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CLASS FORMATION IN AFRICA : A CASE STUDY OF KENYA

by

Peter Kuria Gituru

B.A. (English) University of Washington  
B.A. (Political Science) Eastern Washington State College

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I certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree at any University and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text.

Peter Kuria Gituru.

INTRODUCTION

Kenya is an underdeveloped country as a result of seventy years of British colonialism. The underdeveloped status of the country has, as in other African states and elsewhere, stimulated the development debate which has proceeded along two lines: one line denies the existence of classes in independent Kenya, the other acknowledges their existence, but denies to the Kenyan national bourgeoisie an independent role vis-a-vis the international bourgeoisie. The two lines of argument have their characteristic fallacies. The adherents of the first line fall into two groups of writers. The first of these argues that there are no classes in independent Kenya because the pre-colonial African community was socialist and has remained as such and that therefore the task of post-colonial development boils down to removing all the colonial blockages to this traditional socialism. This argument is well summarized by the former Minister for Economic Planning in Kenya, Tom Mboya. He recapitulates this argument thus:

"I strongly believe that in the field of economic relations we can similarly be guided by the traditional presence of socialist ideas and attitudes in the African mental make-up...

When I talk of 'African Socialism' I refer to those proved codes of conduct in the African societies which have, over the ages, conferred dignity on our people and afforded them security regardless of their station in life. I refer to universal charity which characterized our societies and I refer to the African's thought processes and cosmological ideas which regard man, not as social means, but as an end and entity in the society." 1

For Mboya and his like, the post-colonial development of the country means developing this traditional socialism which was arrested by colonialism.

The second group of writers deny the existence of classes in

Africa in general, and Kenya in particular. They argue that the majority of African people remained in the traditional sector and that only a minority attained elite status. It was these elites who assumed the nationalist leadership and at independence became the ruling elite. Hodgkin argues that:

"[The elites] can reasonably be described as belonging to 'the middle class,' though certain problems are raised by the use of this term in the African context. Clearly there is some correlation between the rapid development during the post-war period of associations of a modern type, including political parties, and other familiar processes of social change - economic expansion, the growth of towns, the spread of Western education; and, as a consequence, the emergence of new social groups, ranging from professionals, administrators, and the larger entrepreneurs, through minor civil servants, teachers,<sup>2</sup> and contractors, to the wage-earning class."

Hodgkin concludes that this "intellectual-professional-commercial-administrative elite"<sup>3</sup> has replaced traditional leadership. Professor Miller supports this viewpoint for he insists that there is no class conflict in independent Africa; what there is, is conflict among diverse elites competing for scarce resources. He writes:

"For the present it would appear that a more potent source of conflict than class derives from friction within the elite between the status layers of the elite, between elite generations and between the bureaucratic and political elite."<sup>4</sup>

Implicit in this is the argument that classes did not exist in colonial Kenya and equally that they do not exist in independent Kenya. Or if they do exist, they are either too nascent or too tradition-ridden to correctly describe them as classes. Hence, these writers conclude that there is no class struggle in the country.

The other line of argument acknowledges the existence of classes in the country, but underestimates the independent political-economic role of the national bourgeoisie vis-a-vis the international bourgeoisie. The error inherent in this argument stems from the economic

determinism of underdevelopment theory which tends to absolutely subordinate the national bourgeoisie to the international bourgeoisie. According to these writers, the Kenyan national bourgeoisie remains dependent or auxiliary. Professor Leys subscribes to this view when he writes:

"The real result of African businessmen's political activities and of the government's policies was to foster the emergence of African capitalist-owners, a distinctive kind of 'auxiliary bourgeoisie'... [cementing] a firm alliance between foreign capital and the new African 'auxiliary bourgeoisie' operating under more and more heavily protected conditions."<sup>5</sup>

The Kenyan auxiliary bourgeoisie remains subordinate to the foreign bourgeoisie in this analysis because the former depends on the latter for capital, aid and expertise knowledge etc. In my thesis, I argue to the contrary and criticize these theories for seeing different trees without recognizing the forest.

Therefore, in the following analysis, I intend to go a step further than the aforementioned analysis of disparate periods of Kenya's political development by approaching these periods - pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial - as inter-related by showing that this interdependence between them constitutes progress whose motive force is class struggle. To demonstrate how class struggle has effected progress in the country, I show in chapter one how the evolution of classes and their struggle undermined African communalism; following this, chapter two shows how the emerging classes from the communalist society were reconstituted by colonialism along racial lines; chapter three demonstrates the importance of class struggle in the Mau Mau liberation war; chapter four reveals how the African liberator classes were displaced by British colonialism in favour of the collaborator classes; and finally, chapter five shows how the classes displaced under direct colonialism are taking the initiative under neo-colonialism against African bourgeoisie and its international

allies. I hope this study will stimulate further insight into this crucial aspect of the country's political development and progress.

FOOTNOTES

1. Tom Mboya, "African Socialism," in African Socialism edited by W.H. Friedland and C.G. Rosberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p.251.
2. Thomas Hodgkin, African Political Parties (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961), p.25.
3. Ibid., p.31.
4. Robert A. Miller, "Elite Formation in Africa : Class, Culture and Coherence," Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.12 (1972), p.533.
5. Colin Leys, Underdevelopment in Kenya : The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp.168-169.



CHAPTER I

PRE-COLONIAL SOCIETIES

INTERDEPENDENT, STATELESS AND CLASSLESS

I

There are, taking a general view, two trends which have emerged in the course of studying pre-colonial African societies. The two trends run in opposite directions, but both serve a common purpose: they are a response to the denial, and later, the distortion, of the African heritage by colonialism in the latter's bid to perpetuate itself in Africa. The British Journal, New African Development, summarizes these colonial rationalizations in the following way:

"For more than a century African history has been either slanted or distorted by foreign historians, and one of the reasons is that European historians have a rosy picture of colonialism in Africa. There have also been myths that Africa had no history until the colonialists arrived." <sup>1</sup>

This denial of the African past has been abandoned as a futile process of separating man from his shadow. In recent years, the debate has turned to a different task: that of interpreting the past to illuminate the present. Whether by foreign or indigenous writers, the most heated argument has been between those writers who deny existence of classes in pre-colonial African society<sup>2</sup> and those who affirm their existence. While I believe the latter position is closer to reality, my aim here is not to add to this rebuttal - this has been done elsewhere<sup>3</sup> - rather, the aim is to show how this rebuttal has led in turn to exaggerated generalizations which have obscured the specificity of given regions or ethnic groups. Without an appreciation of this specificity, it is hard to explain the diversity of modes of life among African societies. To account for it, we have to analyze such unique regions or ethnic groups. The above generalizations can be best summarized in this way.



Those who have denied the existence of classes in pre-colonial Africa have argued for the existence of a communalist mode of production as the initial continental mode of production,<sup>4</sup> especially in Africa south of the Sahara. By so doing, they have blurred regional or ethnic differences inherent in this mode which are indispensable in explaining the development of social classes in Africa. The other group, by contrast, has elevated a regionally specific form to a continental mode of production in which classes evolve. As in the former case, important differences are lost in the latter approach whose all pervasive mode of production fails to account for the diverse social development in a given region such as East Africa and Kenya in particular. Consequently, the objective here is to re-establish this specificity with reference to Kenya in order to show how this unique mode of production<sup>5</sup> emerged, and how later it accounts for the diversity of African response to colonialism within the country as much as without. Furthermore, this approach will illuminate the relationship between class and ethnicity in contemporary African politics which is frequently either confused or glossed over.<sup>6</sup>

The first group of writers affirm - and rightly so - that Africans are not outside, but within world history. This affirmation restores African social development within the class-based civilization of mankind. Kwame Nkrumah is the most representative of the group. In his book, Class Struggle in Africa, he places African social evolution within the classical Marxist social development of which he writes:

"There have been five major types of production relations known to man - communalism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism. With the establishment of the socialist state, man has embarked on the road to communism. It was when

private property relationships emerged, and as communalism gave way to slavery<sup>7</sup> and feudalism that the class struggle began."

In this perspective, the impression is conveyed that pre-colonial African social organization was dominated by a communalist mode of production, followed by slavery and feudalism, both of which would have developed unevenly to maturity in that order or in one combination or other had they not been undermined by colonialism. In short, this scheme allows for the development of social classes in Africa in this pre-colonial period and thereafter provided that the social conditions conducive to this class evolution are allowed to ripen. Colonialism accelerated such conditions. Before the advent of colonialism, the communalist system remains the dominant and generalized continental mode of production. Nkrumah defines this mode in these terms:

"The political maturity of the African masses may to some extent be traced to economic and social patterns of traditional times, for example, all land and means of production belonged to the community. There was people's ownership. Labour was the need and habit of all. When a certain piece of land was allocated to an individual for his personal use, he was not free to do as he liked with it since it still belonged to the community. Chiefs were strictly controlled by counsellors, and were removable."

As a whole, this definition is fairly accurate when it is born in mind that it is directed against both those writers who deny African civilization and those who romanticize it, especially the advocates of the philosophy of exceptionalism according to which African social development occurs outside the mainstream of world history and remains unaffected by it, colonialism included.<sup>9</sup> To this end, Nkrumah succeeds in setting African social development within a continental and global perspective at the expense of the regional or ethnic specificity mentioned previously. What is

required then is to shift the focus from this general mode to a particular one co-existing with the former on a continental scale. But, before we undertake this analysis, let us turn to the other side of the argument.

The latter trend is represented by those writers who err in the opposite direction. This group identifies a specific regional mode of production which is in turn generalized into a continental specimen. Among these writers should be mentioned Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch. She defines what she identifies as the African mode of production in this way:

"The specificity of the African mode of production thus appears to be based on the combination of a patriarchal community economy with exclusive control by one group to the long distance trade. The form of power at any given moment depends on the nature of this group: if those in charge of trade are also the lineage chiefs at the self-sustaining village level, their predominance is then uncontested. In the case of the Fan and the Bubangwi, it was threatened only by the instability of the small rival groups engaged in the same project; in the middle Congo the system collapsed only under the pressure of external factors - the intrusion of Europeans who confiscated the great trade for their own profit by eliminating the traditional brokerage."<sup>10</sup>

Vidrovitch recognizes the state as the common institution in which the "two economic systems impervious to one another"<sup>11</sup> co-exist, i.e. the village and state (long-distance trade) sectors, constituting the African mode of production. In this set-up, the ruling class coincides with the group that controls long distance trade. There is no doubt that her analysis remains invaluable in understanding this period of African political history. Nevertheless, her conclusion is questionable on the ground that the data on which it is based is not continentally representative: the data is heavily drawn from West, Central and Southern African societies. Undoubtedly, these

societies have much in common with those in East Africa. For example, village community and long distance trade. The former was a common institution throughout the continent and remains more or less so to this day.<sup>12</sup> As for the long distance trade, a qualification is necessary: important as it is, long distance trade began in East Africa as intra- and inter-tribal trade with the latter progressively taking the upper hand. Yet, this does not preclude international or caravan trade. Nonetheless, trade remained at that level until the 1820s; thereafter long distance trade assumed a dominant role.<sup>13</sup> Even then, neither of the ethnic groups involved in caravan trade, the Kamba of the interior, nor the Arab-Swahili group at the coast assumed political hegemony outside their respective areas over the country or the region as happened in those regions analyzed by Vidrovitch.<sup>14</sup> Why did not the Kamba or the Arab-Swahili ethnic groups gain political hegemony in Kenya? The reason is to be found in the qualitative difference between the social organizations Vidrovitch deals with in her analysis and those in East African regions. Of the latter, societies were organized differently: they had neither chiefdoms nor states based on either slavery or feudalism<sup>15</sup> as was happening elsewhere in Africa; they had their own system of territorially-based tribal administration as decentralized as it was democratic and collectivist.<sup>16</sup> Yet, this does not mean that these societies were static. Far from it. They were undergoing dynamic changes which were bound in the long term to undermine this classless community. The absence of the state appears to depend primarily upon the following factors: migration, abundant land, game and trade. In the following sections, these will be examined in detail.

## II

Pre-colonial African society in Kenya, like any autonomous society anywhere, was developing self-reliantly and dynamically according to the limits imposed upon it by the environment. This autonomous development - even though punctuated by intermittent tribal conflicts - was leading toward greater co-operation and integration, enhanced by the complementary nature of these subsistence economies of pastoralism and agriculture with a mixed mode of production between them, i.e. a combination of pastoralism and agriculture in which the latter was assuming greater importance at the expense of pastoralism which was previously the dominant sector.<sup>17</sup> This transitional type of subsistence emerged as a dynamic reflection of the pastoralists' desire to diversify their economy as they moved to drier, semi-desert areas of the northern and eastern parts of the country. Even so, in the richly endowed areas in the central highlands, agriculturalists kept both cattle, sheep and goats mainly as symbols of wealth and as the means of exchange since barter was the dominant form of exchange.<sup>18</sup>

The economic interdependence and exchange between the two subsistence sectors was accompanied by cultural interchange exemplified by intermarriage coupled with cultural diffusion.<sup>19</sup> This development in turn stabilized peace which was essential for production and exchange. All in all, the pre-colonial Kenya social system was not a closed one, but an open and dynamic one, characterized by development and intercourse in its widest sense.

This society was in a state of creative flux.<sup>20</sup> This dynamism found expression at all levels. The most expressive of this flux was migration. The agriculturalists came into their present areas in two waves. One group entered into the country from the interlacustrine

area north of Lake Nyanza (Victoria) into the area bordering the Lake on the east; the other group came in from the south through the Taita Hills, along the coast, up the Tana River and Mount Kenya. Agriculturalists are considered as the first of the incoming settlers who were everywhere displacing or absorbing the hunting- and food-gathering groups. For example, Gumba were displaced by Kikuyu<sup>21</sup> and Anoka by Kamba in their respective areas.<sup>22</sup>

In western Kenya, the advancing agriculturalists were Bantu people very much like their eastern counterparts. They settled in the lowland areas around Lake Nyanza (Victoria) and in some of the highland areas behind the lowland areas. This group includes Luhya and Kisii who today occupy the most densely populated areas in the country, if not in Africa.<sup>23</sup> The eastern group advanced from the Taita Hills, in Southeast Kenya, first moving east, then north along the coast. This was the group which first came into contact with the Arabs. As tradition has it, a secondary dispersal area centred at Shungawaya, between the Juba and Tana rivers: it was the source from which nearly all the Bantu-speaking peoples of eastern Kenya and Tanzania trace their origin.<sup>24</sup> Galla were moving south from the present-day Somalia and were already in Tana area in the thirteenth century along the coastal hinterland, moving into the drier plains and more fertile highland areas between Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya.<sup>25</sup> The Meru to the north and the Kikuyu-Embu to the south of Mount Kenya, the Kamba in the scattered hills and steppe country between the highland in Tana Valley and the Digo, Duruma, and Giriama along the coast trace their origin to Shungawaya. Nevertheless, there is a debate going on currently to determine whether or not Kikuyu, Kamba, Meru and Embu actually came from there. According to Dr. Muriuki for example, only Meru and Kamba of this Bantu Congerie came

from the coast, Meru from Mbwa and Kamba from Usuni (coast) probably from the Giriama area.<sup>26</sup> Since their migration is not in any way in doubt, our interest here will focus on how their highland environment whose abundant fertility, rainfall and land combined to permit extensive agriculture supplemented by husbandry and how an equalitarian socio-political system evolved around it. This system was fairly stable and commanded respect from the neighbouring peoples who sought trade with it. And it is not at all surprising that the country came to be identified with these agriculturalists around Mount Kenya as the country's name testifies. But this is not all.

This socio-political system was unique in East Africa, too. Unlike their fellow interlacustrine Bantus who founded feudal kingdoms such as the Buganda, the Bunyore-Kintare, the Nkore, the Toro and so on in which peasants were subordinated to feudal lords, mainly chiefs and heads of clans,<sup>27</sup> Kenyan Bantus set up a decentralized political system in line with their open and expanding social system which prevented a concentration of the means of production (land) in the hands of a few chiefs or lords. The latter in turn prevented exploitation of labour which was communal and the product of this labour was shared accordingly. In the absence of such feudal exploiters and institutions, there was no need of a state to enforce the will of the exploiter upon the exploited. Hence, the non-presence of state in the country, which confirms the Marxian view that:

"The state is the product and the manifestation of irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where and to the extent that class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And conversely, the existence of the state<sup>28</sup> proves the class antagonisms are irreconcilable."

This view is further confirmed by the fact that the imposition of Arab and British colonialism based on feudal and capitalist classes respectively not only created states, but also classes in the country to serve the needs of these economic systems. It is this process that Odhiambo has in mind when he writes:

"The creation of an African peasantry was primarily the result of the interaction between an international capitalist settler economic system and the traditional socio-economic systems within the context of the territorially defined colonial political system."<sup>29</sup>

After plentiful land and communal labour, the factors which impeded the evolution of classes in Kenya were abundant game which supplemented agriculture and trade. Exchange between the two sectors, agriculture and pastoralism, and within them, was a standard practice. However, the exchange between the two tended to increase in adverse seasons which were followed at times by expansion and assimilation.<sup>30</sup> Yet, when all is said, the single most important factor in stunting class formation was land ownership: it was owned communally as Ochola points out:

"Surely, the collective, the communal and the corporate ownership in traditional land law must have been the dominant feature of all or at least most of these communities."<sup>31</sup>

And where individual family or extended family ownership tended to emerge at the expense of communalism, communal control was imposed to stabilize the status quo.<sup>32</sup> This was generally the case among the agriculturalists. Nevertheless, as migration gave way to permanent borders at the close of the nineteenth century, there appeared seminal social differentiations among such distant groups as Kikuyu and Luo. Yet, these differentiations did not reach antagonistic levels and it is fair to say they would have required a protracted period to mature had it not been for the colonial



intervention which upset the communal checks and balances, opening the way for the formation of antagonistic classes.

The precedence of communalism over individualism was also operative at the political level. As already mentioned, there was no state in Kenya: the Kenyan state as it is today is a colonial creation. In this respect, McIntosh notes:

"No state was formed east of the Rift Valley. The eastern Bantu peoples retained and developed the original Bantu characteristics of a well-ordered system of authority not through rule of chiefs or kings, but based upon territorial allegiances and operated by councils of elders. Among the elders, and individuals distinguished by wealth, wisdom, and probably a record of military achievement, could rise for a position of prominence and leadership. It would appear, however, that such a person was not more than a 'first among equals' with regard to his fellow elders."<sup>33</sup>

Consequently, membership in the political system was universal, no one was excluded; no man or generation was excluded by virtue of their being subject to elderhood which was crowned by initiation.

Without a state or an institution concerned with the running of the state, elders set up representative councils at three levels, starting with the village (ituura in Kikuyu or utui in Kamba) where all Mbari, i.e. the extended families or sub-clans, were represented. The village councils sent representatives to ridge (rugongo) councils and the latter to the territorial or tribal council. The council assembled under a sacred tree or on sacred ground or at a homestead of one of the senior elders to deliberate on the affairs of the polity.<sup>34</sup> Council membership was universal for all elders. Office-holding was based on merit, for example, the leadership of the council (i.e. Muthamaki in Kikuyu, Laibon in Masai and Orkoiyot in Nandi - the latter two combined secular and religious<sup>35</sup> functions) were attained through merit such as good service to the community,

wisdom and the like. There were no hereditary positions. Moreover office bearers were subject to recall if they failed to do their duties; besides, for those found guilty of misdemeanor, a fine was imposed on them, payable in goats or sheep, the number varying according to the nature of the misdeed. Self-seeking or individualism was smothered by the collectivist ideology. Kenyatta's comment on this ideology is illuminating. He remarks that:

"The spirit of the collectivism was so much ingrained in the mind of the people that even eating, drinking, working and sleeping were done collectively."<sup>36</sup>

Besides, communalism was reinforced by an all-around superstructural nexus of relations of kinship, age-set system, ritualism and such-like to make it dominant for there was no other alternative to challenge it and, without this challenge, communalism was assured of a long existence.

