

THE ANATOMY OF MAU MAU

by

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THE GLOOMY HISTORY of the coming of White Civilization to Kenya has been well documented by many hands¹. I do not propose to go over it all again in this article. Nor do I intend to recount the miseries of the "Emergency" yet another time (Eileen Fletcher, Peter Evans and Philip Meldon have done that). I will therefore assume that the story of the deliberate propagation of White settlement in Kenya by early colonial officials, the creation of the 'White Highlands,' the transformation of the indigenous peasantry into a labour-force for White farms, the growth of desperate land-pressure, the creation of a rigid colour-stratified society and the suppression of one African organization after another is at least known in outline to most people.

Before the "Emergency" of 1952, Kenya was largely known as a Never-Never Land where younger sons of the aristocracy had used the methods of thirteenth century feudalism to create a twentieth century settlerdom. Well-known, too, were the intrepid explorers who penetrated the depths of the Nairobi Game Reserve in the daytime and returned to write up their travels in the far more dangerous surroundings of Torr's Hotel in the evening. It was hard to take Kenya too seriously. "Are you married or do you live in Kenya?" was a standard joke. But the outside world also knew more about the less amusing realities of life in Kenya than they did of most colonies. In their "Chronicles of Kenya," Macgregor and Ross showed that Kenya was really a tragic sort of farce. Norman Leys, too, cut through all the nonsense about 'paramountcy of native interests' with a series of devastating books. And even today, despite his first-hand experience of the viciousness of the blood-bath, Peter Evans in his "Law and Disorder in Kenya" has produced a wonderful dissection of Kenya society which shows¹ us the farcical side of this colonial Ruritania as well as its horrors.

(D e.g. Dr. R. K. P. Pankhurst's Kenya: the History of Two Nations. The Aaronovitchs' Crisis in Kenya supplies the economic background, but its political content is indicated by the apocryphal story of the Moscow reviewer who commented that the book showed how even bourgeois liberals were being pushed Leftwards.

The settlers, in their ponderous way, finally reacted. One of their number who could write—Elsbeth Huxley—turned from straight historical fiction ("Red Strangers") to fictional history ("White Man's Country," her biography of Lord Delamere, the settlers' leader.) In her famous controversy with Margery Perham, "Race and Politics in Kenya," she largely succeeded in persuading the British public that Kenya settlers were really just misunderstood liberal conservatives and paternalist 'characters' at that. As one of the BBC 'Critics' she is able to give a literary gloss to the racism more crudely expressed by the many tactless settlers who rushed into print after 1952. If you really want to know what goes on inside the skulls of most settlers, you cannot do better than read C. T. Stoneham's "Out of Barbarism," dedicated to a former Mayor of Nairobi. The descent into this literary underworld will teach you that Africans are bribe-takers (p.27), lazy ("except under the direction of a superior") (p.43), have "minds as blank as the blue sky above" (p.43), are liars (p.44), speak "lingoes in which almost no abstract thought can be communicated" (p. 183), etc., etc.

This is the authentic settler voice, not that of Mrs. Huxley. The culture-hero of this savage community is the aged Col. Grogan, long a member of the Kenya Legislative Council, very rich, and the doyen of the Kenya settlers. In 1900, Grogan was advocating "a good sound system of compulsory labour" for "the nigger;" a few years later he achieved fame as the man who whipped an African on the steps of the Nairobi law-courts; in 1919 he told settlers that those of them who were real men would raise Cain until they forced the Government to build railway-lines for their convenience and recently he advocated the public hanging of Kikuyu in batches of 25 *pour encourager les autres*. But in the U.K., people don't know about Col. Grogan. They only know Mrs. Huxley. And they are persuaded that there is a significant 'liberal' body amongst the settlers, just as they have been persuaded that the racially-prejudiced paternalist Albert Schweitzer is a¹ saint. The leader of this 'liberal' wing in Kenya is Mr. Michael Blundell, a man who has charmed British M.Ps and even journalists, even those on the Left. His liberal' reputation was only slightly sullied when Fenner-Brockway produced evidence in the British Parliament of the starvation-wages Blundell paid his farm workers. Nor did his demands for the arraignment of Kenyatta, for heavier penalties (including the death penalty), for collective punishment, etc., do much to impair his reputation. He was still a liberal' when he succeeded in persuading Government to give their "shooting orders" to the settlers who had besieged Government House. In 1956 he announced his election programme: no opening of the Highlands to non-Europeans, separate educational and hospitalization facilities, differential access to justice, and the need to preserve

