one that the Kenyan settler had had to take the brunt of.⁶⁰

Wilson’s main defense tied the treatment of Africans to availability of jobs for Africans. He was responding to the criticism that Africans could not find enough wage-paying labor on European farms, making taxes hard to pay. His conclusion was that the white settlers could not live in Kenya in the primitiveness of the natives and it was impossible to instantly lift the “primitive” Africans to the British level, making their current situation an inevitable and

⁵⁸ Christopher Wilson. “Kenya’s Warning: The Challenge to White Supremacy in Our British Colony. (Nairobi: English Press, 1954), 12.

⁵⁹ Wilson, 12.

⁶⁰ Wilson, 12.

necessary one.⁶¹ He began proving this by asserting that the farmer that dared to treat his African laborers badly would quickly lose all his workers. He felt that there was a vast amount of work for Africans and they had their pick of good and fair management. Wilson admitted that there was punishment for Africans who broke rules, but, "If the man had done wrong and knew it, he did not resent being beaten."⁶² He even went as far as saying that the majority of the early money that was put into British settlers' farms in Kenya went to the Africans' hands as they attempted to copy the whites in living habits.⁶³ Wilson then moved on to challenge his critics' argument that Africans lived at a low standard of living; this was their biggest error. "Should he [the settler] have accepted the lower standard of living for himself, so that none could blame him for being different? That is absurd."⁶⁴ He felt that anything was better than the standard of living of the African before the Europeans came to Kenya and if the settlers were doing anything in the way of changing the standard of living for Africans it was to improve it.

As most responses to criticism asserted, Wilson firmly believed that the land the settlers occupied in the Highlands was not the Kikuyu's and had never belonged to them. In this discussion Wilson attacked the British Broadcasting Corporation for encouraging "anti-British propaganda" as well as the "interfering busybodies" that only created more conflict in the country.⁶⁵ Instead of attacking his critics in a way that would slander them, Wilson attempted to show how they were misled by propaganda from the Kenyan nationalists, specifically Jomo Kenyatta. Wilson analyzed *Facing Mount Kenya* in such a way that showed the faults in Kenyatta's portrayal and examined the mood created by the book under a Western bias. He criticized Kenyatta's description of pre-European Kenya as a Utopia and Kenyatta's presumption

⁶¹ Wilson, 14.

⁶² Wilson, 13.

⁶³ Wilson, 13, 39.

⁶⁴ Wilson, 14.

of authority on the time-period, as he was not alive to witness it.⁶⁶ Though Wilson doesn't believe Kenyatta could be an authority of a time period that he did not live in, Wilson later assumes himself to be one for the same time to prove his own point, invalidating his previous criticism of the African.⁶⁷ Wilson then continued into the common Western critique of polygamy and female tribal initiation rights such as the clitoridectomy and bride price.⁶⁸ By attacking the person who most Westerners agreed was the cause of the Mau Mau Rebellion, Jomo Kenyatta, Wilson not only achieved relieving criticism from himself but focused attention away from the causes of the rebellion to the reactions of the perpetrators.

Wilson also addressed the political representation issue. Like many settlers, he asserted that if the Africans were able to handle the responsibility of governing the country it would be freely given to them. "If there had been evidence of wise and vigorous leadership within the tribes we might now be justified in surrendering a considerable share of the responsibility of governing."⁶⁹ This is proven quite easily with Kenyatta. Convicted in court of leading Mau Mau, though on nonexistent evidence, Westerners accepted his guilt. The connection of the tribe and Mau Mau was so prevalent that Wilson did not even mention Jomo Kenyatta or the Kikuyu tribe by name, but rather alluded to them: "The tragedy in Kenya is that those who were looked to for leadership have utterly failed...the most politically active of Kenya's tribes...has fallen so suddenly and disastrously that one might despair of the future..."⁷⁰ He assumed that Mau Mau proved there was no way to trust the Kikuyu tribal leaders, making it impossible to confidently give them any sort of power.

Wilson clearly stated his definition of Mau Mau in the opening paragraphs of his chapter

⁶⁵ Wilson, 24.

⁶⁶ Wilson, 25-26.

⁶⁷ Wilson, 41.