### III

Like their agriculturalist counterparts, pastoralists, too, were involved in a general migration which brought them into the country from different directions. In some areas, the newcomers absorbed the local nomads and a new cultural synthesis ensued; in other places, an uneasy co-existence was established between the immigrants and their neighbours.<sup>38</sup> As a result of this social, economic and political intercourse, a social system emerged along the following pattern: the Nilo-Hamitic pastoralists from the basin of Lake Turkana (Rudolf) led by the Masai who crossed drier sections of the Kenya highlands into North Tanzania and the more humid country of the Rift Valley came under their control.<sup>39</sup> Hamites, Galla and Somali were relentlessly pressing southward from the Horn of Africa through the dry northern quadrant of the country.<sup>40</sup> In the meantime

Nilotes, Luo, from the Upper Nile basin were pushing into the country, into the area surrounding Kavirondo gulf.<sup>41</sup> As these groups moved into their respective areas, merged with neighbours and then splintered for further expansion as the exigencies of the pastoral environment dictated, a unique and delicate balance developed - between these communities and their animals, between them and pastures. It is this dynamic adaptation which accounts for the diversity of pastoral life style.<sup>42</sup>

This diversity is reflected in the following three types of pastoralism. In areas with adequate rainfall, there was a progressive switch to agriculture. This transitional mode of life was taken up by Suk, Arusha Masai, Luo and Pokot.<sup>43</sup> Other pastoralist groups combined pastoralism with agriculture to insure the future against famine which was an ever-present threat. In case their animals were decimated by disease or drought, they would have their agricultural reserves to fall back on and vice versa. It was also a measure against animal rustlers who found it easier to steal animals than agricultural products. The group engaged in this mode of life comprised mainly Nandi, Kuria and Kipsigis.<sup>44</sup> Even so, the largest group of pastoralists subsisted exclusively on pure pastoralism with all the risks it entails.

Like the agriculturalists who practised shifting cultivation to retain soil fertility, pastoralists resorted to nomadism to replenish their pastures. However, their nomadic life was a source of conflict not only among themselves, but also between them and the agriculturalists. The other method which helped them to protect their stock against raids, disease or drought was to split their herds. The split herds were taken to different areas in search of pastures and

water. In the course of their movements, pastoralists came into contact with agriculturalists. The encounter encouraged exchange between them and the agriculturalists, giving rise to trade, for example, between Masai and Kikuyu, between Maragoli and Luhya.<sup>45</sup> With trade followed other social exchanges which were essential for peaceful co-existence.

As already pointed out, the state as a class institution did not develop among the agriculturalists; could the same be said of the pastoralists? A similar development occurred here too. Neither the growing trade between pastoralists and agriculturalists nor their increasing stock gave rise to classes among them as happened among the Galla to the north of the country and in Burundi and Rwanda where Tutsi feudal lords had Hutu serfs<sup>46</sup> as their cattle herders. More or less the same factors which inhibited the development of classes among the agriculturalists are found operating here too. The most basic being land use or usufruct under which pastoral land was under communal control and each family had equal access to it. Bonte summarises this practice in these words:

"All families and their herds have access to all the territory used by the community,<sup>47</sup> and they have structurally equivalent rights."

Under this system, the question of enclosure was out. This was true of all the pre-colonial pastoral societies in Kenya.

After land, the next major input in the pastoral subsistence sector was animal stock, namely cattle, goats and sheep for consumption and exchange. To these were added animals of burden such as donkeys and camels. The latter were used for all the above purposes. However, the size and composition of stock varied according to the nature of the environment. For example, camels are found

in the north and north-eastern parts of the country mainly among the Rendille and the Somali. Conversely, the Masai mainly kept cattle supplemented by goats and sheep. Yet, the forementioned communal control of the land was not sufficient to prevent accumulation of stock by a few families or clans which in turn would enable them to exercise commensurate social power of their wealth to the detriment of communal solidarity. What then prevented this anti-communal or class-oriented development? The answer is to be found in the various distributive mechanisms operating in these societies.

One such mechanism was to be found in kinship relations, for instance among the Masai and the Turkana,<sup>48</sup> among others. A member of the clan was an heir to the herd. Marriage brought a distribution of animals in the form of dowry or gift to the newly-weds to get them off the ground.<sup>49</sup> And since each and every family or clan had marriageable young men and women, the circulation nexus of these dowry herds is fairly clear. Closely related to kinship was the age-set system of the warrior group. When the latter raided their neighbours successfully, the animals were distributed among the participants.<sup>50</sup> The raid was a means of distribution in that it occurred in adverse seasons. Tilia or cattle lending was still another form of spreading animals around. It was based on friendship and reciprocity. In short, the cattle-circulating network made the cattle owner the centre of social relations, weaving through kinship alliances, co-operation, co-residentiality and the like, all of which neutralized individualism and social stratification or classes. And in this egalitarian social system, there was no need of the state for there were no antagonistic social relations to

regulate. These communities are designated as stateless. Yet, there was tribal democracy very much like that prevailing among the agriculturalists, more or less modified by isolation, inter-tribal interaction or adaptation. This is confirmed by Sutton. He writes of this system of government in this manner:

"At all levels, in fact, the governmental system was essentially democratic: like most other peoples of the highlands and plains of Kenya, the Kalenjin never had chiefs, and the concept of royal or noble birth were quite foreign..through their remarkable system of cycling age-sets, the Kalenjin maintained a highly sophisticated system of government with an automatic continuity built in it."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the pastoralist communal egalitarianism found a parallel expression at the political level.

#### IV

There is no consensus as to the core of Bantu dispersal. But whether there was such a common source or not, the fact remains that they share a common mode of life which at least points to such a source. In this respect, Sik makes this apt observation:

"Despite the extremely great variety and strange differentiation of their political systems and social economic structures, religion, customs, etc., however, the social economic structure, the culture and mode of life of all the Bantu peoples are built upon the same foundations. All Bantu peoples are more or less closely related to one another both by language and by culture."<sup>2</sup>

And this more or less homogeneous social system had a levelling effect that precluded social stratifications. Odhiambo comments on this effect in this manner:

"[It was] a vast mass, the members of which lived in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. There was no empathy between one peasant in Mumias and another in Wandanyi, because they did not know of their commonality of interest (and perhaps did not even know the existence of one another). Their mode of production isolated them from one another instead of bringing them together into mutual intercourse.

The isolation was increased by lack of communication and self-sufficiency of each peasant community. At the fundamental level, there was no peasantry as a class in precolonial Kenya precisely because they did not live in traditional conditions that separated their mode of life, their interests and their culture from other classes (since there were no other classes). Horizontally they merely had local interconnections that did not necessarily demand large-scale political organization among them."<sup>53</sup>

Odhiambo's observation needs drastic revision because pre-colonial Kenyan society was neither isolated nor without intercourse. In fact, intercourse was a part and parcel of their system. Above all, it was not a vast mass of equal individuals: social differentiation was taking place. In short, class formation was developing in this once communalist society.

The most representative Bantu society is the Kikuyu. Kikuyu society had effectively consolidated its settlement in the central highlands of Kenya at the turn of the last century. This consolidation led to social differentiation in the Kikuyu communalist society and this differentiation is fundamental in understanding the African anti-colonial struggle in general, and Kikuyu resistance in particular. It is not enough to evoke the impact of the uneven colonial development as the sole cause of anti-colonialism: pre-colonial African social differentiation made its own contribution to this struggle. In short, colonialism did not find a utopian society in Kenya: it found a society evolving into classes and it reconstituted these classes to its own service. In this regard, it is imperative to examine pre-colonial trade and the emergence of family or private land ownership which marked the break with African communalism. It is among those people infected by this individualist outlook that colonialism found ready allies.

Kikuyu agriculture was so highly developed that the early

travellers and explorers at the close of the last century described it in such terms "as far as the eye could see it was one vast garden."<sup>54</sup> It is not at all surprising to find that Kikuyuland was the granary of her neighbours.<sup>55</sup> Besides, they kept livestock, cattle, sheep and goats. Therefore, it is fair to say that Kikuyu were involved in mixed economy in which agriculture was dominant. This economy made Kikuyu relations, in trade, for example, with their neighbours very versatile.

Contrary to Odhiambo's claim that Kenyan communalist societies were isolated, the Kikuyu were clearly not. Trade for them was "an important economic activity, both internally and externally."<sup>56</sup> For example, Nyeri District in the Central Province of Kenya illustrates how this internal trade developed. It evolved from the very nature of the ecology. In this case, the good soil around Mathari and Southern Tetu of Nyeri were suited for agriculture: it was volcanic and rainfall was adequate. During drought, their neighbours came to Mathari to get foodstuffs. Conversely, in Mukurweini and in some parts of Othaya area of Nyeri, the soil was poor and received insufficient rainfall to permit agriculture. In this area, people produced iron products, basketry and pottery. There was also another section of Tetu bordering with Masailand whose residents exchanged foodstuffs with the Masai for animals, especially goats. The adaptation to this differential soil fertility led to specialization in production and industry which in turn gave rise to horizontal trade. The latter led to the establishment of marketplaces. The following pattern of exchange developed: Mathari sold foodstuffs to Mukurweini; the latter sold iron-ware, woven baskets and the like to the farmer. Meanwhile, people from Tetu area sold foodstuffs to Masai from whom they got animals. This trade pattern



illustrates natural linkages evolved under a network of markets said to be no more than seven miles apart throughout Kikuyuland with an attendance fluctuating between 4,000 to 5,000 people.<sup>57</sup> These markets were held on every fourth day. From this exchange, it is clear that Kikuyu were not engaged in mere subsistence: they were involved in production of surplus. This is confirmed by Miracle. He notes that:

"...by 1895 most Kikuyu were already long past subsistence farmers, in any of the various senses that term is used."<sup>58</sup>

Internal trade was well linked with external trade before that date.

External trade involved inter-sector trade between pastoralists and agriculturalists. This was later extended to caravan trade with the coast, mainly with Arab-Swahili traders at the last quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>59</sup> The former trade was carried out between such diverse groups as Luo and Luhya, between Masai and Kikuyu. Kikuyu sold maize flour, ochre, honey and tobacco to Masai; in return they got goats, sheep and cattle. Like intra-sector trade among Kikuyu, the trade between them and Masai was very much due to specialization in their respective areas. This is exemplified by Arusha Masai who are agriculturalists contrary to the belief that all Masai are pastoralists.<sup>60</sup> This pattern of trade could be extended to the entire pre-colonial Kenyan society. It shows how local exchange and interdependence evolved to create a harmonious development in which the Kikuyu were prominent. This ultimately led to the emergence of a stratum of middlemen who served as communication carriers as well as commodity sellers. Miracle notes their trade efficiency in these words:

"There were also large differences in the extent to which the Kikuyu access to the commodities of neighbouring economies, some individuals everywhere

and many individuals in some areas, because of proximity, intermarriage, or past experience were in a much better position to know of trading opportunities with neighbouring economies, and had a better chance of successfully completing a trading venture that was attempted. Thus not only because of the unevenness of distribution of natural resources, skill and knowledge within the Kikuyu economy, but also because of differences in access to other economies, goods often passed through several market-places and a number of middlemen before reaching the ultimate consumer."<sup>61</sup>

If this is true of Kikuyu, it is even truer of Kamba, who were involved more extensively in caravan trade between the coast and Kikuyuland.<sup>62</sup> However, this trade was gradually taken over by the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) and later by Indians after the construction of the Uganda Railway. The latter reached Nairobi, next to Kikuyuland, in 1899. Nairobi not only became the headquarters of the railway, but also a thriving urban centre which later became the capital. Anyway, just as the above stratum of indigenous traders was being displaced, Kikuyu petty-commodity producers were emerging fairly rapidly to meet the ever-increasing demands for fuel and food by such urban centres as Nairobi. These producers were selling charcoal and foodstuffs as were available then. This production was stimulated further by the introduction of new crops such as potato (*solanum tuberosum*) and other varieties of maize and beans.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, this stratum of small holders and producers was well established before colonization. In this respect Miracle remarks that:

"These small holders on the eve of colonial rule were already involved in considerable specialization and exchange and responded quickly to new economic opportunities presented to them in the form of new crops and new crop varieties, and increments from wage employment."<sup>64</sup>

This rapid adjustment by this stratum of Kikuyu traders and other indigenous traders to the emerging colonial production and exchange

reflects the maturing social differentiation in the African community.

Nonetheless, this internal and external trade is not sufficient to account for the far-reaching transformation taking place in Kikuyu society. This has to be located in the changing relations of production in that society. This exchange was clearest in Southern Kikuyu or Kiambu. The movement southward to Kiambu began around the sixteenth century and continued down to the late nineteenth century. Involved in this migration were individual Kikuyu elders from the north, from Murang'a. These were wealthy individuals who bought land from the Athi or Ndorobo, a hunting community. The Kikuyu frontiersmen gave livestock (goats or sheep) or agricultural products to the Ndorobo in exchange for land; sometimes the latter demanded Kikuyu women in exchange for their land. After the transaction, the Athi were either adopted by the new landowners through the ritual of mutual adoption, or simply moved out to new hunting areas. This mutually beneficial intercourse was not limited to land alone: it involved other products as well. For example, the Ndorobo bartered their hunting products such as elephant tusks, buffalo hides (for shields), honey etc. for Kikuyu goods; in return the Kikuyu offered gourds, baskets, pottery, knives, arrow-heads, and other agricultural products which interested the Ndorobo. However, the expansion of the Kikuyu in southern Kikuyuland meant the eventual assimilation of the Ndorobo by the Kikuyu whose mode of life was more advanced than theirs or that of Kikuyu in other areas. It also meant eventual breakdown of Kikuyu communal systems in that the new landowners were interested in establishing their own mbari or sub-clans; to do so, they bought larger pieces of land than their immediate needs warranted. Given this influx of Kikuyu

in Kiambu area, land eventually became scarce. Those with little or no means at all found themselves without land. This landless stratum, known as Ahoi (singular, muhoi) emerged. The latter group was subordinated to the landlords with certain obligations to their masters. Dr. Leakey comments of this decline of the communalist system of the Kikuyu in these words:

"Coincident with the new system of acquiring land by direct outright purchase from the members of another tribe, and the subsequent development of a real land-owning class, there also grew up a new system of tenant occupation on the muhoi system. When a wealthy Kikuyu had completed his purchase of a githaka from Wanderabo, he would very soon be approached by many Kikuyu members of families still living in the Fort Hall region who were not wealthy enough to go across Chania and buy land. They would seek permission to become tenants on the new estate with cultivation and building rights but no actual ownership."<sup>67</sup>

As a result of this new land tenure, individualism developed among Kikuyu frontiersmen. In fact, this phenomenon was also to be observed among other agriculturalists, among them the Kamba, the Gusii and the Luo. It is this fact that has led Ochieng to go even further to conclude that these landlords displayed the same individualism as that found among white settlers in America and Australasia.<sup>68</sup> Whatever the nature of this individualism, one thing is clear: communalism was irretrievably giving way to social classes. This is demonstrated by the emergence of such powerful landowners in Kiambu as Wayaiki, Gathirimu, Marigu and Kihara.<sup>69</sup>

These landlords enclosed the land (ihingo) in which the Ahoi and the landowner's warriors were accommodated. The Ahoi worked for the landlord, building his huts and clearing forest for him.<sup>70</sup> In short, the landlord could count on the labour of his Ahoi. Warriors protected his estate. In return, the landlord provided food and

shelter and land. Consequently, this new mode of land tenure undermined the communalist land tenure, the githaka system, under which each family was guaranteed its own piece of land. Under the githaka system the Ahoi did not exist. The new production relations were feudal in character or proto-feudal and reflected the emergence of antagonistic relations between the landowners and the landless. It is this antagonism which Dr. Muriuki has in view when he writes:

"The resentment of the Kikuyu towards the newcomers was generated as much by changing modes of land tenure within the Kikuyu society itself and prior to the coming of the white man, as it was affected by the alienation of land. The frontal attack on the traditional social fabric by the individualism of Western society aggravated a situation which re-oriented this growing resentment from within the society towards the administration and the settler community."<sup>71</sup>

As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the African social antagonism was reflected further by the way these proto-classes later aligned themselves with British colonialism. The Ahoi, for example, took the first opportunities to join the colonial administration as chiefs and headmen in order to escape their subordination. In their new position, they were able to accumulate land and other forms of wealth especially through the misappropriation of taxes which they were initially entrusted to collect. Besides, they were quick to exploit the advantages offered by mission education. Gradually, some Ahoi emerged as a privileged social stratum under colonialism.<sup>72</sup> Conversely, colonial land alienation made some landowners and their Ahoi landless. Other landowners evicted their Ahoi to accommodate their relations who were expropriated by colonial land alienation. All these landless people went to live on settler farms as squatters. Consequently, the proto-feudal conflict was converted into anti-colonial antagonism with settlers and their allies (chiefs

and headmen) on one hand and squatters, the landless and workers on the other. These developments - settlerdom and the African national liberation movement, Mau Mau - will be dealt with in the next chapters. What is important here, however, is to point out that the pre-colonial African community in Kenya was undergoing a transition from communalism into proto-feudalism in which classes were definitely evolving. Agriculturalists were leading in this development; pastoralists were lagging behind, but advancing in the same direction. British colonialism put an end to this development. However, there is enough evidence to show that this evolution was unique in Africa.

In conclusion, then, what emerges as the East African or Kenyan Mode of Production? Before answering this question, let us recall that a mode of production is composed of a system of productive forces and a system of production relations. In the communalist phase, the Kenyan Mode of Production had productive forces comprising simple tools, labour and land. The latter two were basic since the simplicity of tools made them cheap or they were "bought" cheaply. But the fundamental input was land and the ownership of the land was determinant of production relations. And more; it determined what was to be produced and how the produce was shared or distributed. Since under this communal mode of production land was owned communally or the usufruct was recognized by customary law, the proceeds of labour were shared accordingly. The subsequent emergence of individual or private ownership of land brought these changes in production relations: the landlord appropriated the labour of the ahoi (tenants) without equivalent return. This change was equally realized at the political level: ahoi's influence in

village or other councils declined accordingly. At the turn of the last century, therefore, Kenya experienced violent social strife and civil wars as various social groups or proto-classes strove to translate their economic power into political hegemony. For example, the civil war in Masailand, the so-called War of Morijo in the 1890s; the war between Luo and Wanga Kingdom; the Kikuyu too had their version. In short, the entire country was in turmoil.<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless, the outcome of this upheaval was aborted by the British colonial intervention. By then the change was partly permanent. Therefore, the Kenyan mode of production was characterized by an uneven, violent internal transformation of communalism rather than by the existence of international trade which, according to Vidrovitch, effected change in the pre-colonial states of west Africa; yet, this transformation of the Kenyan mode of production did not go all the way to its logical conclusion because it was cut short by a new and more violent colonial system. Therefore, this new mode of production emerging in southern Kikuyu was prevented from spreading in Kikuyuland and in the country by colonialism and can best be characterized as transitional or proto-feudal in the sense that it failed to attain maturity in the form of a feudal Kenyan state. It was left to the British colonialism to create such a state.