a "European majority and European control." Even the 'wild men' could accept this kind of liberalism. But the 'wild men' could never have secured for the settlers the gains won for them by the liberal Blundell. After the elections, the "party" differences were forgotten and the settlers elected under different labels formed a united bloc.

The Kenya 'liberals,' then, have been the most skilled and effective promoters of policies which differ little from those of the Stonehams. And they have also succeeded in selling these policies to most of the British public, and even to some of the left-wing.

Not only do most people swallow the myth of the Kenya settler as a staunch pioneer who wrested his farm from the virgin bush with his own hands, but they have accepted equal fantasies about the Africans of Kenya. For the defeat of Mau Mau was a double victory—a victory over the armed resistance of the Africans, and a victory in persuading the world that Mau Mau was an atavistic savage cult.

For despite any sympathy people may have felt for the African case, they have largely accepted that Mau Mau was completely horrible, obscene and regressive. This has not been difficult in a country with a working-class which—let us face it at last—despite its distaste for colonialism as such, has been so influenced by our long imperialist history that it is perhaps the most chauvinist working-class in the world, and one of the least active on colonial issues.

The features of the Mau Mau movement which revolted the British public were its terrorist tactics and its use of obscene oaths. I think it is important to recognise¹ clearly that both these charges are true. Mau Mau undoubtedly used terrorist tactics, and even performed atrocities, principally against waverers and 'loyalists.' (The loyalty of the Kikuyu chiefs, so loudly publicised, is hardly surprising, for the Kikuyu had no chiefs until the British invented them). But under what conditions did they do this ?

Before the Emergency, the major political body in Kenya was the Kenya African Union; by 1952 it was over 100,000 strong. Some Africans, however—a tiny handful—became fed up with the failure of the constitutional activities of KAU, which was so circumscribed by Government that it had to get permission even to hold meetings. A few people turned to escapist religious sects; others turned to preparation for underground terrorism. But before October, 1952, when the Emergency was declared, Mau Mau was undoubtedly merely one of these very insignificant uninfluential groups.

Peter Evans has suggested that the rapid price-rise of 1951, caused by the Korean War, was the final straw. But all the evidence suggests that the Emergency and the consequent war were not the result of any deliberate decision to fight it out by Africans.

Dr. Leakey has told us that Mau Mau was taken by "surprise" in 1952 and was not prepared for action. It is clear that the declaring of the Emergency was a declaration of war on all key African organizations by Government, not a response to any immediate danger of large-scale terrorism.

About the atrocities, (especially the Lari massacre) there is no doubt. No sane person would defend them, just as no one would defend the atrocities of a Capt. Griffiths. But under such circumstances, what else is one to expect? Whenever people are driven to violence, especially where a man's brother may be his enemy, violence always goes to extremes. This is not African atavism, however, any more than the atrocities in Israel or Ireland were atavistic. So much for the violence.

But the oaths? The left-wing in this country and elsewhere stoutly defended the Africans' action in fighting back, but very carefully said little about the oath-taking, especially the obscenities and sacrilege. Dr. Pankhurst's book is typical in this respect. Moscow also declared that the 'oath-taking' was a mere propaganda smoke-screen and that Mau Mau was a figment. Yet the emotional reaction of horror in Britain, carefully fostered by the Press, was the principle propaganda device by which Britain was persuaded that Mau Mau was an evil thing and should be suppressed. Was it helping the people of Kenya to completely ignore this matter? Of course not. The Left, then, had no answer to the grave charges levelled against Mau Mau, so people did not listen to what they had to say on the rest of the Kenya question. Why listen to people who flatly denied what plainly existed? This denial, moreover, led to misconceptions of the true nature of Mau Mau, and incorrect political conclusions were the consequence.