⁶⁸ Wilson, 28.

on the significance of 1952 and 1953. "It began as a secret society...for the purpose of driving the Europeans out of Kenya...[by way of a] campaign of murder and terrorism...[in which] every Kikuyu must be persuaded or forced to join."⁷¹ He criticized the Kenyan and British governments for not paying attention to the warning signs of the situation and acting sooner to suppress the movement. Because of the ease with which he saw "anti-British" speeches given and pro-Kikuyu rallies held, Wilson believed the government failed to impose a more effective suppression of free speech and free assembly.⁷² He did not criticize all Kikuyu and cited many instances of loyal Kikuyu and other Africans helping to control the situation or standing up against Mau Mau.

Like his British critics, Wilson explained his solution for the post-Mau Mau Kenya. The two questions he addressed were: how can the damage of Mau Mau be repaired and how can its recurrence be prevented? Wilson believed that both the material damage of the rebellion and the spiritual damage of the people were the Kikuyu's fault. To show them the error of their actions they should be under rigid discipline. Because of the lack of work ethic among Kikuyu young men, the author saw a good remedy in a famine. This would show them, "that if a man does not work neither shall he eat."⁷³ The Kikuyu would have to stop dividing their land to their sons and instead focus work in the cities, as no extra territory should be given to the Kikuyu tribe. Essential to Wilson's plan, the "authentic" history of Kenya would be taught to all the Kikuyu youth so the lies about land rights could not be taught to younger generations.⁷⁴ Overall, Wilson had no sympathy for the Kikuyu and felt that they brought all of their trouble on themselves. No government position could be entrusted to them and they should be made to pay for their loss.

⁶⁹ Wilson, 43.

⁷⁰ Wilson, 43.

⁷¹ Wilson, 52.

⁷² Wilson, 53-54.

Wilson saw the rebellion as a warning to the settlers that the Kenyan African was not as grateful as he should be for the prosperity the Europeans have brought them and could not be trusted.

E. Carey Francis, a missionary, wrote a pamphlet in the journal *East Africa and Rhodesia* in 1955 entitled, "Mau Mau Really is a Resistance Movement." He made this claim by assuming that the "propaganda" of Mau Mau had filtered into the minds of all the Kikuyu as truth. If one accepted the lies as truth, then one could prove that the Kikuyu were fighting a resistance movement. This all stemmed from the idea that the common Mau Mau fighter was subjected to lies from his leaders and the leaders were effective in their propaganda against the government. The propaganda focused on four main points: "Europeans are enemy invaders, that they have stolen African land, are holding Africans down, [and] are fattening themselves on African labour and possessions..."⁷⁵ Instead of challenging the critics that assume this is true, Francis focused on showing this view-point as effective in understanding the real problem. "We shall never destroy Mau Mau by killing gangsters or imprisoning oath-takers: we shall destroy it only by...showing that we are not enemy invaders." By fighting the propaganda instead of the violence, one could get at the real problem in Kenya.

Francis used his own work experience in the country and his work as a missionary to show how this can be done. He fully supported the work of the settlers to defend their homes, as they had to not only fight the violence, but also the lies of Mau Mau.⁷⁶ He also supported the work of the government officials. Francis did not believe in the methods of fighting guerrilla warfare on the grounds that he was a Christian, but supported the government's use of similar tactics of the Mau Mau in fighting the ideological battles. The "Doctrine of Fear" was a useful

⁷³ Wilson, 78.

⁷⁴ Wilson, 81.

⁷⁵ E. Carey Francis, "Mau Mau Really is a Resistance Movement," in *East Africa and Rhodesia*. (14 April, 1955), 1086.

tool of both sides of the fight.⁷⁷ In order to show his objectivity, Francis admitted that not all of the fighting had been completely fair on both sides and injustices had occurred, though he fully separated the purposeful barbarism of Mau Mau from any reactionary measures the British were forced to take against them.

Francis' response to critics was much different from that of Wilson. Francis specifically stated that the critics should be ignored. "Government and the security forces and the people of Kenya should be jealous of the good name of the Colony, not by denouncing critics but by investigating fearlessly, quickly, impartially every responsible complaint, by admitting fault publicly where they find it, and by punishing – I think publicly – those who are guilty."⁷⁸ Francis presented an interesting position in that he believed in the settlers and the methods of the government but he still wanted to uphold the moral integrity of the country by punishing the guilty. This very well could be a set up for the punishment of the Mau Mau when they were caught, but it seems to be directed more towards the guilty whites in the country. In this way Francis stood as a sort of middle ground, a believer of the "myth" but an advocate for morality and responsibility.