## FOOTNOTES

1. \_\_\_\_\_ "People," New African Development, No.129 (May, 1978), p.51.
2. This denial of existence of classes in pre-colonial Africa is illustrated by the following statement from an official publication in Kenya:

"There sharp class divisions that once existed in Europe have no place in African socialism and no parallel in African society. No class problem arose in the traditional African society and none exist today among Africans. The class problem in Africa, therefore, is largely one of prevention..."

This is taken from the Sessional Paper No.10/1965, on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya (Nairobi: Government Printers, 1965), p.12. See also Sedar Senghar's presentation of what he calls "On African Socialism" trans. by Mercer Cook (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964). For example on page 49 he writes:

"We could learn that Negro-African society is collectivist or, more exactly, communal, because it is rather a communion of souls than an aggregate of individuals. We could learn that we had already achieved socialism before the coming of the European. We could conclude that our duty is to renew it by helping it to regain spiritual dimension."

In this context, what impact did slavery, feudalism and colonialism have on the pre-colonial socialism?

3. See N.A. Gatheru Wanjohi, "African Socialism : A Fresh Look at its Genesis and Present Status," Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi. Discussion Paper No.83 (August, 1977) (mimeographed); Idris Cox, Socialist Ideas in Africa (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1966), pp.30-40; C.L.R. James, Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution (London: Allison and Busby, 1977) p.14; the book is also valuable for it gives an excellent account on the myth-making of the British imperialism about Africa: see pp.27-39.
4. For example, Bernard Magubane defines this generalized communal mode of production in Africa in these words:

"The communal mode of production is one of the oldest systems of social relations in Africa. Typically, it was characterized by an extremely low level of productive forces and no production of surplus. Under the primitive mode of production man was helpless before nature, and this explains the collective ownership of the land and the egalitarian forms of distribution of products. Primitive and/or communalistic relations of this type were and are still characteristic of certain parts of Africa even though



the continent was incorporated into the orbit of the evolving capitalist system."

Taken from "The Evolution of the Class Structure in Africa," The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa, ed. by Peter C.W. Gutkind and Immanuel Wallerstein (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976), pp.173-174. See also J.K. Nyerere, "Ujamaa Essays on Socialism" (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp.1-12.

5. By mode of production is meant the way the productive forces and the production relations are organized around a given type of ownership of the means of production.
6. I have in mind tribalism as an ideology which is used nowadays in explaining away any and almost all socio-political conflicts for the express purpose of obscuring class antagonisms.
7. Kwame Nkrumah, Class Struggle in Africa (New York: International Publishers, 1972), pp.13-14.
8. Ibid., p.13.
9. Ibid., p.10; Sessional Paper No.10 (1965), pp.12-13, etc.
10. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Research on an African Mode of Production," in Relations of Production: Marxist Approaches to Economic Anthropology, ed. by D. Seddon, trans. by Helen Lacker (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1978), p.279.
11. Ibid., p.283.
12. Magubane, p.173.
13. K. Jackson, "The Dimension of Kamba Pre-Colonial History," in Kenya Before 1900, ed. by B.A. Ogot (Nairobi: EAPH, 1976), pp.219-228; see also F.J. Berg, "The Coast From the Portugese Invasion to the Rise of the Zanzibar Sultanate," in Zamani ed. by B.A. Ogot and J.A. Kieran (Nairobi: EAPH, 1968), p.119.
14. Cox, p.36, quotes Lord Hailey who writes the following on Kenya societies:

"Most of the tribes in Kenya...possessed no organization involving the existence of chiefs and sub-chiefs with traditional authority over recognized territorial units.

The (Coast) Province contains no tribes which are distinguished by a tradition of strong tribal cohesion, or even evince a tribal-spirit...there is now little trace of a tribal organization under traditional or hereditary chiefs.

Among the most noticeable characteristics of the Kikuyu today are a strong instinct for trading and profit-making...There is a marked tendency to forsake the old communal basis of society and to adopt a purely individualistic outlook."

There is nothing innate or instinctual about Kikuyu individualism: this is explained by the internal social organization of the Kikuyu at the turn of the last century.

15. James Wafula and G.G.S. Munoru, Our Road to Socialism (Nairobi: Majestic Printing Works Ltd., —). As far as slavery is concerned, the two writers observe on page 6 that:

"The African society was well marked with tribal wars. People who were captured in tribal wars were not generally treated as the Greek and Roman slaves were treated. Such prisoners of tribal wars were held up for some time and were later released in exchange for cattle, weapons of war, food, etc. or alternatively they were absorbed into the tribe which captured them and thereby increased the population of such a tribe, making it stronger."

As for feudalism, they write on page 7 that:

"In our East African societies there was no such rigid feudal system, with the exception of a few strong political societies, e.g. the Baganda, the Haya, etc. In kinship societies e.g. the Luyia, Kikuyu, Kamba, Meru, etc., there was never a distinct feudal system. The reason for the lack of this system was because the primitive communal system was still fairly strong though it was on the decline. There was also plenty of land."

In reference to the non-existence of states, B.G. McIntosh writes:

"No states were formed east of the Rift Valley. The Eastern Bantu peoples retained and developed the original Bantu characteristic of well-ordered systems of authority not through rule of chiefs or kings, but based upon territorial allegiances and operated by councils of elders. Amongst the elders, an individual distinguished by wealth, wisdom and probably a record of military achievement, could rise to a position of prominence and leadership. It would appear, however, that a person was not more than 'first amongst equals' with regard to his fellow elders." Zamani, pp.211-212.

16. See Jomo Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya (London: Secker and Warburg, 1959), pp.186-230; Nyerere, pp.1-12. For further discussion on these aspects of the pre-colonial societies in Kenya, see Kenya Before 1900 cited in a previous footnote.
17. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg with Anne King, An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda 1800-1970 (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1975) p.80. See also G. Muriuki, "The Kikuyu in the Pre-Colonial Period," in Kenya Before 1900 ed. by B.A. Ogot (Nairobi: EAPH, 1976), pp.130-136.
18. Kenyatta, p.64.

19. Jacques Macquet makes a very useful analysis of this diffusion in his valuable book Africanity : The Cultural Unity of Black Africa, trans. by Joan R. Rayfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).
20. J.F. Munro, Colonial Rule and the Kamba (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p.7.
21. Kenyatta, p.23.
22. Munro, p.10.
23. A.N. Ligale, "Some Factors Influencing the Pattern of Rural Settlement in Maragoli, Western Kenya," The East African Geographical Review, No.4 (April, 1966), pp.65-68.
24. McIntosh, pp.198-215.
25. Ibid., p.201.
26. Muriuki, p.114.
27. For more information on these kingdoms, see Mahmood Mamdani, Politics and Class Formation in Uganda (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp.23-24; G.S. Were, "The Western Bantu Peoples From A.D.1300-1800," in Zamani ed. by B.A. Ogot and J.A. Kieran (Nairobi: EAPH, 1968), pp.177-197.
28. V.I. Lenin, The State and Revolution (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1970), p.7.
29. Atiena Odhiambo, "The Rise of the Kenya Peasant, 1888-1922," in Developmental Trends in Kenya. The Centre of African Studies: University of Edinburgh, 1972, p.28.
30. Muriuki, pp.130-136.
31. James Obol-Ochola, "Ideology and Tradition in Land Tenure," East Africa Journal, Vol.VI, 5 (May, 1969), p.41.
32. Munro, p.14.
33. McIntosh, pp.211-212.
34. G.W.B. Huntingford, The Southern Nilo-Hamites. Ethnographic Survey of Africa: East Central Africa, Part VII, ed. by Daryll Forde (London: International African Institute, 1969), pp.32-35.
35. Munro, p.29.
36. Kenyatta, p.195.

38. B.A. Ogot, "The Role of the Pastoralist and Agriculturalist in African History, The Case of East Africa," in Emerging Themes of African History, ed. by T.O. Ranger (Nairobi: EAPH, 1968), p.129.
39. Edward W. Soja, The Geography of Modernization in Kenya (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1968), pp.8-15.
40. For further information on these movements see T.M. Lewis Peoples of the Horn of Africa. Ethnographic Survey of Africa: North Eastern Africa, Part I ed. by Daryll Forde (London: International African Institute, 1969). ————"The Somali Conquest of The Horn of Africa," Journal of African History, 1, 2 (1960), pp.213-229.
41. B.A. Ogot, Migration and Settlement: History of Southern Luo, Vol.1 (Nairobi: EAPH, 1967).
42. Zwanenberg, pp.81-85.
43. P.H. Gulliner, "Peoples," in East Africa: Its Peoples and Resources (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.35-40. See also Ogot, p.130.
44. J.E.G. Sutton, "The Kalenjin," in Kenya Before 1900, ed. by B.A. Ogot (Nairobi: EAPH, 1976), pp.29-31.
45. Kenyatta, pp.67-69; Munro, p.25; Zwanenberg, p.149.
46. J.E.G. Sutton, "The Settlement of East Africa," in Zamani, ed. by B.A. Ogot and J.A. Kieran (Nairobi: EAPH, 1968), p.94; Mamdani, pp.23-24; C. Bonte, "Cattle for God: An Attempt at a Marxist Analysis of the Religion of East Africa Herdsmen," Social Compass, Vol.XXII, 3-4 (1975), p.394.
47. Bonte, p.383.
48. For Masai method of marriage exchange, see G.W.B. Huntingford, The Southern Nilo-Hamites, Ethnographic Survey of Africa: East Central Africa, Part VIII, ed. by Daryll Forde (London: International Africa Institute, 1969), pp.114-120; Pamela Gulliver and P.H.Gulliver, The Central Nilo-Hamites, Ethnographic Survey of Africa: East Central Africa, Part VII, ed. by Daryll Forde (London: International African Institute, 1968), pp.68-72.
49. This practice of giving dowry or marriage insurance as Dr. Leakey calls it was a common custom to be found among both groups, pastoralists and agriculturalists.
50. Kenyatta, p.206.
51. Sutton, pp.25-26.
52. Andre Sik, The History of Black Africa, Vol.1 (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado 1966), p.56.

53. Odhiambo, pp.29-30.
54. L.S.B. Leakey, Mau Mau and the Kikuyu (London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1955), p.6.
55. Muriuki, p.107.
56. Ibid., p.107.
57. Marvin P. Miracle, Economic Change Among the Kikuyu, 1895 to 1905. Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. Working Paper No.158 (April, 1974) (mimeographed), p.5.
58. Ibid., p.4.
59. Ibid., pp.11-18.
60. Sutton, p.74.
61. Miracle, p.5.
62. Jackson, pp.229-242; Miracle, pp.11-18.
63. Miracle, pp.23-24.
64. Ibid., p.29.
67. Leakey, p.6; Kenyatta, pp.25-52.
68. William R. Ochieng, "The Sheep and Goats Among the Kikuyu - Being some Random Reflections on the Study of Colonial African Chiefs in Central Kenya: 1888-1963". Staff Seminar Paper No.78, Department of History, Kenyatta University College, Nairobi, Kenya (mimeographed), p.7.
69. Ibid., p.7.
70. Ibid., p.8; Leakey, pp.7-8.
71. Ochieng, pp.7-8.
72. Ibid., pp.11-12.
73. Ibid., p.9; Richard Waller, "The Masai and the British 1895-1905: The Origins of an Alliance," Journal of African History, XVII, 4 (1976), pp.541-543; Kenyatta, My People of Kikuyu, pp.51-59. See also Munro, p.29.

CHAPTER II  
COLONIAL POLICY, SETTLER RULE AND THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICAN SOCIETY IN KENYA

I

The political history of East Africa and Kenya in particular, shows that this region has been interacting with Asia and Europe via Arabia for over two thousand years. But this intercourse was mainly commercial and entailed little or intermittent violence, if any.<sup>1</sup> However, this early Western and Eastern peaceful contact gave way to more violent colonial domination and exploitation in the latter part of the nineteenth century as these societies extended their antagonistic systems in other territories. Whenever and wherever these social systems were transplanted, they moulded colonized societies in this area along with their respective social classes on which the continuation of the empire depended.<sup>2</sup> Kenya was drawn into both Arab and British colonialism in that order. An understanding of the former is essential for an understanding of the latter because it illuminates not only the class formation in Kenya induced by external forces, but also the mode of operation of British imperialism in Kenya: the latter depended on different colonial methods which coincided with different colonial phases and, in each phase, British colonialism relied on collaboration with specific social classes in the colonized Kenya society for the maintenance of its rule, i.e. it depended on an Arab aristocracy during the informal empire and on white settlers during the formal empire. Therefore, the examination of the Arab empire will reveal how Britain colonized Kenya.

The consolidation of the Omani empire in East Africa starts in the mid-eighteenth century with the expulsion of the Portuguese from

the area where they were seeking to break the Arab's East India trade. It is worthwhile to delve into the hegemonic rivalry between Portugal and Arabia in this region, which serves as a prelude to the imperialist rivalry of the nineteenth century among Western powers mainly Britain, France and Germany, which resulted in partition of the area among them. However, the Arab-Portuguese rivalry goes back to Vasco Da Gama in the fifteenth century. The conflict was resolved in 1730 in favour of Oman when the latter routed the Portuguese.<sup>3</sup> Fifteen years following this defeat, the contradiction between the metropolis, Muscat, and her Arab settler-colonists in East Africa emerged foreshadowing the conflict between Whitehall and white settlers in Kenya in the 1920s. In the struggle between Muscat and Arab settlers, one faction of Arab settlers was supported by Portugal, the other by Muscat. The anti-Muscat struggle was led by Mombasa, the then centre of the Arab settler aristocracy and of traders. This group sought independence from Muscat in 1753 by attempting to take over Zanzibar which was the capital of the empire in this region. The venture failed. This resulted in what came to be known as the Mazrui war. Seyyid Said became the Imam of Oman in 1806 and was largely responsible for the suppression of the settler rebellion which ended in 1822. After his victory, he annexed Pate and Pemba islands and threatened Mombasa directly.<sup>4</sup>

Seyyid Said is the one who laid the foundation of the Omani imperial economy which initiated the integration of the East African region into international capitalism. To consolidate his imperial domain, he shifted the imperial court from Oman to Zanzibar in 1828.<sup>5</sup> By 1838 Omani rule was undisputed in this area. He transformed the Zanzibar economy from one based on trading into a slave plantation system based on clove production.<sup>6</sup> The latter was introduced in 1830 and progressively replaced sugar and rice. Said enhanced his political

position by granting alienated land to loyal settlers from Oman after the Mazrui war. Rey summarizes this settler-sultan relationship succinctly in this manner:

"Sultan Said only allowed Omani Arabs to plant clove seedlings and the plantation remained entirely under Arab ownership."

This plantation economy was not very different from the West Indies, Reunion or Mauritius: it was the "Arab West Indies."<sup>8</sup> Plantation products were sent mainly to Western Europe and India.<sup>9</sup> From the latter, the Omani empire imported textiles, beads, brass wire, American soap, guns and so on.<sup>10</sup> This export economy of the Omani empire based on the export of primary goods marked the beginning of the integration of East Africa into the capitalist world system which continues to this day.<sup>11</sup>

The expanding Arab empire needed an indigenous class to handle the expanding administration and trade. This need was met by the Swahili class, "a comprador class,"<sup>12</sup> which developed along with the Arab coastal and insular rule. It was an urban class concentrated mainly in the Swahili city-port states which emerged with the growth of international trade in this region. Sheriff describes the economic basis of this class in this way:

"It is a mistake, however, to equate the affluence of the Swahili city states with the well being of the whole economy of East and Central Africa for they were local metropolises living parasitically on international trade which linked Asia with satellized hinterland in Africa through Zimbabwe and Sofala... the Swahili city states also claimed their share to lead a life of ostentation and luxury which finds graphic expression in state monuments of the coast and the vast quantity of beads, imported Islamic and Chinese pottery which litter the beaches... Despite the prosperity the economy of these city states was deformed by their dependence on international trade which had stimulated a limited amount of local self-sustained industrial or agricultural occupation."<sup>13</sup>

These city-states emerged in the early Middle Ages and dominated the



east coast region until the 1840s. The most important among them were Kilwa (on the southern coast of today's Tanzania) and Pate off the coast of Kenya. The success of the Arab empire depended on this comprador class as much as the latter's prosperity depended on the former.

The Arab-Swahili alliance found full expression in their economic relationship which spilled over to the political field as well. Their economic relationship converged on long distance trade in ivory, the slave trade and the slave plantation system at the coast and in Zanzibar. The requisite capital to finance this economic set-up was provided by the Indian rentier class resident in Zanzibar.<sup>15</sup>

The Indian immigrants in the Omani empire came mainly from Western India. They were attracted by Seyyid Said's liberal outlook, especially his fiscal policy. Consequently, Indians moved into Muscat as well as in the empire, particularly Zanzibar. When Said moved his court to Zanzibar, the Indian community there was small, ranging between 300 and 400 migrants. After his arrival, the community grew steadily reaching 6,430 people in 1887; this steady growth continued even after Zanzibar became a British protectorate in 1890.<sup>16</sup> But what is important is the role this community played in Omani imperial economy due to the decadence of the Arab-Swahili aristocracy living, as already observed, parasitically. Of this decadence, Gregory notes:

"The Asiatic civilization of Zanzibar was typical of that in other cities throughout the Sultan's domain. A ruling, landed Arab aristocracy, becoming increasingly decadent and impoverished, was surrounded by a larger, faster growing, far more vigorous and prosperous Indian community."<sup>17</sup>

In due time, this community came to monopolize export-import trade which enabled it to accumulate sufficient capital to turn out a rentier class. It was from this class that the Arab-Swahili aristocracy

borrowed capital to finance its undertakings such as trade caravans and clove plantations. The degree of its dependence on the Indian rentiers is illustrated by the following remark by Dr. Wolff. He writes of this dependence thus:

"During the nineteenth century, the Arab and Swahili traders within the Sultan's domain and beyond were increasingly financed by the immigrant Indians. By the 1890s British officials estimated that Indians possessed half the landed property in Zanzibar and had several million pounds sterling invested in East Africa. British Indian subjects thus had a large stake in East African economy based heavily on slave trade, although they rarely participated in the trade directly."<sup>18</sup>

In spite of its financial dependence, the Arab-Swahili aristocracy retained political hegemony on which the Indian rentier class in turn depended for its prosperity.

As far as slavery is concerned, it was almost non-existent in the country. There was limited slave trade in Bunyoro and Buganda. Even in these kingdoms, their rulers were interested in keeping their slaves rather than selling them. Once retained in these communities, they were assimilated for there were no taboos against their absorption. Those who were sold were exchanged with Arab and Swahili traders for goods brought in by caravans. Slavery did not develop in Kenya - probably with the exception of Kamba<sup>19</sup> - because the captives from wars or raids were assimilated in their new community. Incidentally, this was also the case with the Swahili community, which was interested in "taking female slaves who could be incorporated in the Arab social setting."<sup>20</sup> However, slavery grew in importance with the deepening of the incorporation of this region into the international capitalism which can be traced back to the middle of the eighteenth century. This development coincided with the setting up of sugar and tobacco plantations by the French in the 1770s in the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon.<sup>21</sup> Slave trade increased further in the nine-

teenth century as shown by numerous plantations and settlements along the trade routes.<sup>22</sup> This expansion was stimulated partly by the increased demand for ivory and partly by the changed production relations in such non-slave owning societies as Kamba and Nyika.