AFRICAN SECTS AND CULTS

To anyone at all familiar with African history and sociology—which excludes most writers on Africa—the existence of cult movements of various kinds with a strong nationalist flavour is well-known. Movements of this kind generally occur in the early stages of contact with Europeans. Indeed, they are by no means peculiar to Africa; they have occurred in virtually every country in the world. At the present moment, millenarian cults, for example, are rampant in Melanesia, as I have described in a forthcoming book. The emergence of prophets who foretell the end of the world, after which there will be a heaven on earth (and usually this means no White men!) is one of the earliest forms of movement. Mwana Leza (Child of God) was one such cult-leader in Northern Rhodesia/ in South Africa Junod has described the Murimi cult amongst the Bathonga. Katesa Schlosser's "Propheten in Afrika" contains a comprehensive survey for those who wish to follow this up. One of the most striking of these movements

occurred among the Xosa during the Kaffir Wars when a female prophet named Nongqause persuaded the people that if they killed off their cattle and abandoned their gardens the sky would fall and crush the white people — and their black 'collaborators.'

They did so, and as a result died of starvation in tens of thousands. Such movements mainly occur amongst peoples who lack the State form of organization, but who need to combine together rapidly on a large scale — usually against the Europeans. The prophet achieves this because his message and his authority are derived from supernatural sources; he stands above the sectional divisions into village, clan, etc., and is therefore identified with no one of them. But similar movements have also occurred in more advanced societies. The Maori, for example, opposed the Europeans by orthodox secular means—the use of armed force—but in the end they were overcome. Just as the Xosa in southern Africa had thrown up prophets at various times when the struggle was becoming desperate and when defeat seemed possible, so the defeat of Maori in campaign after campaign and the defection and retirement of chiefs from the struggle, resulted in a new desperate movement . . . the Hau Hau. Its resemblance to Mau Mau is more than name-deep, for the Hau Hau was ruthless and terroristic; it had an elaborate ritual, was religious in form, and only emerged after all other resistance seemed to have failed.

But these movements, too, themselves always fail. They are often succeeded by much more passive — but still religious-sects. Commonly, men now join fundamentalist Christian sects, often of U.S. Negro parentage. Thus the Jehovah's Witnessess has long had mass support in Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo whose governments are very hostile to it. In the Congo, where all political organization is ruthlessly crushed, the Kimbanguist church has been the major nationalist organization in recent decades. Africans who find themselves segregated in Christian churches, blocked not only from obtaining equality and advancement in political, economic and cultural life, but even within the Christian churches, break away and form their own separatist churches. These are often the only legal way in which they can organise: there is normally a syncretic doctrine combining Christian elements with indigenous faith-healing, divining, possession, etc. Frustrated leaders, ambitious and capable, can only rise by breaking away from existing sects. So today in South Africa we have at least 1,000 such sects. The emotionality of the movements, which is the product of the immense frustrations felt by the adherents, appears in trances, visions, dreams, mass hysteria, etc. The weakest, form of movement is that which no longer mobilizes people against the Europeans, but preaches that the people themselves are responsible for the evils come upon them. They must cleanse their hearts, and abandon the sin which has brought them

such misery. Hence Central Africa has been swept by "witch-finding" movements to eliminate sorcery; the latest, the 'Alice' movement, was reported from the Copper Belt only a few months ago.

As the cults become more and more passive, and begin to preach that the reward is to come in Heaven (where the colour-bar is often to be reversed), the more militant elements abandon them. On the Copper Belt today it is the African Mineworkers' Union and the African National Congress which are **the active** movements; the cults lead people from realistic and radical action. But 30 years ago they were quite dangerous.

Kenya has had its share of these movements. The Luo had their Mumbo cult even before 1914; among the very backward Si, the Dini ya Masambwa cult produced a wave of outbreaks, notably one in 1948 when there were 11 deaths, and **one in 1950** when 29 Suk were killed and 60 wounded, and three Europeans and one African soldier killed on the other side.