Francis showed one place that seemed to be relatively untouched by Mau Mau, the missionary schools. He depicted them full of happy children who often used the schools as a place of refuge from dangerous Mau Mau households.⁷⁹ Just as other authors attempted to do, Francis inserted a comment to reassure the reader that Mau Mau was being defeated. After boasting that some of the boys stayed in the schools for safety, Francis remarked, "It is a

⁷⁶ Francis, 1086.

⁷⁷ Francis, 1087.

⁷⁸ Francis, 1087.

⁷⁹ Francis, 1087.

measure of the greater security of Kenya that last holidays only six asked to stay.”⁸⁰ The schools, depicted as separate from the world of the Mau Mau, had athletic tournaments and performed classic plays such as *Julius Caesar*. Francis attempted to portray the schools as proof of a solution; by creating a good relationship with Africans one can successfully trump the activities of the Mau Mau.

The magazine *Kenya Today* revealed settlers’ need for reassurance in Kenya in the 1950s. Containing useful information for the settler, the magazine was a way for the fears of Mau Mau to be alleviated by showing Mau Mau in the lights the settlers wanted to see it in. Published by the Department of Information, the magazine was a way for the government to keep the “myth” alive and reiterate the strength of the British to the settlers. From 1954 to 1956, the magazine mentioned Mau Mau only four times. Each instance focused on the presence of loyal Kikuyu and gave “proof” that Mau Mau was losing influence and power in the reserves. It also showed Mau Mau to be a formidable but beatable enemy, making the government’s early losses justifiable.

The first mention of Mau Mau in *Kenya Today* was not an article, but rather a feature of three photographs and captions. “Captor – And the Mau Mau Captured” appeared in the magazine in September, 1954. The photograph of the captor featured a smiling, armed African policeman in uniform. The caption mentioned the kind of technology the policeman had available to catch the Mau Mau detainees, including a spotter plane.⁸¹ The two photographs of the Mau Mau showed dirty men dressed in tattered clothing. The caption itself urged the reader to compare the three Africans, allowing her to make her own decision: “These are the portraits of two Mau Mau terrorists...soured, sullen and unresigned to their capture. Contrast them with the

⁸⁰ Francis, 1087.

⁸¹ “Captor – And the Mau Mau Captured,” in *Kenya Today*. (September, 1954), 9.

laughing constable, a member of the General Service Unit of the Kenya Police.”⁸² Published during intense fighting between the Mau Mau and the Government, this story informed the settlers that Mau Mau was losing the war, due in part to the actions of loyal Kikuyu.

In December, 1954, *Kenya Today* published the article, “Bringing the Truth to Kikuyuland: Information Campaign to Fight Mau Mau.” Using photographs along with a specific story, this article explained how loyal Kikuyu men were helping to bring down Mau Mau without further violence. Two Kikuyu men, working for the Information Department, spread the “truth” about Mau Mau, including that they had succeeded in making the Kikuyu a shunned tribe and that they were losing the battle.⁸³ The article featured two photographs of native people listening to the Western-dressed workers and two other photographs of the men smiling and working, also in Western-style clothes. This article informed settlers that not all the Kikuyu were part of Mau Mau, that there were many people working against the rebellion, and that the Kikuyu were listening.

“Working Their Way to Freedom” appeared in *Kenya Today* in March, 1955. The article focused on a soft-core rehabilitation camp and showed how the Government was dealing with the prisoners from Mau Mau. Focusing on rehabilitation and not punishment, the article suggested that these Mau Mau detainees would be able to re-enter Kikuyu society once they admitted their guilt. The sensation created by the Hola Camp Massacre was still years away, but the author avoided any criticism concerning the running of the camps: “This is no attempt to get public works done ‘on the cheap.’ Far from it, projects on which these detainees are working are costing more – and taking longer – than if done by machinery.”⁸⁴ Though the article

⁸² “Captor,” 9.

⁸³ “Bringing the Truth to Kikuyuland: Information Campaign to Fight Mau Mau,” in *Kenya Today*. (December, 1954), 5.

⁸⁴ “Working Their Way To Freedom,” in *Kenya Today*. (March, 1955), 12.

distinguished these detainees from hard-core Mau Mau, it emphasized that those working to rehabilitate the men were serious about their jobs and wanted to get them back into society. This article included photographs of the men working on projects, such as making furniture, and talking with the interrogators. The most interesting photograph showed a group of men playing music together with rather sullen faces, the only picture that shows the faces of the detainees. The caption read: "There is a nostalgic look in the eyes of some of these detainees as they think back on the old days in Kikuyuland before terrorism lured them from their homes with its evil doctrines."⁸⁵ This article reassured the settler that something was being done to stop the Mau Mau from entering back into society without rehabilitation and that even the Mau Mau are sorry it happened.