The increased demand for ivory effected a change in the mode of exchange in favour of increased slavery. Due to the declining value of the goods from the coast which were exchanged for ivory, Kamba, the main suppliers of ivory, refused to exchange their ivory for these goods. Instead they demanded livestock, i.e. cattle, sheep and goats. Consequently, Swahili, the main buyers of ivory, had to turn to increased slaving in order to obtain slaves to exchange for livestock which, in turn, would be exchanged for Kamba ivory. Krapf, one of the early explorers, detected this new trend. He describes it in this way:

"A Mombassian takes for instance a slave girl who he bought at Kiloa...for 7 or 8 dollars or German crowns and carries her to the Wanika-country, selling her for 2 large and 2 small cows which are worth 18 dollars on the spot - with these he proceeds to the neighbouring Wakamba, who bring ivory from the interior, and buys there a piece of ivory which sells at Mombasa [for] 40 or 50 dollars, which sum he then takes and goes or sends to Kiloa at the proper season where he buys another supply of slaves..."<sup>23</sup>

Conversely, the changed production relations enlarged slavery for the fact that the non-slave owning societies such as Kamba and Nyika were turning to slave labour in their agricultural or pastoral production. For example, Kamba were acquiring slaves at the coast, "not only females, but also males for cultivating their ground and feeding their herds."<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the booming ivory trade stimulated slavery while at the same time effecting a new specialization in the African communalist community. Among these specializations should be mentioned hunting, trade and raiding. This pattern of specialization changed the order of production and exchange in favour of external-oriented production and exchange to meet the cost of imports. In this

new relationship, local agriculture was adversely affected. Nowhere is this transformation manifested better than among the Kamba who specialized in ivory and caravan trade. An examination of this small scale transformation of the Kamba community will give us an insight into the transformation of the entire country along class lines following the establishment of British colonialism.

The Kamba rank among the most versatile ethnic group in Kenya and their versatility illustrates the ability of both agriculturalists and pastoralists to adapt to their environment however exacting it might be. Kamba society combined both types of subsistence economy. As they moved into their present location in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the group first occupied the Machakos hills. While this area has enough rainfall to allow cultivation, it suffers also from recurrent droughts, making famine a constant threat to the community. In areas with less rainfall and fair grazing grounds, Kamba kept cattle, goats and sheep. As they settled in their new area, they came into contact with two other communities, the Kap-tui Masai on the Kapiti and Athi plains and the Kikuyu in the hills to the north.<sup>25</sup> The former group is comprised of pastoralists, the latter of agriculturalists. Consequently, when Kamba livestock declined, they replenished their animals by exchanging or bartering foodstuffs with the Masai for animals; conversely, when their crops failed, they exchanged their animals with Kikuyu for foodstuffs. This exchange developed into a regular trade to redress the vagaries of nature.

Some Kamba broke off from the Machakos community and left for Kitui by crossing Athi. They were attracted to this area by its expansive grazing zone and its rich game. As they advanced toward Mount Kenya, they came into contact with Kikuyu, Embu and Meru, who had settled around Mount Kenya. The Kitui Kamba started exchanging

their animals and hunting products with their new neighbours. Here too a regular pattern of trade emerged.

The motive force behind trade by the Kamba was famine. To survive, they had to trade. The incidences of famine attest to this fact: 1836 - Yua ya Ngaro (famine of disappointment); 1851 - Yua ya Kiasa (the long famine); 1871 - Yua ya Ngeetele (the tightening [belt] famine); 1882-3 - Yua ya Ndata (the star famine), etc.<sup>26</sup> Famine is still a threat in this area even today.<sup>27</sup> Now with their frontiers closed for further expansion, the Kamba turned to consolidate their trade with the Masai, Kikuyu, Embu and Meru. They even expanded eastwards to the coast to do business with Arab and Swahili caravan traders. In this regard, Munro notes that:

"The centre of the ivory trade lay in Kitui, rather than the Machakos district, because the Kitui people enjoyed certain advantages. Elephants were much more plentiful in the empty areas adjoining Kitui than around the Machakos hills, and hunting played a larger part in the local economy, so that the Kitui people had a stronger supply base. The Kitui Kamba also had closer contacts with the centre of demand at Mombasa through the settlements made in 1836 around Rabai. For these reasons Kitui became the focal point of the ivory trade. Kikuyu and Embu visited Kitui to sell their ivory, and Kitui people in turn journeyed to the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru countries. Kitui was the home of the most famous Kamba ivory trader, Kitui wa Mwendwa, and the goal of European travellers - Krapf in 1849 and 1851, Hildebrandt in 1877."<sup>28</sup>

It is their trade acumen that made them known far and wide; their up-to-date knowledge of trade matters kept them informed of the latest demands of the market-place. However, before Kamba traders were entangled in the European and Arab international trade, their trade pattern revealed that it was binding different aspects of the subsistence economy such as agriculture, pastoralism, hunting, iron-industry<sup>29</sup> and such-like into a localized interdependence which is a necessary condition for balanced development. The new imbalance created by Arab colonialism is reflected in the changes it effected

in the pre-colonial trade network. Arab-Swahili traders shifted the centre of this local trade from Kitui to Machakos. The new trade with its centre at Machakos created a new Kamba stratum of middlemen or elite entrepreneurs to mediate between Arab-Swahili traders and the interior peoples. It is this class of entrepreneurs which facilitated the integration of the pre-colonial economy into the international economy. Whether Arab or British, the imperial system requires an indigenous class, in this case the Kamba elite:

"The influx of Arab-Swahili into the highlands broke the commercial dominance of the Kitui Kamba whose ivory trade went into decline, although it was not totally extinguished. By contrast, the arrival of the alien traders in the Machakos district considerably expanded the commercial developments haltingly begun there in mid-century and brought to the Machakos Kamba a new period of prosperity. They made the Mombasa demand for cattle and ivory much more keenly and directly felt in the district and their need for provisions created a new market for arable produce too bulky to be transported for sale and consumption at the coast itself."<sup>30</sup>

Here then we see the way in which the restructuring of the subsistence economy proceeded in order to meet the needs of the international economy. The centre of trade of subsistence economy shifted from Kitui to Machakos. Kamba people were switching from agriculture to hunting and raiding. Although the latter was not created by international trade, it almost made raiding a specialty since raiding formerly occurred only during adverse seasons. Now it happened in and out of season for exchange purposes.<sup>31</sup> Besides shifting labour from agriculture to hunting and raiding, agriculture also experienced change: new crops were introduced to meet the growing needs of the caravan trade and the Arab coastal and insular empire. Above all, a new African entrepreneurial stratum emerged:

"A new type of entrepreneur appeared here, the trading-muthiani who achieved muthiani's status through knowledge of the route to the coast and ability to persuade anake to join him or an expedition to sell their families' cattle and ivory."<sup>32</sup>

These Anake or warriors provided security for muthani's (plural = athiani) caravans on their way to and from the coast. In return, anake were paid in cash or in kind. They augmented their earnings by raiding the Masai, Kikuyu and Pokot for animals to sell at the coast. Yet, the most far-reaching development as far as trading-athiani were concerned was that they translated their growing wealth into political capital which dealt a serious blow to utui, the communalist institution of Kamba community: a sort of "tribe in miniature, self-supporting socially and economically complete"<sup>33</sup> without chiefs. Trading-athiani usurped the role of utui by turning utui members into "highly efficient bands of robbers"<sup>34</sup> and raiders over whom athiani presided as chiefs or asili. The degree of social disintegration in Kamba communalism is reflected in internecine commercial conflicts within it and in inter-tribal wars which had replaced inter-tribal peaceful co-existence and exchange. This social disintegration found parallel expression in the long distance ivory trade: the Arab-Swahili caravan traders promoted Nyika as their new middlemen brokers in ivory trade at the expense of Kamba which prompted the latter to take arms against Nyika.<sup>35</sup> Kamba could not withstand the combined forces of Arab-Swahili-Nyika alliance. Besides, Arab-Swahili traders avoided Kamba territory by charting new trade routes. One trade route went round Ukamba in an easterly direction, then northward to Mount Kenya; the other took a southerly turn to the Great Lakes. By the 1880s, Swahili caravans had penetrated the remotest frontiers of the ivory trade. At this time, Kamba trade with the coast was diminishing as fast and, by the turn of the century, "the golden age of Kamba commercial activity was long past."<sup>36</sup> But before the Arab-Swahili traders could consolidate their commercial monopoly throughout the country, another more formidable commercial rival was settling down

in Kamba territory, breaking the remaining Kamba resistance by "superior firepower, administration and technology."<sup>37</sup> Which classes would British imperialism entrust with the running of the new colonial state? Which African groups or class would be enlisted as allies in this colonial enterprise? In short, how did British colonialism reconstitute classes in Kenya after destroying the existing social system?

## II

As remarked already, British penetration and colonization of Kenya followed several stages, direct and indirect. Our concern here is with the former phase. However, it should be mentioned in passing that the latter phase of indirect colonialism reflected the monopolization of the world market in the early part of the nineteenth century; hence, this informal empire was characterized as commercial imperialism.<sup>38</sup> The British concern at this time was the consolidation of her commercial empire within the Omani empire under the latter's political umbrella, linking Britain with her Indian empire. Under this commercial hegemony, joint-stock companies were set up: the Royal Niger Company was formed in 1886 to exploit West Africa, mainly the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Nigeria; the British South Africa Company was formed in 1889 to exploit Central African regions, the Rhodesias (Zambia and Zimbabwe respectively); and the British East African Association was given the exclusive rights to exploit the region we are concerned with here, East Africa. The latter acquired from the Sultan a fifty-year concession to administer the Kenya coastal strip (mwabao), ten miles wide. In 1888 the Association changed its name to the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). Under the Royal charter of 1890, the company was entrusted with the administration of Uganda. During this period of informal empire, Britain depended on



the Arab-Swahili aristocracy for the maintenance of political stability which was essential for steady commerce;<sup>39</sup> in the economic field, she depended on the Indian commercial-rentier class most of whose members were British citizens from India resident in Zanzibar and her dependencies. In return, the British government through its resident consul in Zanzibar protected the interests of this class.

Gregory summarizes this relationship in this manner:

"Hamerton (a British consul) and his successor thus became the guardians of Indian interests in East Africa, and their presence at Zanzibar served as an inducement to Indian commerce."<sup>40</sup>

This alliance between the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the Arab-Swahili aristocracy and the Indian commercial bourgeoisie prevailed throughout this period of informal empire. The latter, like its successor, was characterized by violence. In reference to this violence, Oculi writes:

"The notion of transforming African territories and societies into estates for European joint-stock companies...carried the implication of the start of a conscious policy of destroying the level of material development of the African societies and of a massive destruction of its population and effective manpower."<sup>41</sup>

But this violent undertaking was beyond IBEA's means and the company was forced by financial difficulties to hand over its East African possession to the British government in 1895 at a fee of £250,000. The onus of completing the colonial enterprise fell to Whitehall.

This transfer did not change the violent nature of the imperialist policy, if anything, it hardened it for Britain proceeded with the incorporation of Kenya into her industry and commerce. This integration was advocated earlier in 1894 by the representatives of the defunct IBEA, Captain Lugard and P.L. McDermott.<sup>42</sup> However, it was left to the Colonial Secretary most credited with the founding of modern British imperialism, Joseph Chamberlain, to lay down the incorporation policy for Kenya. According to Chamberlain, Kenya was to

be developed

"as practically an estate belonging to His Majesty's government, on which an enormous outlay has been<sup>43</sup> made, and which ought to repay that outlay."

The outlay in question was the heavy expenses incurred by the completion of conquest initiated by the IBEA. Which colonial class would be entrusted with the extraction of the "repayment" Chamberlain had in mind?

Initially there was indecision as to which British migrants should undertake this colonial venture. Indian and Zionist settlers were proposed,<sup>44</sup> but the choice went to the British settlers:

"It is incontrovertible that they (i.e. British settlers) were encouraged to settle in Kenya and to develop the country as a direct instrument of British policy."<sup>45</sup>

Kenya as a direct instrument of British policy refers to the strategic importance Britain attached to the country and that of the role these settlers were expected to play in its implementation, as will be made clear presently. These settlers came from the mother country and from the dominions with a majority coming from South Africa. The imperial outlook of the latter group is well known in association with Cecil Rhodes and apartheid. Nevertheless, the settler population remained small: there were only 13 settlers in the country in 1901 and 342 in 1904.<sup>46</sup> Yet this small but steadily growing number of settlers was compensated for by the growing imperial power given to them by the metropolis out of all proportion to their size. While from the imperial viewpoint it made sense, as far as long-term political stability was concerned, it did not.

As already mentioned, settlers alone were not equal to the task of advancing imperial interests as a whole. This was clear, particularly in commerce. Therefore, the metropolitan bourgeoisie included in the new set-up its ally, the Indian commercial class which emerged

under British protection during the latter's suzerainty over the Omani empire. This class was allowed to carry on and even expand its export-import trade dealing mainly in British goods. The value of incorporating this trading class in the new imperial system is expressed by the architect of the new system, Lord Lugard, in this manner:

"Being unaffected by the climate, much cheaper than European, and in closer touch with the daily lives of the natives than it is possible for a white man to be, they would form an admirable connecting link (under the close supervision of British officers), their status being nearly or on a par with natives, while their interests are entirely dependent on the Europeans. As they would establish themselves permanently, with their families, in the country, they would have a personal interest in it."

This class was preferable to its would-be African counterpart because the former had no roots in the country and therefore was bound to be loyal to its imperialist benefactor, whereas the African one would be inclined to nationalism to rectify the colonial imbalance. But the most ominous development was the evolving racial pyramid in which the African majority were placed at the bottom to be exploited by the immigrant classes instituting a class formation in which class coincided with race and the colour-bar ideology was used to rationalize it.

The policy of subordinating Kenya to international capitalism via British capitalism through settler colonial capitalism, was inherently violent in principle and in practice. This violence was also international: it had its sources in the metropolis where class struggle was raging between the emerging proletariat socialism and the moribund bourgeois supporters of imperialism (the latter should be understood as synonymous with capitalism), between the proletarian majority fighting against bourgeois domination and exploitation. The British bourgeoisie being in a stronger position, was able to impose

its will as of 1890 onwards.<sup>48</sup> It embarked on a thoroughgoing economic imperialism abroad that year. At home it pursued a repressive policy of "blood and iron against the working class;"<sup>49</sup> externally it pursued ruthless imperialism. It is in this light that settler violence in Kenya and elsewhere must be assessed: it is inseparable from its source. This does not mean that settlers did not add innovations to it, however. They did. Even so, these innovations found their way to the mother country in one form or another and vice versa. No one portrays this dialectical violence better than Fox when he declares that:

"...the exploitation of the colonial peoples is the greatest obstacle to freedom of the British workers, the chief cause of the enormous taxation which the workers of the home country must bear in order to pay for the vast armed forces that protect the Empire against imperialist rivals and keep down internal revolt. The capitalist class in Britain remains powerful because it is still able to transfuse the blood of its colonial slaves into its own anaemic system. It derives its own class strength, its own reactionary forms of class outlook and class repression, from its parasitic existence at the expense of these colonial peoples. Just as British imperialism is colonial imperialism,<sup>50</sup> so British fascism will be colonial fascism."

This then was the direct result of the bourgeois defense of capitalism at home and abroad at any cost. Therefore, when Britain chose her settlers, she chose this class because it shared the same outlook and would pursue the same policy accordingly. Consequently, settler violence permeated the entire colonial system in the country for this policy demanded no less than the revolutionization of the African community. Leys describes this revolution thus:

"But the revolution that has overwhelmed the tribes of Kenya was complete in twenty years. It has split up families as our revolution rarely did. It has deliberately replaced the indigenous tribal authority by an alien political authority. It has been conducted, regardless of the wishes of the people, by a small body of foreign invaders of superior civilization, speaking a foreign language, professing a different

religion, who offer no place but the lowest in the new social order to the people of the country... The tribes of Kenya have, in short, been subjected to a social revolution so wide in scope, so rapid and so complete, that no co-ordinated adaptations of the structure of their society have been possible at all."<sup>51</sup>

Unlike ordinary revolutionary violence which allows for continuity of the old within the qualitatively new system, settler violence negated any such continuity of the African system, albeit progressively by making transplanted capitalism, however distorted, the only viable system; the African system, however desirable, was denied existence. This violent negation of the African way of life was especially directed against three areas crucial to its continuity. First, the violent conquest negated any form of African independence. Second, cultural violence was perpetrated against African culture as a whole in the vain attempt to convert Africans into "Black Britons". The impact of the latter can be appreciated when it is borne in mind that British colonizers saw the country as wax to be moulded in any way they desired. This view is well spelled out by Sir Charles Eliot, governor of Kenya from 1900 to 1904. He said at the time that:

"We have in East Africa the rare experience of dealing with a tabula rasa, an almost untouched and sparsely inhabited country, where we can do as we like, regulate immigration, and open or close the doors as seems best. This lessens the difficulty of administration, but it increases the responsibility and the need for reflection."<sup>52</sup>

There was nothing to stop this cultural imperialism except African resistance. The third and the most devastating violence was economic. Whether they were pastoralists or agriculturalists, Africans in Kenya depended on land. The expropriation of their land and their labour thereon was achieved by the stroke of His Majesty's pen when he signed the order in council to the effect that

"all native rights...whether such rights relate to tribal, group, family or individual holding in any land...are hereby extinguished."<sup>53</sup>

This wholesale dispossession of Africans of their land in turn generated its own forms of violence. Malignant malnutrition became a common feature of African life.<sup>54</sup> These famished people became easy victims of diseases introduced by the colonizers for which they had not developed immunity<sup>55</sup> or diseases from deficient diet.<sup>56</sup> These diseases were spread to rural areas due to the migration of African labour. Among such diseases should be mentioned tuberculosis, which was rising quickly among African labourers, for example, those employed by the Kenya-Uganda Railway, due to poor diet and overcrowding.<sup>57</sup> Other examples could be cited, but their cumulative effect on the African community leaves no doubt that, had it not been for the African resistance, then settler violence was "driving them (the Africans) rapidly along the road to total extinction."<sup>58</sup> The foregoing account may appear as an unfair generalization when it is remembered that in Kenya as elsewhere in the colonized areas, the colonial regime introduced such social services as education, health, agriculture, transport systems (railway and roads), communication systems (telephone and telegraph) and so on. Yet, when these social benefits are weighed against the above record, whose shorthand name is underdevelopment, then one cannot help but conclude with Barnes that:

"There is, it is true, a credit side to the account, but grudging tenders of education, technical advice or agricultural and veterinary matters, medical care, and familiarization with the first principles of sanitation and public health, can only be regarded as highly inadequate compensation for shocking ravages which imperialism can never hope to repair or atone for."<sup>59</sup>

This dreadful record and shocking underdevelopment which imperialism can never hope to repair or atone for, is the negative force which infuses liberation movements in the colonies with a qualitatively new developmental and positive force of socialism and self-reliance for rehabilitation and reconstruction of the post-colonial African society.