But such movements were quite untypical of the political life of the more advanced parts of Kenya where the mass of the population resided. The Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba and other peoples had left this sort of thing behind decades ago. The next stage—the transition to Independent Christian or syncretic churches—was reached in **the thirties** with the creation of the African Orthodox **Church** of Keaya and the Kikuyu Independent Pentecostal Church.

Stemming from these early independent African organizations were the Kikuyu Karinga Schools Association and the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association, the famous bodies which by **1952** had set up nearly 200 African Schools independent of Government and mission (and despite strong European opposition).

Secular organizations had also emerged even before the Independent Schools movement, notably the Young Kikuyu Association (1921, banned the same year), and the Kikuyu Central Association (1922, banned in 1940). Now many authorities, notably Dr. Leakey, have claimed that all these movements were merely **different** labels for one vast subversive movement. The KCA and the Independent Schools are for him, not just products of the same general nationalist sentiments, but actually segments of one organizational whole or successive parts, of one such movement. With exactly the same aplomb, he asserts that KAU is merely a 'front' for Mau Mau, that the KAU was merely the old KCA revived, etc., etc. The vague smear-technique is widely used: Mau Mau was a "variant" of KCA; Mau Mau was "virtually the same" as the KCA ("Defeating Mau Mau," pp. 103-4); or "so far as the Kikuyu tribe are concerned Mau Mau was synonymous" with KAU (p. 41). This no more proves that Mau Mau — KAU = KCA than to say that the Labour Party = the Chartists = the Communist Party, because (a) some members of one organiza-

tion were **later found in** one of the others; (b) the organizations had many common aims and practices; (c) people **believed** that they were the same thing. Montague Slater's analysis of the Kenyatta trial has shown in more detail that extremely tenuous material of this kind was used to condemn Kenyatta, and to "prove" that the Mau Mau was organizationally linked to KAU. (My own most vivid memory of Kenyatta in action is of a speech urging African strikers to go back to work, some years ago).

Despite Leakey's stature as an archaeologist, he can by no stretch of the imagination be called a trained anthropologist. A missionary's son who worked for Intelligence during the Emergency, his accuracy and objectivity was called in question when he acted as interpreter during the Kenyatta trial, causing him to withdraw. His general involvement and sociological ignorance oblige the reader to examine his conclusions very critically.

The Independent churches sprang up in an attempt to halt Government and Mission inroads on Kikuyu life. But in some respects, they looked to the past rather than the future: they took as symbols of independence traditional customs which **the** Europeans deprecated and attacked: female circumcision, polygamy, the levirate, etc., and found their justification easily enough in the Old Testament.

But the political associations, the trade unions and the periodic disturbances which appeared more and more frequently between the wars were forward-looking and overwhelmingly secular. The KAU, founded in 1944, was **100,000** strong by the date of its suppression and carried its agitation to England and the United Nations. In the full-scale onslaught of 1952-3, the KAU, like most independent organizations in which Kikuyu predominated, was banned. There followed the arrests, the concentration camps, the Kenyatta trial, the terrified exodus from the European farms into the Reserve, the bulldozing of the Nairobi slums, and the rapid slide into the violence of the Lari massacre on the one hand and the fulfilment of the settlers' "shooting orders" on the other. The horrors of the subsequent hostilities, the mass arrests, the bombing of the Reserves, the building of "concentration villages," and so forth, need not be related here.

MAU MAU

This was the situation in which Mau Mau mushroomed from a tiny sect to a mass resistance movement in a matter of months. The most striking feature of Mau Mau was not its resemblance to traditional cults and magico-religious practices, but its very divergence from the traditional. As Leakey remarks:

"in respect of all Mau Mau oath ceremonies, the tendency has been to do things which are in direct contradiction to established Kikuyu law and custom." (Defeating **Mau Mau**, p. 28).