Kenya Today published a human interest story about the children orphaned by Mau Mau. "Orphans of the Emergency: Kikuyu Children at Dagoretti" was published in June 1956 and focused on a Children's Centre for those who lost their parents at the hands of the Mau Mau and those whose parents were in detention camps. The article, as well as the magazine, disclosed a humanitarian and benevolent side to the usually vicious Mau Mau story. But the way in which the Mau Mau are presented gave them an even more horrific image. The children are depicted as victims whose parents left them to go into the forest to fight. Other parents were shown as unfit because of the lack of food and adequate care given to the children. Only the Centre kept these children from death. There were many pictures of the children at work and play, praying in church or learning in a classroom. The three main policies of the Centre were explained: no mention of Mau Mau is made, children of Mau Mau are not to be treated differently and children left the Centre only when the Centre decided they had a "proper home to go to"⁸⁶, most likely

⁸⁵ "Working," 14.

⁸⁶ "Orphans of the Emergency," in *Kenya Today*. (June, 1956), 6-7.

Christian, non-political ones. In this way the Kenyan Government still had control over children's education as well as their home life. This reassured the settlers that, although their parents were caught up in the Mau Mau violence, the children of the Emergency were not to be subjects to Mau Mau propaganda.

C.T. Stoneham avoided critics by using scientific evidence. Quoting the psychologist A.L. Cureau, Stoneham attempted to show that the settlers had reason to treat Africans differently based on the scientific differences between Africans and Europeans. According to Cureau, "The fickle instability of the impressions and sensations, which merely graze his consciousness, [leaves] but a transient mark on it."⁸⁷ Stoneham paraphrased Cureau later: "Egotism makes them careless of others' woes. They have no innate sense of kindness, and therefore do not understand motives of benevolence towards them."⁸⁸ Stoneham set the stage for racism and gave the settlers the excuse of being misunderstood by the Africans. This focuses on quieting critics before they finished reading of the barbarity of the Kikuyu and their propaganda of lies in order to gain more land, giving the settler the upper hand.

The degree to which racism and unsubstantiated degrading comments were used in this work puts it on the far end of the spectrum of settler commentary of the time. On the issue of land rights, Stoneham claimed that the land was sold to the British fairly before the "wasteful agriculturists" of the Kikuyu destroyed any use the land had. He even explained that Kikuyuland had grown in size during British rule because of the increasing birthrates under their protection.⁸⁹ The Kikuyu not involved in the upper ring of Mau Mau leaders were called, "the simple villager, who could scarcely put two and two together and was baffled by the most rudimentary logic."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ C.T. Stoneham, *Out of Barbarism*. (London: Museum Press Ltd, 1955), 68.

⁸⁸ Stoneham, 69.

⁸⁹ Stoneham, 109.

⁹⁰ Stoneham, 110.

They also had the favor of a Government that Stoneham explains as, “in favor of the utmost leniency towards the native peoples.”⁹¹ Stoneham’s work contained some of the most blatantly racist comments in the genre of settler commentary of the 1950s. Without knowing the distribution of his book and others’ feedback it is hard to conclude if and to what degree this racism was accepted in Kenya among the settlers.

Stoneham also described his solution for stopping Mau Mau and bringing Kenya back to the way it was before the rebellion. He looked to education, but not all-inclusively:

The raw tribesman does not need to know about Caesar’s conquests and the schisms in the early Christian Church...Neither should he be informed of sophisticated people in American cities, where night-spots, joints, and country clubs form the background for immoral pleasures of the degenerate rich of the nefarious schemings of tough racketeers and shady politicians. At present he can get plenty of this in the form of entertainment in any Kenya town, and the effect on his juvenile mind baffles research. The complexities of the modern social kaleidoscope are beyond the understanding of wisdom enthroned, let alone that of a simple savage, just learning to wear shoes and ride a bicycle.⁹²

Stoneham went on to explain that Africans only needed to learn basic reading and writing, in English, and taught about democracy and economics in Kenya. Beyond these basics, all instruction would be not only impossible, but also a waste of time.