For these movements, the capitalist model of development is blocked by imperialism, old and new, and to embark on capitalist development boils down to developing the extant colonial structure which exacerbates underdevelopment. Therefore, socialism at this juncture ceases to be an external desideratum in these national struggles and becomes an internal necessary condition for progress and peace in these societies. Having traced the source of colonial violence, let us now turn to the ways and means used in each sphere of African life to effect the desired results. Here, attention will centre on the methods used to effect the colonial-capitalist economic revolution.

### III

As already mentioned previously, the British choice of settlers to colonize Kenya was motivated by considerations of economic imperialism whose strategy required effective control of the region stretching from Cairo to Cape of Good Hope. However, at the close of the last century, British interests in this area met increasing challenge from her imperialist rivals, namely Germany and France. Consequently, when Britain annexed the country in 1895, she wanted to turn this region into a British Mittel Afrika running from the north to the south. But this scheme conflicted with France's similar plan running from West Africa to East Africa, from Congo-Brazzaville to French Somaliland. France too wanted to control the River Nile. In the meantime, German expansion in East Africa, from Tanganyika (Tanzania) was undermining British influence in the area, especially in Zanzibar, through the Gesellschaft fur deutsche Kolonisation. Hence, Britain needed not only the control of the source of the Nile which she had since she was already in Uganda, but also of the entire River Nile for production of cotton in Egypt for Lancaster textiles.<sup>59</sup> Besides, Britain was extending her control over the Sudan and she was contemplating

extending cotton production at Geziva basin in Sudan with the help of water from the Nile.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Egypt was becoming an important market for British manufactured goods as Chamberlain pointed out in his speech at Birmingham on January 22nd, 1894, when he said:

"I approve of the continued occupation of Egypt [so that] new markets shall be created and that<sup>61</sup> old markets shall be effectually developed."

The usual story of trade following the flag. And the same pattern would be repeated in British Mittel-Afrika. Yet, the over-riding imperial strategy was to keep the routes to British Indian empire open and secure for her shipping and trade through the Mediterranean Sea via Suez Canal which was opened in 1869, or via the Cape of Good Hope. The importance of India to Britain was emphasized in 1898 by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy to India at the time, in the following words:

"India is the pivot of our empire...if the empire loses any other part of its dominion we can survive, but if we<sup>62</sup> lose India the sun of our empire will have set."

Being situated in the Indian Ocean midway between Cairo and Cape Town and adjoining Uganda, Kenya was the missing link in this imperial strategy separating British antagonists, France in French Somaliland and Germany in Tanganyika. The next thing Britain needed was colonists who could withstand the pressures of her rivals. But before they could be brought into the country, the necessary infrastructures had to be established to attract immigrants or else they would go elsewhere in the empire.

In conformity with the foregoing strategy, Britain began by linking Uganda with her East African possession of Kenya and beyond. This linkage necessitated the creation of a communications infrastructure in both countries. To realize her plan, the British government initiated the construction of the Uganda railway from Mombasa in 1895; it reached Kisumu on Lake Victoria in 1902. The railway line



cost the British Treasury £5,244,000. The cost was borne by the British taxpayer. He continued to pay the bill until 1925, by which time the bill had climbed to £8,000,000. Wary of taxpayer's sensibility, the British government, faced by costly administration and an uneconomical railway system spanning 580 miles, wanted to subsidise neither: she wanted to make the colony self-reliant. Therefore, the logical way of getting the requisite revenue for running the colony was to raise the value of land along the railway line, since the railway cut through the best land in the country.<sup>63</sup> This approach brought the land issue to the forefront in Kenyan politics where it remains to this very day. The approach set the pattern in which class struggle would evolve: the colonial state under settler control allocated land along the railway line to settlers and simultaneously the state used various mechanisms - administrative and economic (especially taxation) - to force Africans off their land to go to work for the settlers. The latter process can be best summarized as forced proletarianization. This will be dealt with in a later section. For now, let us follow the settlement process first.

Serious settlement began in 1902. Sir Charles Eliot, the then High Commissioner, had succeeded the outgoing commissioner Hardinge in 1901. His view of the future of the colony was very clear. He wanted to make it "pre-eminently a white man's country."<sup>64</sup> He made sure that his view was advertised in the metropolis. The Crown Land Ordinance was passed in 1902. Because of settler opposition to it due to its stringent lease and development conditions, it was replaced by the 1903 ordinance which gave free grants of agricultural land of 640 acres and of stock-frams in lots of 5,000 acres. Leases of huge tracts of land of many thousand acres were made to individuals and syndicates. For example, Lord Delamere got 100,000 acres of farm land,

and the London based East Africa Syndicate secured 500,000 acres of land. Eliot opposed the syndicate deal and failed. He resigned and was replaced by Sir Donald Stewart. Stewart died a year later after contracting pneumonia. In the meantime, land alienation went on unabated.<sup>65</sup>

The Crown Land Ordinance of 1915 extended the lease period from 33 years to 999 years, making leased land virtually freehold. In that same year, there was a plan to resettle ex-soldiers in the country. To this end, 4,560 square miles of farm land was alienated by the administration. This land was given to white settlers partly free of charge and partly on easy terms. From 1904 to 1915 200,000 to 600,000 acres were alienated yearly for white settlement. The programme was suspended for a while during the war. After the war, in 1919, 2,000,000 acres of land were allotted to settlers in 1,000-acre farms. A portion of this land was given freely; the other was sold at give-away prices ranging from 20 to 50 shillings an acre. Most of this land was expropriated from the Nandi people.<sup>66</sup> These people were not prepared to part with their land without struggle. They put up a very determined resistance which continued well into the 1920s, when they were finally subdued.<sup>67</sup>

The First World War changed the situation throughout the world. In Britain, the British bourgeoisie faced increased proletarian resistance to say nothing of the Irish resistance; externally, the British bourgeoisie was threatened by subordination to the American bourgeoisie. To escape these contradictions, the British ruling class turned to their colonies, Kenya not excepted, for their solution.

British imperial consolidation in Kenya was marked by declaring it a Crown colony in 1920. In that same year, the Crown Land Ordinance was passed to reinforce that of 1915. All land in Kenya became Crown

property to be disposed of according to the wishes of the Crown. The ordinance made Africans "tenants at will of the Crown."<sup>68</sup> Africans put up a stiff fight against this royal proletarianization to no avail. In fact, the triumphant African nationalism of the 1950s was born at this time. Nevertheless, Britain frustrated the nascent African nationalism not by arms alone, but also with the appointment of various Royal Commissions supposedly to investigate African land complaints and claims. Consequently, Kenya became known as the "land of Royal Commissions."<sup>69</sup> The turning point came in 1926 with the amendment of the Crown Land Ordinance. The new ordinance excluded Africans from the so-called White Highlands. Moreover, the ordinance went further and forbade cultivation by Africans of any alienated land outside their reserves. Africans were now concentrated in 26 reserves which were strictly delimited. 1927 saw a deepening of the conflict between Britain and Kenyan settlers. The latter sought to escape growing imperial control over the colony by urging their counterparts in East and Central Africa to join them to halt metropolitan encroachment and possibly opt for independence. It should be noted at this juncture that Southern Rhodesia got its internal self-government at this time in 1923, and the occasion gave Kenyan settlers cause for hope. Britain counteracted settler manoeuvres by proposing closer union of the East Africa territories under British control.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, Britain dispelled settler claims to self-rule. Britain sensed the long-term danger to the empire posed by her settlers in Kenya. After all, Africans in Uganda and Tanganyika would not agree to such a union which included Kenyan settlers. From this viewpoint, the 1927 White Paper can be regarded as the initial step toward decolonization of the country for it says, among other things, that:

"...in the body politic must be provided for and steps taken to create the machinery whereby self-government at first purely local and later over larger areas, can be developed."<sup>71</sup>

Contrary to the settlers' wishes, the British administration wanted to promote a degree of African politics to prove to the recalcitrant settlers that they were not indispensable after all.

In 1927 1,901 settlers owned 4,737,460 acres of land which amounted to 2,470 acres per person. In addition, 2,943,919 acres were earmarked for white settlement at a later date. Given the area of Kenya of 225,000 square miles, almost half of which was comprised of Turkana and Northern Frontier Provinces which are semi-desert and unsuitable for farming, the remaining area of 41,749 square miles ranges from better watered to waterless desert. Consequently, white settlement extension meant extension of reserves in these less hospitable areas. And by so doing, the reserve dwellers would be compelled by sheer economic necessity to move out of these reserves in search of work in white settlements.<sup>72</sup>

The talk of paramountcy of African interests in the 1920s remained mere rhetoric. The official pro-settler policy continued through the 1930s. Land alienation continued unabated. In 1932 gold was discovered in the Kavirondo Gulf area. Various companies flocked into the country to exploit the metal. A hurried amendment to the Native Land Trust Ordinance which forbade expropriation of land in African areas, was passed. Huge tracts of land in the Kavirondo area were alienated without compensation. Africans rioted in protest. The Morris Carter Commission was dispatched into the country to look into the land issue. In the meantime, settlers were agitating against the shortage of labour occasioned by the companies rushing for gold. In 1933 African workers rose to 8,000. Settlers reacted by setting up "vigilance committees" coupled with anti-government propaganda

threatening unilateral declaration of independence (UDI).<sup>73</sup> The agitation remained at a demagogic level only. But the British government faced a very practical threat from African workers. African workers went on strike for the first time. The Morris-Carter Report acknowledged the existence of African land hunger and advocated land reform. The report recommended the extension of African reserves by five percent, while stressing that Africans should be shifted from one of their areas to another. However, as far as the settlers were concerned, the report did nothing but entrench their control over the White Highlands. The climax came in 1935. In that year, a law was passed to "whiten" the highlands: the law stressed that Africans could be repatriated from the White Highlands to their respective reserves; many were indeed repatriated. In 1934 the Samburu people, 6,000 in all, were evicted from their ancestral area to provide farming land for 300 settlers.<sup>74</sup> As one missionary put it in regard to Samburu relocation, they were sent to "the valley of death."<sup>75</sup> The same thing happened to Kikuyu at Tigonu in 1937 and Taita in 1939.

The settlers were accumulating more land than they could cultivate. In 1934, as Lord Hailey pointed out, there were 6,543,360 acres of alienated land. Of this 1,405,036 acres were not yet occupied. Two thousand and twenty seven settlers occupied 5,138,324 acres, giving each settler an average of 2,534 acres. Yet only 274 acres per settler i.e. eleven percent of the whole area, was under cultivation. The annual report for Kenya for 1938 states that in that year alone, 5,053,448 acres were in occupation by 1,890 settlers, of which area only 546,602 acres were under cultivation. However, the area under cultivation had been decreasing since 1931. For example, the area under cultivation in 1931 totalled 650,000 acres, and in 1938 it had

fallen to 549,000 acres and the number of European occupants had declined too. So had the land revenue. The total annual rent from agricultural land alienated to Europeans in 1935 was £38,000; £7,606 of the above figure was in arrears.<sup>76</sup>

Land alienation continued in the 1940s as well. In 1948 the Ol-Engruone dispossession took place involving 30,000 men, women and children. Their livestock, goats, sheep and cows, were confiscated. What is of interest in this particular incident is that this was the second time that these people had been forced out of their land to make room for white settlers. Originally they had been relocated to Ol-Engruone after being thrown out of their ancestral land at Kiambu to provide land for coffee planters. Since 1940 these people had not secured any steady employment.<sup>77</sup> It was alleged that these landless and jobless people were very active in launching the Mau Mau liberation movement. As the rent arrears show, most of the settlers who came into the country had little or no capital at all. So, in spite of the free and partially free land given to them by the colonial administration, they needed labour capital to develop their farms. And if Africans were not prepared to part with their land, they were equally determined not to surrender their labour. Hence, the settlers turned to the colonial administration for the provision of African labour. The process involved in the creation of this labour, legal or illegal, can be best summarized by this pregnant phrase: forced proletarianization which was as ruthless as its counterpart, land alienation.

#### IV

By proletarianization of Africans - subsistence cultivators and pastoralists alike - is meant the progressive drawing in of these people into the labour market created by settler cash crop farming

and urban development. The continued land alienation meant equally the narrowing over time of available options for making a living. The process did not rely on economic mechanisms alone, since the African pre-colonial economy was based on an elaborate barter exchange rather than money; besides, Africans were not interested in working for the settlers for little or no compensation. Consequently, to force Africans out of subsistence, the settlers resorted to economic as well as non-economic mechanisms. Non-economic mechanisms involved mainly administrative ones, such as taxation, labour registration cards or passes, labour conscription; economic mechanisms involved mainly squatter- and hired labour. Both types converged on the transformation of African subsistence, by making money "acquisition a universal necessity."<sup>78</sup> The latter summarizes the proletarianization process succinctly. Let us now turn to colonial taxation which loomed large in this economic revolution.

The official and the non-official settler view was that taxation should be imposed on African peasant cultivators and pastoralists to force them out of their reserves to settler farms in search of money to pay taxes. This policy was well spelled out by the Governor, Sir Percy Girouard, in 1913. In this respect, he said:

"We consider that taxation is the only possible method of compelling the native to leave his reserve for the purpose of seeking work. Only in this way can the cost of living be increased for the native...[and] it is on this that the supply of labour and the price of labour depend. To raise the rate of wages would not increase but would diminish the supply of labour. A rise in the rate of wages would enable the hut and poll tax of a family, sub-tribe or <sup>79</sup>tribe to be earned by fewer external workers."

It is clear from the Governor's speech that economic incentive in the form of increased wages was ruled out: the colonial regime then had to rely more on non-economic mechanisms.

As a result, hut tax was imposed on the African community in 1901. The burden of this tax, a form of primitive income tax, is clear: given that African adult males were polygamous and each wife had her own hut in her husband's compound, then it meant that the individual paid as much tax as he had wives - a "wife tax" as it were. The iniquity of the system is reflected in the criticism levelled against it by no other person than the Under-Secretary for Colonies, Dr. Shiel. In his criticism he pointed out that:

"...the concept of wives as property was merely 'a convenient doctrine for the tax-gatherer,' that Africans were taxed at sixteen while Europeans remained immune from taxation until the age of twenty-one and African women were taxed while European women were exempted...African wives, widows and even war widows were not generally exempted;...<sup>80</sup>Africans paid the bulk of all taxes gathered..."

When an African taxpayer defaulted, if he happened to have saleable agricultural products or livestock, these were sold in order to recover the tax due; if he had neither, then he had to hire himself out in settler farms to earn the required amount or else face imprisonment of up to three months as laid down into law by the ordinance of 1903.

In 1910, poll tax was again imposed on the African polity. African men of over sixteen years were required to pay it. Failure to pay carried a prison term of three months. In 1913 a settler association pressed the government to increase poll tax in order to "relieve the acute shortage of labour."<sup>81</sup> Besides, the settlers with government concurrence demanded tax collection to coincide with harvesting seasons to counter labour shortages which were most keenly felt at this time in such industries as coffee, pyrethrum, sisal, tea and so on.<sup>82</sup> Both hut and poll taxes amounted to three rupees until 1915. Thereafter, the amount was increased to five and in 1920



to eight. Predictably, Africans rioted in protest, under the leadership of Harry Thuku. The amount was reduced from eight to six rupees. In the meantime, Britain reacted to the African resistance by issuing a White Paper in 1923, the Devonshire Paper. The latter reaffirmed the paramountcy of African interests over those of immigrant communities.<sup>83</sup> However, this policy remained a dead letter because the paramountcy of settlers as pronounced by Governor Northey in 1919 continued to prevail, as the following tables illustrate, in regard to tax collection and expenditure of this revenue on various social groups in the country in 1923.<sup>84</sup>

	Taxation	Customs
European	£162,775	£222,300
Indian	£ 46,790	£ 96,980
African	£501,615	£218,900

As can be seen from the table, a European family of five paid £115 mainly to the benefit of the European community of only 1,832 residents or absentee settlers. As for customs, a settler paid £23 for imported goods, whereas an African spent £135/10/- on imports and necessities for that matter. But the real picture emerges when we turn to the taxation column which shows how African resources were transferred to the settlers. The African figure of £501,615 is from hut and poll taxes. In the case of Europeans and Indians, the figure of Europeans and Indians includes £25,000 obtained from non-native poll tax of thirty shillings payable by every adult non-African male. Another £152,000 was paid by Europeans and £32,000 by Indians from the so-called miscellaneous revenue. Nevertheless, their combined total comes nowhere near the amount of hut and poll tax paid by Africans. And what is more telling is the discriminatory expenditure of tax money in favour of the white community, as the second table shows:<sup>85</sup>

Prison costs	£39,793
Police costs	£113,764
European education	£22,140 or about £22 per child of school age
Indian education	£8,720 or about £2/5/- per child of school age
African education	£22,680 or about 1/- per child of school age
Military	£173,336

This discriminatory expenditure of tax revenue at the expense of African taxpayers could be extended to all other social services with little or no modification at all. And Africans were quite resentful of their subsidizing settlers as the Chief Native Commissioner pointed out in 1924. He declared:

"It was strongly felt, both by natives and by administrative officers and others, that the present expenditure from general revenue on direct services to natives does not represent an adequate return for the taxation they pay."<sup>86</sup>

Behind this taxation burden lay the economic propulsion force pushing Africans out of their reserves to settler farms in search of employment to pay taxes.

Yet, once the African worker or labourer had earned enough money for taxes and other essentials, mainly imports such as clothes, implements and the like, he had no more incentive to work and he tended to return to the reserve either on his land, or he bought a piece of land for himself. Consequently, this tendency created fluctuation in the labour market. To steady the supply, the administration had to devise a new method, the so-called Kipande system - a labour registration system in which the particulars of the Kipande-bearer were entered, among them fingerprints, tax and work records. This system was introduced in 1926 and not without lobbying from settlers who were by then empowered to collect taxes from their squatters or workers. The African was required to carry this document at all times and failure to produce it on demand could land one in

trouble. The new system cut down desertion or evasion of work as much as it cut tax evasion. It also made tax collection easier for the administration. The impact of these measures was clear by the mid 1920s. By then half of the largest ethnic groups in Kenya (Kikuyu and Luo) were working for Europeans.<sup>87</sup>

Yet this stable labour supply conceals the African resistance to taxation; the latter development intensified in the 1930s as reflected by the changed official attitude toward taxation distress. According to law as laid down by the aforementioned ordinances of 1903 and 1910, distress was used occasionally or rather optionally as the circumstances dictated, i.e. if an individual failed to pay his taxes, his agricultural produce or livestock were sold to recover due taxes. In the 1930s, however, distress was generalized into a standard practice; its general application did not mean demonetization of African subsistence, rather it reflected the increasing African passive resistance to these taxes. The group most adversely affected by distress were herders or pastoralists such as Kamba, Meru, Embu and the like, whose animals were sold by the administration not only to recover due taxes, but also to recover arrears as well.<sup>88</sup> They were worse off compared to subsistence agriculturalists in that it took them longer to replenish their animals and once restored, other depleting factors threatened them. The decline of their livestock was a boon to the regime and the settlers. In fact, the latter exploited the situation by forcing squatters on their farms to sell their animals on the ground that their animals were likely to spread disease to settler high-grade animals. But due to falling prices, Africans refused to sell as many as was expected. Conversely, peasants near and around urban areas were doing a bit better: they were selling their agricultural produce to these centres such as Nairobi, Muranga,

Nyeri and so on. But the picture changed as one moved away from these areas. In some cases, some peasants were being compelled to sell their land to meet tax burdens.<sup>89</sup> Whether among agriculturalists or pastoralists, the administration was meeting with growing opposition to taxation as evidenced by the growing time spent by administrative officers on tax collection and the punitive methods they were resorting to, such as hut burnings. For example, one missionary characterized this scotching terror

"as an act of terrorism...a blot on the record of our empire...I can find no justification for destroying the huts of the poverty stricken... in the face of the iniquity of hut burning such irregularities as seizure of stock...pale into insignificance."<sup>90</sup>

After the Second World War, the controversy over taxation continued between the administration seeking to enlarge its revenue and settlers set on shifting tax burdens onto others on the one hand, and on the other, Africans who opposed both. The controversy came to a head in 1946 as the administration sought to retain income-tax on settlers; the latter wanted it dropped altogether. The Africans on their part demanded that the expenditure of tax money on each community should be in proportion to its contribution which would have meant the dismantling of the colour-bar system. Settlers opposed this proposal, of course. However, the controversy led to the issue of a report by the fiscal commissioner, Sir Wilfred Woods, who advised against dropping settler income-tax, while at the same time warning of "the heavy burden of poll tax borne by Africans."<sup>91</sup> In 1947 the settlers refused to pay for any African development. Africans registered their protest by demanding abolition of the notorious Kipande system which would have more or less restored free labour markets and not necessarily in the interests of the settler, given the growing demand for labour in urban areas after the war. The controversy

polarized settler community between those who kept abreast with African nationalism and were ready to co-operate with it; their opponents were white supremacists who were working diligently to reverse the irreversible. Before the two groups could re-discover their original common interest, African nationalism had overtaken them.