The oaths were based on a strange mixture of indigenous practices: some derived from traditional initiation-rites (the use of banana-stem arches, grass necklets, etc.), others from evil sorcery (the piercing of sheep's eyes, the use of a calabash full of blood) and yet others from traditional ritual oath-ceremonies. Most of those who were initiated into Mau Mau only took the first oath, binding them to help and protect fellow-members. In the second oath, they swore to **kill**, if called upon, even to kill close relatives. Positive affirmations were enough, when reinforced by the use of a jumble of powerful traditional rites, to ensure the efficacy of the first two oaths. But in order to create a resolute, tough, fanatical, hard core, this was not enough.

In the more advanced oaths, therefore, obscene and sacrilegious acts were introduced. It is noteworthy that Leakey states that these advanced oaths were only instituted after the Emergency was well-advanced, i.e. when mass repression and violence had been unleashed on the Africans. We cannot yet know the accuracy of the accounts of advanced oath-ceremonies, which are said to involve copulation with animals and with menstruating women, the eating of human flesh, etc., etc., for we have only **official** evidence and we have seen how shaky that can be on many an occasion during the present Emergency. We do know, however, that the deliberate breaking of the most sacred taboos—and the important fact is that these things are recognised as sacred by **the** very people **who** deliberately break them—is a universal feature of many movements of this kind. The obscenity and sacrilege, then, is used as a mechanism to unify men by getting them to perform acts which so cut them off from normal society that in their common guilt they are henceforth bound to each other, and are capable of anything.

It is said that raw SS units in the Russian campaign were bonded together by "blooding" them—by making them carry out atrocities as a group. By so doing, men can be nerved to prepare themselves for action in which there are no "conventions of war." (And even on the most trivial level of our own everyday swearing, our oaths today are still based upon sexual and religious themes).

The oaths, then, like many similar oath-binding ceremonies throughout world history (and including, as Professor Asa Briggs has pointed out, many of the secret oaths of early British trade unions and combinations), are not mere obscenity and sacrilege for their own sakes; nor are they atavistic regression . . . they are quite unlike any traditional rituals even though they use elements of various traditional rituals.

Most attention has been focussed on the negative aspects of Mau Mau oaths. But what was the positive significance of the oaths? Obviously the assertion of the independence and value of African culture, and the rejection of that of the Europeans; but

in addition, Mau Mau preached a positive and strict new moral code: it strongly opposed prostitution, it attacked illicit sex-relations. This is usually entirely neglected. It is another aspect of the construction of a movement of the **dedicated**, differentiated from those who have succumbed to the degeneracy colonialism has thrust upon them. In more trivial ways, too, the Mau Mau bans on the drinking of English beer, and on wearing hats, express something of this same deliberate turning of the back upon the culture of their enemies; it is a trivial form of the more serious oaths binding them to discipline as rebels.

As a parallel, Chinese peasants in the nineteen-twenties prohibited luxuries they associated with the upper classes: quite minor things such as theatrical entertainments, sedan-chairs, wine, sugar, feasting, etc. A similar ascetic ethic made them forbid gambling and opium-smoking (Mao Tse Tung, SW 1, pp. 50-54).

As Engels noted long ago:

"asceticism . . . is to be found in all mediaeval uprisings that were tinged with religion, and also in modern times at the beginning of every proletarian movement. This austerity of behaviour, this insistence on relinquishing all enjoyment of life . . . is a necessary transitional stage without which the lowest strata of society could never start a movement. In order to develop revolutionary energy, in order to become conscious of their own hostile position towards all other elements of society . . . they must begin with stripping themselves of everything that could reconcile them to the existing system of society. They must renounce all pleasures which would make their subdued position in the least tolerable. All the prophets of rebellion started with appeals against sin, because, in fact, only a violent exertion, a sudden renunciation of all habitual forms of existence could bring into unified motion a disunited, widely scattered generation of peasants grown up in blind submission."

(Peasant War in Germany).

There is some slight evidence of lingering messianic elements in Mau Mau. The 'hymns' cited by Leakey contain references to the "return" of "M—" (p. 66); another passage states "our M— will take us to await him at the aerodrome" (p.69)—this latter reminiscent of the Melanesian Cargo Cults. Leakey omits any reference to these allusions. Miracles, too, were also sometimes prophesied (see "In the Shadow of the Mau Mau," by lone Leigh, where a "dumb" boy spoke and related a vision of God, and threatened that deviationists would be "suspended in the skies for 39 days" (p.76)).