Like Stoneham, Colin Wills looked to a famous name to give his work more credibility. But in a stark contrast, he used the source for a completely different purpose. Using Louis Leakey, the noted anthropologist, Wills discarded the idea that Africans are a more primitive race. He reiterated that all men are physically the same.⁹³ From the opening chapters, *Who Killed Kenya?* was not as boldly racist as Stoneham’s work, though mildly racist attitudes emerge with further reading. Wills developed a middle ground in his work by asserting that Europeans had a right to be in Kenya but taking into consideration all the hardships the Africans have had to deal with under British rule.

⁹¹ Stoneham, 113.

⁹² Stoneham, 147.

⁹³ Colin Wills. *Who Killed Kenya?* New York: Roy Publishers, 1953.

Wills had a very unusual opinion of the capacity for Africans to rule themselves. He didn't believe it was their fault that the environment they lived in kept them "static" politically and culturally, but also saw this lower stature as a reason to keep them out of power.⁹⁴ His line between culturally accepting and racist was very narrow, which leaves a reader confused as to his real position. He did not believe that Africans lived in a state of darkness because of a predisposition to it by nature, but he did believe that there was a state of "profound darkness" that dominated the Africans' lives before the Europeans came to Africa.⁹⁵ Africans rarely thought for themselves in their everyday action because of adherence to custom, but this showed a strong sense of culture.⁹⁶ These contradictions filled Wills' text.

Part of the confusion in Wills' writing was in the direction of his criticism. Though never clearly stated, Wills hinted that he was in favor of British rule but against settler rule in Kenya. Wills could have been avoiding a problem with settlers by not directly commenting on their ability to run the country. "...there is no reason to suppose they [settlers] have the ability to govern a predominantly African population as well as can an administration based on Britain's tremendous and highly creditable experience in this field."⁹⁷ Wills wavered back and forth between who had the most rights to be in power in Kenya; the British helped establish the country but the Africans were more populous. Wills concludes that there needed to be a level of cooperation between the two groups for success. The settlers and the Africans would have to work together, with the British government as an advisor.

Conclusion

Mau Mau greatly affected the way the British Government handled their colonial issues.

⁹⁴ Wills, 23.

⁹⁵ Wills, 22-23.

⁹⁶ Wills, 52.

While the Government attempted to run things the same way as they had in the past, even using brutal methods to suppress uprisings, many people with very different political and social affiliations did not hesitate to criticize these policies. Showing the power of social dissidents, the critics forced the Government to justify its actions, which sometimes ended in the Government caught in lies or cover-ups. Such was the case with Ernest Law and the treatment of Mau Mau detainees. These critics were very useful in getting the Government to hold itself accountable for its own actions and the actions of its employees within the colonies, especially Kenya. Human rights began to have more of an influence in public opinion of colonial issues than God, Gold or Glory.

The reactions to these criticisms were significant in that many published materials were used to restore their honor. The works published during the 1950s can be viewed as responses to criticism in that each one not only discussed the same subjects, but also acknowledged the arguments made by critics while they stated their own views on the subject. The way in which the settlers went about this was significant to understanding what they felt about the position they were in in Kenya in the 1950s. Attacked from both their home government in Britain and African nationalists, the settlers needed to create a sense of camaraderie between white Kenyans and create a literature from which they could draw their ideas. It is significant that they did not just respond to others in Kenya, but also to Britain, as it shows that the settlers still felt themselves as part of the British community. As much as they tried to show their lifestyle as different from those in Britain, they still wanted to be included in that “civilized” part of society.

The affiliation of an author with a specific political and social group tended to influence the type of argument he or she made against British policy. Communist Philip Bolsover, concentrated on economic and class issues than social and cultural conditions. P.F. McGill, a

⁹⁷ Wills, 63.

missionary, focused on humanitarian efforts to improve the quality of life for the Kikuyu. Each critic had different motives for bringing up the issues he or she did, but each had the desire to get the reader to think more critically about the way the British government was handling the situation in Kenya. By focusing on the reader and targeting the audience, these criticisms were to the point and effective.

With the “winds of change” blowing across Africa a great deal of attention focused on the African and governmental arguments. But the controversy of the Mau Mau Rebellion opened a discussion that signified the new changes in colonial attitudes of the regular British subjects, whether in Kenya or Britain. The time allowed for some to openly criticize the way that their government was dealing with the colonial situation while others argued against them to uphold their way of life. Each group had their own motivations and reasons for getting involved publicly. The way they argued shows how political discussions can encompass economic and social issues and how it affected not only Kenya, but also the colonial power. The discussion that resulted challenged British rule in colonies and, in the context of Britain’s stance on human rights during World War II, the hypocrisy of Britain in control of a group of people based on outmoded imposed assumption.

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