## V

The other basic element in the proletarianization of Africans in the country was squatter labour. It developed as a result of under-capitalization of settlers, i.e. when the latter came into the country, the colonial administration gave them extensive land holdings and granted that these settlers had little or no capital at all, or were absentee landowners, they had to devise a method of getting African labour; Africans dispossessed of their land had to find a way of getting access to settler land; hence, the new exchange between settlers who exchanged part of their land for African labour and landless squatters who exchanged their labour for settler land. The resultant squatter farming was known as "kaffir farming."<sup>92</sup> These squatters paid their rent by working for their landlords for a specified period; in other cases, they paid it in cash or in kind. And the system was open to abuse, given the fact that the squatters did not know how to read or write. It is with this background in view that the Native Labour Commissioner condemned the squatter system in 1913 as "wrong in principle and detrimental to labour supply."<sup>93</sup> To rectify the situation, the government passed the Resident Natives Ordinance in 1918. Instead of alleviating the plight of squatters, the ordinance enhanced it: it made it illegal for squatters to rent or lease land from settlers either for cash or for a share of the produce. The aim was to eliminate the so-called "kaffir farming." In place of rent, the 1918 ordinance laid down that the squatters

and their families had to work for the settlers for a period "not less than 180 days in a year."<sup>94</sup> In return, white farmers had to provide squatters with land, building materials for their houses and cash wages. The real motive behind the ordinance was to standardize squatter labour exchange by capitalizing on labour services for land and cash and the latter two are quantifiable. Due to growing social pressures in the African reserves such as landlessness, population, deterioration of the soil and the like, squatter labour showed a remarkable growth. For example, Endre Sik estimates that there were 185,000 squatters on settler farms in 1927 compared to 12,000 in 1912.<sup>95</sup> From 1912 to 1954 the cash-wage element remained small compared to non-squatter wages on farms or outside agriculture. Consequently, squatter labour remained an important component part of the colonial economy. Gavin Kitching confirms this when he writes:

"...squatter labour remained an important part of the agricultural labour force in Kenya until independence, and indeed until the<sup>96</sup> dismantling of the settler economy after independence."

Squatter modes of labour exchange were not unique to Kenya; they were a common practice in white colonies in Africa.<sup>97</sup>

Neither taxation nor squatter systems were enough to meet settler demands for labour. The administration had to resort to force increasingly in order to increase labour supplies. The method was in use before 1914, but it was used so extensively during and after the war that it became institutionalized.<sup>98</sup> When the war broke out, East Africa was drawn into it by Germany's advance from Tanganyika (Tanzania) against British possessions in the area. The official hypocrisy which surrounded pre-war forced labour was dropped. African men were conscripted into the carrier corps during the war. The pressure exerted by conscription on the African community was great indeed. This is well summarized by the District Commissioner,

C.S. Hemsted, when he said that

"the beginning of the year 1917-1918 saw a vastly increased call for carriers and a pressure was put on the natives in the reserve which resulted in the conscription of practically every able-bodied man who was not in regular employ...A certain number escaped to Naivasha, a large number worked on the farms sullenly and giving as much trouble as they dared, the remainder were enlisted and sent, too often, to their deaths. A gloom spread over the native population."

And gloomy it proved to be. As men got conscripted into the army or carrier corps and famine threatened those left behind, labour shortage hit the country. In 1919 the employers experienced such serious shortages that they were led to demand official help to relieve them. For instance, in that year the Coffee Planters Union met the Governor, Sir E. Northey, to convey their grievances: there were no coffee pickers to harvest their crop. The same story was heard from other employers or their organizations. The gravity of the problem can be seen in the fact that the labour shortage brought about the collapse of the flax industry. The government realized its war-time labour needs through the provincial administration especially the chiefs. The latter were required to supply labour in quotas. Chiefs too supplied private employers with labour. Even here, force was the order of the day. To keep the labour flow going, Governor Northey institutionalized the practice in his famous circular of 1919 which should be quoted at length here:

"1) There appears to be a considerable shortage of labour in certain areas due to reluctance of the tribesmen to come out into the labour field, as it is the wish of the government that they should do so. His Excellency desires once again to bring the matter to the notice of the provincial and district commissioners, and at the same time, to state that he sincerely hopes that by an insistent advocacy of the government's wishes in this connection an increasing supply of labour will result.  
2) His Excellency trusts that those officers who are in charge of what is termed labour supplying districts are doing what they can to induce an augmentation of the supply of labour for the various farms and plantations in the protectorate

and he feels assured that all officers will agree with him that the longer and more continuous flow of labour is from the reserves, the more satisfactory will be the relations as between the native people and the settler and between the latter and the government.

3) The necessity for an increased supply of labour cannot be brought too frequently before the various native authority, nor can they be too often reminded that it is in their own interests to see that their young men become wage earners and do not remain idle for the greater part of the year...

4) In continuation of previous communications on this very important subject, His Excellency desires to reiterate certain of his wishes and to add further instructions as follows:

(1) All government officials in charge of native areas must exercise every possible lawful influence to induce able-bodied male natives to go into the labour field. Where farms are situated in the vicinity of a native area, women and children should be encouraged to go out for such labour as they can perform.

(2) Native chiefs and elders must at all times render all possible lawful assistance on the foregoing lines. They should be repeatedly reminded that it is of their duty to advise and encourage all unemployed young men in the areas under their jurisdiction to go out and work on plantations..."<sup>100</sup>

To the administrators, the message was quite clear. Force was taken as the most efficacious method of obtaining African labour. The effect of this measure on the labour supply can be gauged from the following figures.<sup>101</sup>

Year	Number Under Employment
1912	12,000
1920	90,000
1923	129,000
1924	133,000
1925	152,000
1927	185,000

From these figures it is clear that labour under employment increased almost one hundred percent in the last seven years.

But the exploitation of Africans was not limited to white settlers alone. African administrators, namely chiefs and headmen, were also deeply involved in it. This group enriched itself by



forcing Africans who wished to escape labour conscription to pay them in cash or livestock. In other cases where these forms of payment were not obtainable, the people involved were required to work for chiefs or headmen in their farms or shambas. In this way, labour recruitment became a source of revenue for administrators and employers alike. Consequently, chiefs and headmen came to identify their interests with those of colonialism.<sup>102</sup> Conversely, the African nationalists movement emerged in this period. The 1930s saw the continuation of the same process as Dr. Zwanenberg and other writers have demonstrated.<sup>103</sup>

The 1940s were no different. Again, the pretext of war was used to justify conscription of Africans for settler farms. In fact, the settlers opposed the government in its drive to recruit Africans for the army or carrier corps. Because of settler pressure on the government to stop recruitment of Africans for the military, the Kenyan administration had to suspend the operation in 1941. But only for a while. In 1943 16,000 Africans were conscripted into employment. Three-quarters of these workers were channelled to settler farms. The latter's vested interest in the abolition of military recruitment of Africans can be seen in the fact that settler agricultural industries such as coffee and tea industries, were classified as "essential services", for which labour conscription had to give priority. But the true nature of the settlers' motives is reflected in the wages for conscripted labour, the minimum wage was put down as 8 to 10 shillings per month, or 9 to 12 shillings for the duration of employment. In addition, these conscripts were provided with food, housing and medical attention. By contrast, military recruits received 12 shillings per month on recruitment, and 14 shillings when the recruit passed through military depot. Besides this higher pay, recruits were entitled to other emoluments. If economic incentive were allowed full

play, obviously most Africans would have joined the military establishment.<sup>104</sup> But settler opposition to African recruitment for the military was not purely economically motivated: politically it was a liability since it coincided with the growing African nationalism.

## VI

Of all the measures used by the colonial regime to create colonial capitalism in the country, land alienation and forced labour were the most effective in revolutionizing the African community along capitalist lines. The impact of this revolution is well conveyed by the officer in charge of Soil Conservation in the country, Colin Maher, in a speech given in March 1943 which deserves to be quoted at length. In the course of his speech, he said:

"The introduction of cash, of markets, and of the desire for goods to be bought by cash, together with the government policy of stimulation on production of cash crops, such as cotton and maize, has resulted in a large increase in cultivation. This has been assisted by the introduction of European-made hoes and ploughs. The increased production has reduced the grazing areas and increased the pressure on the remaining grasslands. Meanwhile desire for gain, coupled with the decay of tribal and family customs and ties, has resulted in land occupying a much more important place as a means of production. Land-grabbing occurs in many reserves; the claims of the absent or of the widow or fatherless are over-ruled by the strong. Family or tribal rights are neglected and occupation rights have become, tacitly or openly, individual rights allowing right of cash sale. Meanwhile swelling populations have necessitated increased subdivision and fragmentation so that holdings commonly are too small to permit of any rational system of good husbandry and soil conservation. In Bungare and Margoli in North Kavirondo, in parts of Embu and Kiambu the population is 1,000 to 1,500 per square mile. Here are fertile fields for the political agitator. However, with decreasingly favourable opportunities on the land the demands for a higher standard of living have increased. Educational opportunities for the African have passed beyond the elementary and the primary stage to the secondary, post-secondary or Cambridge School Certificate stage and to the Makerere or near-university stage...

The difficulties of this position have been intensified by the speeding up of these social trends by the war. Land must inevitably deteriorate more rapidly when increased production is urged. Many young African men have earned high wages in the army and acquired a taste for a higher standard of life, while a sight of life in other countries cannot but fill them with dissatisfaction for the often truly wretched conditions which exist in their own reserves, and with the standard of life which is possible on an agricultural holding inadequate in size to give a subsistence.

Lack of opportunity in these reserves, and the acquiring of an intensified desire for money and goods, has brought about a drift to the towns and the development of a trading class, whose sometimes doubtful trading morality is too often derived from that of the Indian.

The increased class of artisans, the latter of whom it is hoped will replace the Indian fundi, have ample opportunity during the war. They will find life difficult after the war since a deteriorating African agricultural industry cannot employ them...I believe that nothing short of a complete social and economic re-organization can save the land and people from ruin, and this country from bloody disorders, the seeds of which are present in the contending circumstances I have recounted."<sup>105</sup>

There were, however, no reforms forthcoming under the settler regime. Actually Maher was re-echoing the warning given to the administration by Dr. Leakey in 1937. These warnings went by unheeded and predictably the bloody disorders erupted in the 1950s as the Mau Mau liberation movement fought to end British colonialism in the country. Britain then was faced with the choice between the empire now threatened by settlerdom which meant either dismantling the latter, or backing it and, by so doing, inviting further disintegration of her empire in Africa because Mau Mau was the first armed struggle in the British African colonies or elsewhere in colonial Africa. Let us now turn to the course which Britain took in a vain attempt to salvage her collapsing empire.

## FOOTNOTES

1. For the history of Western and Eastern interaction with the East African region, see: A.H.J. Prins, "The Swahili-speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East coast (Arabs, Shirazi and Swahili)," Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Part XII, ed. by Daryll Forde (London: International African Institute, 1967); Zdenek Kubes, "The Arab Minority in Kenya," Asian and African Studies, IV (1968), pp.80-93; C.S. Nicholls, The Swahili Coast (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971); G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, "The Coast, 1498-1840," and Gervase Mathew, "The East Coast Until the Coming of the Portuguese," in History of East Africa, Vol.1, ed. by R. Oliver and G. Mathew (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), etc.
2. Richard D. Wolff, The Economics of Colonialism : Britain and Kenya, 1870-1930 (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1974), pp.30-32. See also Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), p.46: "The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e. to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image."
3. Kubes, p.84.
4. Colonial Report - Annual : Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, report for 1928. No.1463. H.M.S.O., 1928, pp.4-5.
5. Lucien Rey, "The Revolution in Zanzibar," New Left Review, No.25 (May-June, 1964), p.30.
6. Geoffrey W. Reeves, "Tanzanian Underdevelopment and Dependence," Typescript, Adelaide, 1976, p.15; Samir Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa - Origins and Contemporary Forms," The Journal of Modern African Studies, vol.10, 4 (1972), p.515; Rey, p.30.
7. Rey, p.30.
8. Amin, p.515.
9. Reeves, p.15; Robert G. Gregory, India and East Africa : A History of Race Relations Within the British Empire, 1890-1939 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). pp.31-45.
10. Gregory, India and East Africa, pp.42-43.
11. For the contemporary underdevelopment of Kenya, see Colin Leys, Underdevelopment in Kenya : The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism (London: Heinemann, 1975); for colonial underdevelopment see E.A. Brett, Colonialism and Underdevelopment :

Britain in East Africa 1918-1939 (London: Heinemann, 1973), etc.

12. Abdul M.H. Sheriff, "Trade and Underdevelopment : A Survey of the Economic History of the East African Coast," Typescript, Dar es Salaam, 1972, p.14.
13. Ibid., p.14.
14. Before the 1840s, Oman had not yet established full control over her domain. In this regard, John Lamphear points out that: "Mombasa could well afford to allow the peoples of her interior to conduct their own commercial affairs, for it is clear that by the middle of the nineteenth century the city was prospering and was unquestionably the most centre along the coast of East Africa despite the troubles between Mazrui and Omani factions during the '20s and '30s. Krapf indicated that the city's population grew by several thousand to about 12,000 between 1844 and 1853. Between 2,300 and 2,600 frazilas (about 45 tons) of ivory per year were being supplied to the town at mid-century, mostly through the efforts of indigenous peoples of the interior, especially the Kamba and Nyika," from "The Kamba and the Northern Mrima," in Pre-Colonial African Trade, ed. by R. Gray and D. Birmingham (London : Oxford University Press, 1970), p.87. This development then was the result of the consolidation of Omani empire in the 1840s and thereafter.
15. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg with Anne King, An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda 1800-1970 (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1975), p.168.
16. Gregory, p.30.
17. Ibid., pp.34-35.
18. Wolff, p.31.
19. Even Kamba slave ownership was a later development not un-related to Arab-Swahili connection. For example, Lamphear points out on page 90 that "traditionally neither the Nyika nor the Kamba had been slave-owners."
20. Zwanenberg and King, p.177.
21. Ibid., p.168.
22. Lamphear, pp.86-88.
23. Quoted by Lamphear on page 90.
24. Ibid., p.91.
25. J. Forbes Munro, Colonial Rule and the Kamba (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1975), pp.16-21.
26. Ibid., pp.22-23.

27. Author's experience in the province, the Eastern Province in 1972.
28. Munro, p.24.
29. The following remark by Lamphear illustrates Kamba's industry and craftsmanship. On page 85, Lamphear writes:  
 "Iron ore, washed from the stream in the manner of gold prospectors, was smelted by Kamba smiths and fashioned by craftsmen into ornamental chains and other decoration without equal in East Africa."
30. Munro, p.25.
31. On Kamba raiding, Lamphear has this to say:  
 "There are also indications that increasingly some Kamba began to abandon any pretence of legitimate trade, employing their utui organizations as highly efficient bands of robbers which would waylay bona fide caravans, killing their members, stealing their goods, conveying them the remaining distance to the coast, and selling them to the middleman villages. It is possible that whole areas of Ukamba may have given up trading for the easier, but just as lucrative, occupation of bandits..." p.98.
32. Munro, p.27.
33. Krapf quoted by Lamphear on page 91.
34. Ibid., p.98.
35. Ibid., pp.98-101.
36. Ibid., p.100.
37. Ibid., p.100.
38. For the discussion on economic imperialism of the period see Leonard Woolf, Empire and Commerce in Africa (London : The Labour Department - ) and G. Galbraith, MacKinnon and East Africa 1878-1895 : A Study of the New Imperialism (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1972).
39. Zwanenberg and King, p.166.
40. Gregory, p.39.
41. Okello Oculi, "Imperialism, Settlers and Capitalism in Kenya," Mawazo, Vol.4, 3 (1975), pp.115-116.
42. Leonard Woolf, Empire and Commerce in Africa : A Study in Economic Imperialism (London: The Labour Research Department -) p.330.

43. Quoted by George Bennett in "Settlers and Politics in Kenya," in History of East Africa, Vol.II, ed. by V. Harlow and E.M. Chilver (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1965), p.269.
44. M.P.K. Sorrenson, Origins of European Settlement in Kenya (Nairobi : Oxford University Press, 1968), pp.34-43.
45. M.F. Hill, "The White Settler's Role in Kenya," Foreign Affairs (American), vol.38 (1959-1960), p.639.
46. George Padmore, Pan-Africanism or Communism? (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd. -), p.234.
47. Quoted by Mahmood Mamdani in "Class Struggles in Uganda," in Review of African Political Economy, No.4 (1970)<sup>5</sup>, p.31.
48. R.P. Dutt, The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1953), p.78.
49. Ralph Fox, The Colonial Policy of British Imperialism (London: Martin Lawrence Limited, 1933), p.23.
50. Ibid., p.118.
51. Norman Leys, Kenya (London: The Hogarth Press, 1924), pp.298-299.
52. Ibid., p.98.
53. --- The Colour Bar in East Africa (London : The Hogarth Press, 1941), p.26.
54. Dutt, p.222.
55. In regard to the diseases introduced by colonialism, Zwanenberg and King write:  
 "Following close on the heels of these disasters (i.e. famines) came the 'pacification' campaigns waged by the Europeans in which more people died, and accompanying the adventures and traders who were 'opening up' East Africa, and the colonial administration, came a number of diseases new to East Africa which reached epidemic proportions because the African population had no immunity against them. Smallpox, chicken pox, measles, poliomyelitis, plague, influenza and whooping cough all seem to have made their appearance in East Africa by at least 1890. Many of these diseases were killers. Jiggers, relapsing fever and sleeping sickness were introduced for the first time in the 1890s..."
56. Jack Woddis, Africa : The Roots of Revolt (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1960), pp.168-177.
57. Ibid., pp.175-177.
58. Fox, p.93.
59. Leonard Barnes, The Duty of Empire (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1935), p.277.