But such scraps of millenarian ideas (and I have deliberately concentrated on such evidence) do not make Mau Mau merely another of the many cult-movements. That there were people in its ranks with religious notions derived from the old sects is clear enough. Even the KAU had had trouble with fringe members belonging to the Etereri sect (see Kenyatta Trial). But Mau Mau, which suddenly expanded enormously when it became the only

possible medium for accumulated and blocked energies, as well as for sheer self-defence, inevitably swept up all sorts of people into its ranks. And it was inevitably organized with a high degree of local autonomy, with limited central control over what particular sections did. The overwhelming weight of evidence is that there were very few of these apocalyptic visionaries. Of course, people can be religious enthusiasts and good fighters; political parties are unlikely to reject them, or even to be able to control acceptance of such people. Our Labour Party does not proscribe Jehovah's Witnesses. There is little doubt, too, that at least some of the Mau Mau leaders have used the familiar language of the Apocalypse as a medium of appeal to a mass audience who had little political knowledge but very bitter anti-European feelings. This does not mean that the leaders themselves accepted the religious implications of the rites and phrases.

We must always remember that we have only heard one side of the case, too. Nor can we, with Miss Margery Perham, accept for one moment the racist nonsense disguised as scientific 'psychology' which the Kenya Government puts out in the shape of Carothers' "Psychology of Mau Mau," for this has already been exposed for what it is by both anthropologists and psychologists. If one examines Mau Mau statements, and their methods of organization — and *no* one has bothered very much to do so — one gets a very different impression of the movement, even allowing for propaganda presentation of the case.

Here is one fantasy-monger's version of a Mau Mau hideout full of:

". . . villainous-looking Kikuyu, with hairy, evil faces . . . lean and vicious . . . There is the General, a powerful, brutal fellow, looking half mad . . ." etc., etc. (Stoneham, p. 126).

In fact the thousands of people organized in the Kikuyu Land and Freedom Army, as they called it (NOT Mau Mau) were organized into four groups (the Gikuyu Iregi Army, Western Army, Townswatch and Ituma Demi Army), sub-divided into named "battalions" commanded by 'Generals.' Controlling the military forces was the "Kenya Parliament" with a shadow cabinet headed by Dedan Kimathi, with ministers, secretaries and departments. Badges of rank, medals, uniforms, documents, etc. were all created. Linked to each military group was a 'passive wing' in each native location whose job it was to provide food, ammunition, etc., for the troops. Production of home-made weapons was also undertaken, and political education classes and ceremonial (with perhaps, some ritual) parades were held. Despite Mr. Stoneham, the "Times" reports of the 11th and 12th July, 1955 stressed that:

"leaders who have been captured or met by the security forces have in general appeared to be reasonably intelligent to talk to and definitely politically minded."

The organization then, is highly rationalized—and rational. The "Times" correspondent, however, misunderstood some less obvious features. He describes the "grandiloquent" imitations of the British Army and Government which are particularly obvious in Dedan Kimathi's use of the title "Field Marshal Sir," in the "overweighting at the top with Generals," the proliferation of medals, badges of rank and so forth. Now this is partly misunderstanding of European ranks and honours; it is, again, only natural for any Army to create ranks and to honour its heroes, but it is clear that this particular Army overdid it. This is the typical psychology reported from such groups in every corner of the globe.

Energetic and intelligent men frustrated by colour-bars from achieving the position in society that their talents warrant, find satisfaction in the assumption of titles, ranks, honours, badges, etc., often in fantastic form, as in those religious fraternities or other societies where everyone is at least a Committee Member (Sultan, Mammy Queen [from Queen Victoria], Judge, Doctor, Manager, Commissioner, Leader, Conductor, Sister, Nurse, etc., are some of the titles in one West African association.)