60. Oculi, p.114.
61. Woolf, p.194.
62. R.P. Dutt, India Today (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1940), p.20.
63. W. McGregor Ross, Kenya from Within (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1927), pp.40-41.
64. Sorrenson, p.62.
65. Woddis, pp.2-7.
66. Leonard Woolf, "Kenya : White Man's Country?" in Fabian Society Research, No.62-122 (1942-7), pp.7-10.
67. A.T. Matson, "Reflections on the Growth of Political Consciousness in Nandi," in Politics and Nationalism in Colonial Kenya, edited by B.A. Ogot (Nairobi : EAPH, 1972), pp.18-20.
68. R.L. Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, Vol.1 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928), p.309.
69. George Podmore, Africa : Britain's Third Empire (London : Dennis Dobson Ltd., - ), p.60.
70. For more information on this conflict between Britain and settlers and its relation to the former's proposal for closer union in East Africa see: Report of the Commission on Closer Union of the Dependencies in Eastern and Central Africa, Cmd.3234 of 1929.
71. --- Joint Committee on Closer Union in East Africa, Vol.1 Report No.156, H.M.S.O., 1931, p.32.
72. E. Sik, The History of Black Africa, Vol.II (Budapest : Akademiai Kiado, 1966), p.195.
73. See Report of the Kenya Land Commission, Cmd.4556, 1934.
74. Sik, pp.199-200.
75. Ibid., p.200.
76. Woolf, Kenya, pp.7-8.
77. Podmore, p.61.
78. Woddis, p.49.
79. D.L. Barnett and K. Njama, Mau Mau From Within (Letchworth : MacGibbon and Kee Ltd., 1966), p.32.
80. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya 1919-1939 (Nairobi : East African Literature Bureau, 1975), p.87.
81. Buell, p.331.



82. Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya 1919-1939, pp.88-89.
83. Joint Committee on Closer Union in East Africa, Vol.1 - Report No.156, H.M.S.O., 1931, p.29.
84. Leys, Kenya, p.341.
85. Ibid., p.342.
86. M.R. Dilley, British Policy in Kenya Colony (New York : Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1937), p.243.
87. Leys, The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, p.31.
88. Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya 1919-1939, pp.92-93.
89. Ibid., p.99.
90. Ibid., p.97.
91. G. Bennett and A. Smith, "Kenya : From 'White Man's Country' to Kenyatta's State 1945-1963," in History of East Africa ed. by D.A. Low and A. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p.115.
92. Kaffir Farming was introduced by settlers mainly from South Africa and the term was used pejoratively.
93. Buell, p.325.
94. Ibid., p.326.
95. Sik, p.196.
96. G. Kitching, "Modes of Production and Kenya Dependency." Review of African Political Economy, No.8 (January-April, 1977), p.160.
97. Barnes, p.54.
98. Zwanenberg, pp.105-136.
99. D.C. Savage and J.F. Munro, "Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate," Journal of African History, VII, 2 (1966), p.337.
100. Buell, p.377.
101. These figures are adopted from Buell, p.345.
102. For more information on chiefs' co-optation by the administration and their subsequent corruption see W.R. Ochieng, "The Sheep and Goats Among the Kikuyu : Being Some Random Reflections on the Study of Colonial African Chiefs in Central Kenya: 1888-1963." Staff seminar Paper No.28, Department of History, Kenyatta University College, Nairobi, Kenya --.

103. For more discussion on further transformation of the African community in Kenya in the 1930s see the works of Brett, Dilley, Tignor, Wolff and Zwanenberg referred elsewhere in this chapter.
104. Woolf, pp.21-23.
105. Ibid., pp.27-29.

## CHAPTER III

## MAU MAU AND THE EMERGENCY

## I

The African protracted armed struggle against British colonialism along provincial or ethnic lines came to an end in the 1920s with the completion of the pacification of the countryside.<sup>1</sup> Following this imperialist consummation, African political struggle henceforth was increasingly informed by class struggle, even though this class antagonism was overshadowed by the nationalist struggle. The apparent stability of the colonial state depended on the relative strength of the African classes supporting or opposing colonialism and the latter knew very well which side of its bread was buttered. Those classes which were losing in the emerging proto-feudal society in pre-colonial Kenya, for example, the ahoi, or those which were bound to go under, under colonialism, namely landowners, discovered their common interest in co-operating with colonialism; the latter, too, was aware of this contradiction in the African society and made full use of it by recruiting African administrators, i.e. chiefs, headmen and the like, mainly from ahoi or the landless from the declining proto-feudal society and a few from the land-owning class who chose to co-operate rather than risk losing their land through land alienation or their lives as Wayaki wa Hinga.<sup>2</sup> This set the pattern of social development in the country.

The colonial strategy in recruiting a majority of chiefs from ahoi was to forestall African nationalism because ahoi were people of no standing in the African society and had nothing to lose, but everything to gain by co-operating with the colonizers. This is confirmed by the chiefs' unquestioning adoption of Christianity.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, this African administrative class was bound to come into

conflict with the African masses who sought selective conservation of African traditions. The conflict was acute in the economic sphere as the undercapitalized chiefs and their cohorts translated their political and economic power into economic assets. Therefore, the creation of chiefs constituted no less than a revolution in the African society with chiefs as the revolutionizing agents who transformed the African pre-capitalist society, albeit progressively, into the colonial-capitalist system. Here the term agency should be understood in two ways: on one hand, it conveys the sense of chiefs' vested interests, on the other, the subordinate role of chiefs as executants of the imperial design. Both senses gave these African administrators formidable political power. Consequently, the African mass struggle had not only a nationalist dimension to it against foreign domination by white settlers, but it had also a class dimension against African classes aligned to colonialism. The first aspect dominated African political struggle from the 1920s until the end of the Second World War. After the war, the two aspects tended to go hand in hand with the nationalist aspect taking the limelight until Mau Mau movement in the 1950s brought class struggle back on centre stage, where it has remained ever since. Hence, in order to trace this class struggle through its twists and turns during this period, we need a clear picture of the role the colonial chiefs played in revolutionizing the African community during which process these administrators became the new land-owning class. Without this picture, Mau Mau then becomes all things to all men.

No-one portrays this picture better than Leonard Woolf when he writes:

"...A change in the balance of power between the chief and the tribe, imposed by an alien government, and by the use of power, in one place has effected a revolution in the economic structure of tribal society and

Did the structure

in the social ideas and ideals of the Africans. The change in the economic structure, which forces the individual independent agriculturalist to become a wage-earner, itself reacts upon the power of the chief within the tribe, upon the political structure of the tribe, and upon the code of morality and standards of value which kept the tribe together as a social entity. But the revolution in social ideas and ideals reacts in its turn both upon the balance of power and upon the economic structure. This revolution originated in a change in the control of power; the first stage in the impact of western civilization was the transfer of the ultimate control of communal power from the chief and tribe to the European administration. But the administration brought with it from Europe, not only its guns and capitalist system, but its social ideas, its Bible and missionaries, its schools and teachers. The European's social ideas and standards, in proportion as they are accepted by the African, act as powerful solvents of the ideas and standards which gave to the old tribal society its form and its stability. The Masai, who resist them smoulder in their reserve; the Kikuyu who accept them, change their way of life, their economic 'wants,' their attitude towards the chief, the law, and finally, to the administration..."<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, chiefdom became the basis of colonial rule in the country; it ushered capitalist revolution in the African society at all levels at the same time. Here we are concerned with three of them: political, economic and superstructural (or capitalist ideas and ideals as Woolf would say) levels. And at every single level, chiefs found firm resistance from the African masses and this resistance grew ever more antagonistic over time as will be seen shortly.

The economic revolution was effected by the administrative elite through their use of political power to acquire land and, through this process, they became rural land-owners or landed gentry. The term elite here refers to the growing body of educated chiefs who came from mission schools and most of them were either sons or relatives of chiefs in power which guaranteed the continuity of administration and of this class. Ochieng describes this class vividly:

"It is no wonder then that the first thing the ahoi colonial chiefs among the Kikuyu did was to buy for themselves and their followers land. The Kikuyu chiefs used their power to accumulate land and in turn used their control over land as a basis for enhancing their authority."<sup>6</sup>

The basis of accumulation by chiefs was enhanced by the ordinances of 1902 and 1912. These ordinances empowered chiefs to administer justice in the Local Native Courts, collect taxes, levy labour and so on. In the course of execution of their duties, their functionaries embarked on systematic corruption (and this practice was not confined to Africans alone), despoiling African masses. Through corruption and other malpractices, chiefs amassed a great deal of wealth in land and in other forms. Tignor concurs with this assessment. He writes:

"Chiefs devised many ways to enrich themselves. They used the courts to accumulate land holdings. The members of the tribunals frequently took contributions from participants, prompting Phillips to say that the Kiambu courts benefited only 'swindlers.' As recruiters of labour, chiefs exempted certain peoples. They also received payments from private farmers and recruiting agents for recruiting supposedly voluntary wage labour. If necessary, tribal retainers simply expropriated the wealth of others. When the chiefs were allowed to collect taxes, some of these abuses were brought to light...chiefs forced widows exempted from tax to pay them a bribe to retain their exemptions...stock sold in distress for non-payment of tax was undervalued and purchased by the chief and his henchmen...The District Commissioner of Fort Hall, believed that of the 5,000 exemptions allowed in the district, fully one third were bought by bribes. In Nyeri...chiefs sold the cultivation rights of tax defaulters and arranged for private sale<sup>7</sup> of the stock of defaulters among their followers."

The antagonism generated by this moral revolution in the African community can only be appreciated when it is remembered that this corruption was unknown in pre-colonial African society in Kenya. No less an authority than Tignor testifies to this. He says:

"Whatever may be the case in independent African states, colonial corruption among the Kikuyu stems directly from the functioning of the colonial system and was not a traditional inheritance."<sup>8</sup>

Chiefs went even further in pursuit of their wealth by exploiting African labour directly, the labour of ahoi on their land or that of poor peasants who could not pay taxes or pay their way out of conscript labour and the like: chiefs and their cohorts, like their settler counterparts, did not hesitate to use violence to extract surplus or physical labour from ahoi and peasants. This violence reached an explosive level as Tignor points out:

"Often they (askaris) used a great deal of violence to carry out the wishes of chiefs, creating what at times surely could be called a reign of terror."<sup>9</sup>

As the wealth of these chiefs grew, so did their corporate interests vis-a-vis the settlers and the African masses. This development came to fruition in 1919 with the formation of a party, the Kikuyu Association (KA) to articulate its members' interests. The party leadership was drawn mainly from the chiefs who had passed through mission schools which points to the close relationship between colonial capitalism and the missionary crusade. Among these leaders should be mentioned Mbiu Koinange, Josiah Njonjo, Phillip Karanja and Waruhiu Kungu. The party's class interest in landed property is reflected in the fact that in 1921, KA demanded that the government issue title deeds as a preventive measure against further alienation of land to white settlers. To protect its members' interests vis-a-vis African masses seeking to redress the excesses of chiefs as the successful case against the paramount chief Kinyanjui in Kiambu had shown, the party advocated co-operation with colonialism.<sup>10</sup> Its ideology was constitutional gradualism. Here, too, missionaries were at work in elaborating this ideology because many of them served in the party as advisors to the Christian chiefs; when these missionaries were not busy advising their followers, they were busy promoting their proteges into the administration or in the party: colonial politics and

religion were becoming indistinguishable.<sup>11</sup> This alliance between the settler ruling class and their missionary ideologues on one hand and the African-administrator-land-owning class on the other, is of great importance in understanding the subsequent African nationalist struggle in general and Mau Mau liberation movement in particular. However, the provincial outlook of KA failed to attract mass support not only in the Central Province, but also in the other provinces, which doomed the party to an early demise. Yet, the African political struggle did not die with KA: it took a leap forward.

The missionary revolutionizing crusade came to bear full impact on the superstructure of the African society in the 1920s. This impact was imparted through religion and education. Through them, Africans were called upon to abandon their customs and adopt Christianity and the western way of life, or rather, the British way of life, which boiled down to demanding of Africans to become "Black Britons." And chiefs expressed their indebtedness to missionaries by helping the latter to carry out their crusade in their respective areas. The well-known Kenyan novelist, Ngugi wa Thiong'o summarizes this process of cultural alienation of Africans in his novel, The River Between, in this manner:

"Joshua...was then a young man who ran from the hills and went to live with the white man in the newly established mission. He feared the revenge of the hills; the anger of his friends, betrayed. In Siriana (Mission) he found a sanctuary and the white man's power and magic. He learned to read and write. The new faith worked in him till it came to possess him wholly. He renounced his tribe's magic, power and ritual. He turned to and felt the deep presence of the one God. Had he not given the white man power over all? ...He realized the ignorance of his people. He felt the depth of all the darkness in which he lived."<sup>12</sup>

This missionary crusade was led by various churches, among them the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM), the African Inland Mission (AIM), the Gospel Mission Society (GMS) and the Catholic Church, even though



the latter was not as vocal on the anti-female-circumcision issue as on other issues. This frontal attack was directed against African customs in general, and against two in particular, polygamy and female circumcision. The strategy of this attack is clear: the two customs constituted the core of the African society and of Kikuyu society in particular, and their destruction meant the destruction of African society itself. This is made clear by the following remark by a District Commissioner, H.E. Lambert, when he says that:

"[The] failure to circumcise was equivalent to detribalization and would further divide the Embu people into mutually antagonistic groups, the circumcised versus the uncircumcised..."<sup>13</sup>

And so it happened. The final division came in 1929 when the missionary church leaders demanded that their adherents sign papers renouncing these customs. Those who refused - and a good number did - were excommunicated and their children were expelled from mission schools; these students could never hope to join other institutions because the missionaries were entrusted by the government with the education of the "natives." This act sealed the break between a minority of christianized and loyal African subjects and the rest of the African community opposed to colonialism and missionarism, between loyalism and nationalism. Those Africans who chose nationalism established their own churches and schools to propagate African nationalism among their followers; the loyalists remained in the establishment's institutions. The antagonism between the missionaries and the nascent African nationalism was exacerbated by the fact that these churches owned large estates in which African squatters or labourers were treated no better than elsewhere. Therefore, the distinction between the missionary and the colonizer among nationalist Africans became progressively blurred as the following saying among them illustrates: "Gutiri ngurani ya mubea na muthungu" which literally

means that there is no difference between a settler and a missionary. Consequently, the emerging African nationalism from the 1920s onwards propagated anti-colonialism and anti-missionarism hand in hand. Mau Mau descended from this nationalism and, as we shall see shortly, the movement, too, inherited these isms which it refined and incorporated in its liberationist ideology.

## II

The political and economic hegemony of the white settlers and the African land-owning class seemed settled at this time. Yet, this alliance was more apparent than real because of the settlers' relentless expropriation of African land and labour. This ever-present threat to African land-owners and peasantry was confirmed daily by settlers in public and private utterances which reminded Africans that they were Crown tenants. In 1924, for example, Lord Delamere, the settlers' spokesman, could say:

"All the land in the world had to be put to the best use and in the Kikuyu country they had one of the richest areas in the world, only one-third of which was being used owing to the system of cropping and fallowing which the natives followed. That was a matter that had to be gone into. By land taxation or by other means people in the world were being expected to use their land and the native had that responsibility as much as anyone else."<sup>14</sup>

Under this feigned reproach to African agriculture, any means could, and was used to dispossess Africans of their land. The African economic insecurity was exacerbated by the administration's refusal to allow Africans to grow cash crops. It was this situation, therefore, that forced some chiefs to turn to nationalism as the only way to wrest concessions from the settler ruling class and, failing this, to use it against them altogether. However, the number of patriotic chiefs was very small, which leaves one to wonder which enemy chiefs feared most, the white settlers or the African masses. In any case,

the patriotic section among the chiefs was gaining sympathy among urban intellectuals and workers.<sup>15</sup> The small but growing stratum of African elites was driven to nationalism when these elites found their advancement along the bourgeois road blocked by colour-bar.

As Carey-Jones points out:

"Ruling classes have maintained their position and power for centuries, providing that they are at all adaptable and can recruit their strength from the ruled, as in Britain. There were, admittedly, rigidities in the colonial structure of Kenya which made this adaptation more difficult. Colour was an obstacle to recruitment by the ruling class from the ruled."<sup>16</sup>

Unlike the British ruling class, the settler ruling class was exclusive in that it discriminated against the very African elites who could have stabilized their rule. Consequently, these elites turned to nationalism in order to destroy the colour-bar which blocked their way to becoming a bourgeoisie like their creators.<sup>17</sup>

But, were African masses ready for this alliance?

The elite political leadership could not have come at a better time. The economic depression of the early 1920s had reduced drastically the living standard of African masses, making them receptive to nationalistic politics. In the reserves, the situation was as explosive as it was bleak. Buell describes this rural impoverishment in the following manner:

"...In the midst of the financial and economic depression in Kenya in 1921, the settlers decided, as a retrenchment measure, to reduce native wages by one-third...

Moreover, taxes were now raised from twelve to sixteen shillings; the registration system put into effect (Kipande system); and government commissioners talked of taking away native land. Meanwhile the government had started or intensified its policy of labour 'encouragement,' particularly of women and children for coffee estates (forced labour)..."<sup>18</sup>

To these hardships were added others created by migration of male labour, over-crowding in reserves, soil erosion and so on. These reserves were ripe for political mobilization.

The squatters' economic situation was no better either. It was deteriorating too with progressive phasing out of their livestock on settler farms, growing unemployment, eviction or repatriation back to their already over-crowded reserves. Wambaa and King recapitulate their worsening position thus:

"Gradually during the 1920s, conditions deteriorated in the Rift Valley, from the Kikuyu point of view. First of all, settlers banned squatters' cattle, not all at the same time, but by 1923-25 all the Kikuyu cattle had gone. This meant that very often the big men began to leave the Rift, or alternatively they would get some of the neighbouring Masai to hide their cattle nearby. You see, on some of the largest farms, the Masai continued to be allowed to have cattle when they had been banned to the Kikuyu. Goats were the next thing to go, and went out of the Nakuru area first. Up in the Laikipia they survived a little longer, but eventually the labour officers...had driven them out of most farms. They then turned their attention to the sheep and began to limit their numbers... This caused a good deal of enmity..."<sup>19</sup>

The elimination of squatters' livestock was followed by intensified exploitation of their labour in that the set of days they were supposed to work for the settlers was increased. Here, too, the political barometer was rising.