But when all this has been said, the programme as well as the organization of Mau Mau was a very sober one. Their objectives were not even the expulsion of the Europeans, but the negotiation of a settlement of the fighting after which the question of self-government (not settlers' government) might be discussed (see letter of General Sir Kerari Njemo of 4-4-55). These repeated requests for a cease-fire were couched in moderate and balanced language; certainly to read them does not give the impression of violent, insane fanatics. Such there may well have been—we must not assume unanimity of views within the Mau Mau leadership, let alone the rank and file — but there is good evidence that the extremists were in a minority by 1955. The notable event was the Mau Mau invasion in March, 1955, of the house" of the Kikuyu Member of the Legislative Council (= M.P.), Mr. Eliud Mathu, long a Government nominee, when the gang told him they were no longer killing except during actual fighting, and spent over an hour arguing the uselessness of parliamentary politics with him instead of slaughtering him.

The Kenya Parliament and the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, then were fundamentally the product of the vicious destruction of African independent political and trade union organization over a long period, but especially between 1950 and 1952, and the consequent frustration which induced a few men to turn to terrorism and to underground methods. During the mass turning towards Mau Mau which took place in 1952-3, when Mau Mau represented the only possible form of self-defence, many elements were swept into the movement, and the diversity of local sections became

marked. The final stage was the virtual replacement of terrorism by orthodox revolutionary tactics. The Mau Mau then, as Professor Max Gluckman pointed out in his famous "Manchester Guardian" controversy with Sir Philip Mitchell, former Governor of Kenya, was a product of colonialism not an expression of atavism.

The furious vehemence of Mitchell was an interesting self-exposure of the true sentiments of this long-boasted 'liberal' colonial official, now himself a Kenya settler. Despite the need to retain Colonial Office control over Kenya at present, this is a vital reminder that in the end the local official has always worked for the settler. Blundell has got what he wanted all along the line. The recent elections returned a majority of extremist settlers; the African electors who abstained in large numbers, carefully selected, were plainly not too "lethargic" or too "parochially-minded" to vote as the British press told us, but merely scared; and they still have to be convinced that there is much to be gained by voting. Yet despite the narrow franchise and the fear, those who did vote rejected practically all the former African members whom they regarded as tainted with 'good-boyism,' and returned a new team headed by labour leader Tom Mboya. At present, they are slowly and cautiously rebuilding political organizations.

The Mau Mau may have been defeated militarily, but its very resistance has forced the first major concession in Kenya — the right of some Africans to elect eight members of the Kenya Legislative Council instead of having to accept Government nominees. The next major political development in Kenya will therefore take place in this parliamentary context, and a struggle over the Lyttleton "multi-racial" Plan may be expected. This is a Plan whereby Europeans will have as many Ministers and Legco seats as all other communities — a nice equality of the 42,000 on the one hand and the six million on the other! A marxist appreciation of the situation, therefore, means recognising the importance of these constitutional developments. For too long CP agitation on Kenya concentrated on depicting the Mau Mau as a straight-forward nationalist movement. It was indeed a nationalist movement, and support for the Kenya people fighting back was an elementary duty which Marxists, to their credit, carried out, despite the Press howls about oaths and atrocities. But just as it was wrong to follow; Moscow and ignore all the evidence of Mau Mau atrocities and of Mau Mau oaths, and to describe complex colonial situations in the crudest of black/white terms, so the policy of blind defence of Mau Mau led to a playing-down of the new constitutional developments as if they were imperialist manoeuvring of minimal importance. As in Malaya, however, ultimately these have proved immensely important. No matter how far such changes are products of actual or threatened armed struggle, and whilst we must never forget the example of British Guiana, it is high time that the

fundamental importance of the constitutional changes in the colonies was recognised on the Left—a case Basil Davidson has been pleading for some time. Indian and Ghanaian independence are not mere formalities; and in Kenya, as in Malaya, constitutional advance is possible and likely. Failure to appreciate this leads to the present dire position the Malayan CP finds itself in: supporting the Government on the one hand, and supporting the rebels on the other. But after the French CP's noble example in supporting the Mollet Government in Algeria, we should not be surprised at the ultimate perfidies which opportunism can lead to in colonial affairs. For British Marxists there must be a very different line of action.