The story of the African urban workers reflected the general trend of the rest of the country: growing unemployment, denial of unionism, poor housing and diet accompanied by diseases and death at times.<sup>20</sup> Urban workers were, like their counterparts elsewhere in the land, alienated by the colonial system. As a result, all these diverse African classes were inevitably drawn together to form the Young Kikuyu Association (YKA) in 1921 under the hegemonic leadership of the intellectuals or elites. Their commonality of interest centred around land, which leads Dr. Leakey to conclude that:

"Yet another factor connected with the problem of Kikuyu land is that which affects the many urban Kikuyu. There are really very few Kikuyu who are truly city dwellers, although thousands are to be found living in towns like Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa, and Kisumu, and also as far as Arsha in Tanganyika

territory (Tanzania). The vast majority of these Kikuyu are not urban in the strict sense of the term; they are merely town dwellers in that their work lies in the towns and cities, but they nearly all retain a home in the native lands, either as land-owners if they are lucky, or as tenants. With very few exceptions, they intend to live on the land when they retire."<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, this common national front would not survive the political and economic scramble going on because these squatters, poor peasants and urban workers could not compete with chiefs and the rich land-owners when it came to buying land in the reserves.<sup>22</sup> Their antagonistic interests could only emerge through concrete struggle. Therefore, the national front had to be widened to include all races and ethnic groups. Consequently, YKA decided to go national as its President, Harry Thuku, points out:

"We saw clearly that if we sent anything coming from the Kikuyu tribe alone, we could carry no weight. But if we could show that it came from all tribes... then we should have a great voice. At the same time...we continued our discussion for the proper name for our Association, and finally decided that we should change it from the Young Kikuyu to the East African Association (EAA), so that anyone in the whole area could join."<sup>23</sup>

The new Association came into being on 1st July, 1921. The new nationalist doctrine would be propagated through ethnic associations akin to YKA such as the Kavirondo Association, the Kamba Association and the like, which continued to co-exist with EAA. But before this change came about, YKA had achieved unity among the Kikuyu through mass oath-taking. We shall encounter this phenomenon again in Mau Mau movement as an effective way of uniting African masses who do not know how to read or write.

This nationalist development met a setback on the 3rd of March, 1922. On this day, EAA called a mass meeting in Nairobi to protest the worsening position of African masses; 10,000 people attended the meeting. Thuku addressed the enthusiastic crowd. He was arrested

shortly thereafter on the grounds that his activities were "dangerous to peace and good order." He was detained in Caledonia Police Station waiting deportation to Kismayu, which was a part of Kenya at the time. In the meantime, workers and their leaders met near the Metropole Hotel to stage a general strike against this arbitrary arrest of their leaders. They were joined by other EAA supporters who marched toward the police station to free their leader. Police opened fire, killing 200 people; one official account put the death toll in two figures. However, the importance of this strike cannot be overemphasized: it was the first of its kind in the history of the country and of East Africa.<sup>24</sup> This placed Kenyan workers in the forefront of the country's political struggle where they remained until this trend was reversed in the mid 1950s during the counter-insurgency campaign against Mau Mau. This development worried the administration so much that it decided to undermine the EAA. It could not be done openly without provoking the African masses. Therefore, the administration followed the age-old course of divide-and-rule by compelling the party to go ethnic i.e. limiting its membership to the Kikuyu or else face proscription. The party chose the former proposition by changing its name only to the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA); the party was allowed to continue, but it remained faithful to EAA's objectives. However, what is of great import here in respect to this colonial strategy is that it remained the official policy throughout the colonial period until 1960 when national parties were allowed.

KCA came into being in 1925. Its leadership was equal to the task of growing nationalism because it was drawn mainly from the growing body of intellectuals. These leaders included: President, Joseph Kangethe; Vice-President, Jesse Kariuki; Secretary, Henry

Gichiuri; Treasurer, Job Muchuchu. As already mentioned, KCA was pursuing the goals of its predecessors which reflected the nature of the growing class antagonism. These objectives were (1) permission to grow cash crops, especially Arabica Coffee, (2) appointment of chiefs, (3) election of African representatives to the Legislative Council as in other official bodies and a proviso for the eventual predominance of African representation in the Council, (4) publication of laws in the vernacular, (5) release of Harry Thuku, (6) title deeds to land held by Africans in the reserves (for fear of further alienation of African land), (7) abolition of the Kipande system and exemption of women from hut and poll taxes and all other measures which restricted free movement of Africans. The list of objectives is not exhaustive, but it does map out the course which KCA nationalism was to take.

The most comprehensive African campaign against the ruthless destruction of African identity and culture by missionaries took a religious form. The first to take to the field was Andu A Roho or Watu Wa Mungu in Swahili. The new religious movement started in Kikuyuland, in Kiambu and Fort Hall districts. It was against wholesale westernization as envisioned by missionaries. Instead, it advocated selective adoption of the valuable elements from Christianity and African religions. One of the customs which was retained intact was female circumcision of which they pointed out that there was no biblical opposition to it. Due to their nationalistic opposition to the colonizing zeal of the missionaries, Andu A Roho were persecuted and engaged in constant, violent clashes with the authorities. Andu A Roho and KCA shared the same outlook on the nature of African identity and the need for independence.

The controversy over female circumcision led to the expulsion

of children of those who stuck to this custom from mission schools. The expulsion accelerated between 1920 and 1930. The Kikuyu retaliated by setting up their own schools independent of missionary nefarious influence. In the Central Province, the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association (KISA) and the Kikuyu Karing'a (Pure) Educational Association (KKEA) were founded. KISA sought complete disengagement from foreign churches by establishing the African Independent Pentacostal Church and KKEA churches were associated with the African Orthodox Church. In the case of independent churches, they embarked on synthesizing good elements from both sides, while emphasizing the Old Testament because "the Kikuyu worship of God differed not very greatly from that of the Hebrews in old times."<sup>25</sup> Hence African nationalism took refuge in the pulpits. As for independent schools, they became instruments of freeing African pupils from colonial and missionary indoctrination by imparting African nationalism in preparation for independence. To this end they were one with the African churches and the KCA. According to Kenyatta's account, KISA and KKEA had 342 schools with 60,000 pupils.<sup>26</sup> The most famous was the Kenya Teachers Training College at Githunguri in Kiambu which was presided over by Jomo Kenyatta. Initially the college was intended to train teachers, but it trained more politicians than teachers. These institutions were the breeding ground of future Mau Mau cadres. The administration recognized this fact and finally closed them in 1952 because they had become by then the "foci for spread of Mau Mau."<sup>27</sup>

The party did not overlook the industrial front either. As the depression lingered on and especially in 1929, KCA embarked on a politicizing and organizing campaign among rural and urban workers and squatters to the extent that it became their "political and



industrial voice."<sup>28</sup> The regime did not fail to detect this development as the Annual Report of the Native Affairs Department (NAD) shows:

"Nakuru District. During the year agitation stirred up by the emissaries of the Kikuyu Central Association was in evidence among Kikuyu squatters on European farms, who, on the expiration of their squatters agreements, refused to re-engage. Towards the end of the year however, the situation improved as a result of a number of Kikuyu agitators being sent back to the reserves..."<sup>29</sup>

This campaign to mobilize squatters and workers covered the whole country. Therefore, nationalist politics and the national labour movement went hand in hand. In fact, their unity was embodied in KCA's constitution.<sup>30</sup> To break this unity between politics and unionism, the administration advocated separation of the two and under this separation, workers and their organizations were advised to confine their activities to bread-and-butter issues, i.e. to an economistic ideology. The latter was again used effectively in the 1950s in order to break labour support for Mau Mau.

Jomo Kenyatta became the General Secretary of the Association in 1928 as well as the editor of its journal, Muigwithania (Reconciler), which was spreading the KCA nationalist ideology. By this time, it was becoming clear that KCA's efforts were not yielding the desired results. The regime was hardening. So the Association decided to bypass the administration and deal directly with Britain. Consequently, Kenyatta was sent to London to present a petition to the Colonial Office on the land issue and on the enlargement of African representation in the Legislative Council. As expected, the petition was ignored and Kenyatta settled in London for the next fifteen years, drumming Kenya's case in Britain.

The hardening of the regime was a reflection of the intensifying

class struggle in the country at this time between the settler ruling class and the metropolis on one hand, and between them and the African masses; and these antagonisms in turn were deepening class polarization in the African society even though the main contradiction was still between the settlers and the African people. In this struggle, Britain was interested in aligning herself with the community or class(es) likely to safeguard her interests in the country and in the East African region. The Devonshire Paper of 1923 had questioned the long term ability of settlers to fulfill this imperial role. Conversely, this confirmed settlers suspicions. By this time they had become so suspicious of Britain that in 1926, they took a pre-emptive action by demanding self-government, failing which they threatened to declare independence unilaterally. Britain countered settler manoeuvres by proposing a federation among the three East African territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (Tanzania) in 1927. Settler supremacy could not have survived for long under this union because Africans in these countries opposed it uncompromisingly. Predictably, the settlers opposed the federation because it undermined their political power.<sup>31</sup> However, the union would have enhanced Britain's power in these territories in two directions: on one hand, she would have been able to whittle down settler power under the guise of her trusteeship of African interests, and on the other, she would have undermined African nationalism on the grounds that it was provoking settler extremism. Britain would have emerged the winner. Africans, too, opposed the plan because whether the settlers were the losers and Britain the winner or vice versa, it did not really matter very much to the colonized Africans: it meant further struggle in either case. It is during the next phase of the nationalist struggle that class struggle within KCA crystallizes.

Meanwhile, Thuku was released from detention in 1930. He resumed the presidency of KCA upon his release. In 1933 the Association went before the Carter Land Commission and the Bush Commission on the administration of justice among Africans to press its case. KCA mass mobilization was bearing fruit. In the meantime, the administration and the loyal chiefs assisted by their missionary allies, were undermining KCA as will become clear shortly. The administration was making it impossible for KCA leaders to hold public meetings; missionaries went around the country reviving the declining loyal organizations or creating new ones.<sup>32</sup> These external pressures were bound to have an effect on KCA's internal make-up: the party split up between the moderate and the radical wings, even though both subscribed to the nationalist-constitutionalist ideology. In the meantime, KCA's rival, KA, was declining accordingly. This decline started as early as 1928 and could not be stopped. The party was formed by a land-owning class in Kikuyuland comprising traditionalist chiefs; its stronghold was in southern Kikuyu, in Kiambu District. KA's decline was due partly to the progressive replacement of traditionalist chiefs by mission-educated chiefs whose outlook stretched beyond Kikuyuland and partly due to the party's staunch support for the colonial regime. The dwindling KA support is reflected in the following observation made by the then Provincial Commissioner for the Central Province, R.W. Hemsted. He remarks that:

"[KA] cannot claim the right to represent the Kikuyu people or even any considerable proportion of them."<sup>33</sup>

Nonetheless, missionaries made various attempts to save KA in 1929; they were busy reviving it "as counter to KCA."<sup>34</sup> In 1932, KA changed its name to the Kikuyu Loyal Patriots to prevent any confusion with KCA and to emphasize its loyalty to the administration as well.

Among its leaders were Chief Koinange and Chief Waruhiu. It was concerned with land too, but for a different reason: most chiefs, as shown earlier, acquired sizeable land holdings by virtue of their loyalty to colonialism and their colonial service gave them esprit de corps. This group emerged as a landed class in the Kikuyu reserves; it was the base of colonial loyalism in the country. Therefore, these chiefs feared that the people's struggle for the restitution of the alienated African land through KCA would not be limited to settler land, but would go further to include lands of the chiefs which had been illegally acquired. Consequently, to protect their ill-gotten land, the chiefs made common cause with the administration against Kenyan nationalism, since both stood to lose if this nationalist upsurge attained its real objective - political power.

Even so, KCA's mass mobilization was growing from strength to strength in both rural and urban areas. KCA was not only politicizing workers, but also organized them wherever possible. The outcome of this drive was demonstrated by the Mombasa General Strike in 1939. Before and during the strike, the leaders of KCA and the Labour Trade Union of East Africa, the only union at the time, worked hand in hand. During the strike, the two organizations organized mass meetings during which handbills printed in the five main ethnic languages were handed out to explain the situation. The strike was a resounding success.<sup>35</sup> The importance of this General Strike is that it galvanized unity between KCA and the African labour movement which in turn set the stage whereby "the trade union movement in Kenya was now moving forward at great speed."<sup>36</sup> Unionism, like nationalism, could no longer be stopped. This co-operation re-emerged again during the Mau Mau struggle with amazing results. And what was true of unionism was equally true of nationalism: KCA was canvassing support from

other ethnic groups such as the Kamba and the Taita and had even set up branches in these areas.<sup>37</sup> However, its main achievement was the welding of these groups together - peasants, squatters and workers - linking town and country, for the same cause, through oath, to accelerate co-operation and unity vis-a-vis colonial divisiveness and domination. When the war broke out, the government got the chance it was waiting for to suppress KCA; it was banned in 1940.

The ban did not finish KCA. The latter translated itself into a mbari society. Mbari, as was mentioned in the first chapter, meant an extended family lineage or sub-clan. The importance of this social unit is in reference to Kikuyu land rights and ownership and the political structure based on it is immense. The area owned by such a family is known as githaka. Consequently, a githaka covered a considerable ground depending on the size and zeal of the Mbari because possession was based on clearance and effective use of the area in question. When the founder of a Mbari died, his absolute rights of githaka and the duties attached devolved to one of his sons who became a muramati or a guardian after being chosen by male members of the sub-clan, the choice being based on discussion until confirmed by consensus. The selection was on religious suitability, wisdom and leadership ability. His functions were mainly ceremonial and dispensation of land to new Mbari members. The process was repeated down the line wherever and whenever the occasion demanded it. Subsequent aramati (singular, muramati) were subordinated to the principal muramati atop the Mbari. This set-up took on new political importance when African land, Mbari land, was alienated to settlers. The dispossessed Mbari made common cause in the Mbari Society against colonialism and settlers in particular who now occupied their land. So, when the Kenya Land Commission of 1932 was set up to investigate African land claims, Mbari

were very active, especially in Kiambu, demanding their inalienable heritage, even though their efforts came to next to nothing. But in their bid to recover their lands, they made common political cause with the KCA. Therefore, this made it easier for the party to circumvent the ban by changing its colour. The Mbari Society had its seat in Kiambu at ex-Senior Chief Koinange's house.<sup>38</sup> The link between the Society and Mau Mau is manifest when it is borne in mind that Mau Mau oathing started in the same house and that it was Mau Mau headquarters until the latter shifted to Nairobi. Mau Mau influence on Mbari Society is also made clear by the fact that the former worked within Mbari Society and gradually transformed it into the Kiambaa Parliament which managed Mau Mau affairs until the Mau Mau Central Committee took over.

The final fission between KCA's moderates and radicals came in 1935 when the moderates formed their own party, the Kikuyu Provincial Association (KPA) under the leadership of Harry Thuku, the ex-president of KCA. The ideology of KPA was collaborationism as the Rules and Regulations of the party stipulate:

"Every member of this organisation will be pledged to be loyal to His Majesty the King of Great Britain and the established Government and will be bound to do nothing which is not constitutional according to the British tradition or do anything which is calculated to disturb peace, good order and government."<sup>39</sup>

This was exactly contrary to KCA ideology of liquidation of British rule in the country. Consequently, it attracted little following save from men of wealth and recent converts to Christianity. Most of these people were progressive farmers from Fort Hall, Nyeri and Meru. Although based in the reserves, it had no mass support and because of its shrinking support, Thuku sought merger with KCA at the end of 1936. However, the attempt failed because he rejected the pre-conditions put to him by KCA. For the next few years, KPA made little

progress. In 1939 the confrontation between the two parties came to the fore when KCA opposed bitterly the administration's so-called Kenya Native Areas order in council, which segregated Kenya's diverse ethnic groups into their respective areas; KPA supported it wholeheartedly. The antagonism intensified during the war when KCA refused to pledge loyalty to the Crown; KPA did, and even went further to demonstrate its loyalty by collecting money for the War Welfare Fund. Even though KCA was proscribed in 1940 for its subversive activities, KPA did not make headway, since KCA continued underground; and above-ground as the Mbari Society. When the Kenya African Study Union (KASU) was formed, Thuku became its chairman. His tenure of office was very short because of opposition by the former KCA members in the organization who accused him of having betrayed their cause. He resigned shortly afterwards to work for KPA and on his farm. His resignation crystallized the antagonistic loyalist opposition allied to colonialism in Kikuyu society. KA and KPA found themselves in the same loyalist camp fighting Mau Mau. It is this aspect of the armed class struggle which has led some observers to conclude that it was a civil war. However, laudable this observation may be, it fails to appreciate fully the alliance between the Kikuyu loyalists and the British colonizers which stretched the conflict beyond the confines of tribal war into a war of independence.

KASU was making headway into national politics. James Gichuru, a teacher from Thogoto, had succeeded Thuku. The Union was comprised of the educated Africans in Nairobi. The ideology of this petty-bourgeois stratum was one of collaborationist elitism, i.e. it subscribed to "non-violence and full co-operation with the government."<sup>40</sup> In regard to the African masses, its elitism forced it to "despise everything African."<sup>41</sup> Consequently, it was divorced from the people

and had no mass support in the country. The representative of this group, Eliud Mathu, was nominated to the Legislative Council. This nomination placed KASU in the position where it could carry on its constitutionalist politics. Nevertheless, it remained divorced from the people and had no mass support in the country. This picture changed dramatically in 1947. The Union was re-christened the Kenya African Union (KAU). Jomo Kenyatta took over the leadership of the party then and brought with him his popularity behind KAU. Besides, militant trade union leaders such as Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai and J. Mungai, became leaders in KAU. They, too, brought their labour followers into KAU ranks. In addition, there were other favourable factors which contributed to the militancy of the unions: the release of KCA detainees and the discharge of soldiers who were more or less committed to the liberation of the country by any means, views which were encouraged by the settlers' so-called Kenya Plan, a blueprint for turning Kenya into "a White man's country." Out of the latter group emerged the "Forty Group," a group composed of veterans of the Second World War, mostly young men; and the group was fully committed to the armed struggle to free the country from the colonial rule. This group played a prominent role in the Mau Mau struggle. KAU went further: it solicited help from the Asian community and the Asian help came in the form of co-operation between their political organizations, between KAU and the Indian National Congress. Besides enjoying trans-ethnic backing as indicated in the establishment of KAU branches in various areas such as Taita and Ukambani, it extended support to the other East African political organizations - the Ugandan National Congress and the Tanganyika Africa Association - as shown by the inter-territorial conference held in Nairobi in 1952, chaired by Kenyatta, President of KAU.<sup>42</sup> However, in spite of these



developments, KAU was still suspected of being the KCA in disguise or a Kikuyu outfit mainly because of Kikuyu over-representation in the leadership, and the overwhelming support by Kikuyu rank and file throughout the country. Yet, KAU support remained fairly trans-tribal and it was the only national political forum for the people who were denied national expression either electoral or party politics by the administration that tolerated only ethnic-based associations whose parochial outlook was becoming outlandish. By the time it was banned in 1953, KAU claimed 100,000 membership paying five shillings a year.

However, this apparent nationalist harmony did not last long. A rift developed between the petty-bourgeois moderate leadership and the radical young leaders mainly from the labour movement with the latter evolving to become what came to be known as the Mau Mau. Because of the frustration and fragmentation of national politics along the lines described above, nationalist and militant politics had found an outlet in the trade unions: "trade unions became the focus of militant and revolutionary activity, and at first had no use for KAU."<sup>43</sup> As a result, when the militant labour leaders joined KAU, a conflict developed between the latter and the KAU moderate leaders, Tom Mbotela and Joseph Katithi, vice-president and general secretary respectively. So, the militants wanted to get rid of the moderates in order to bring KAU in line with their ideology. This attempt came in June, 1952. A meeting was called for this purpose to elect new Nairobi-branch KAU officers, and, if elected, the new officers would have replaced the moderates. According to this election coup, the prospective candidates would have been proposed from the floor and these candidates were already known. The plan was upset when it was proposed that the names of the aspirants should be written on pieces

of paper, mixed in a hat and then drawn for voting. The militants protested in vain. In spite of the setback, the result was satisfying: Fred Kubai, chairman (Transport and Allied Workers' Union); J. Mungai, vice-chairman (Transport and Allied Workers' Union); B.M. Kaggia, general secretary (Clerk and Commercial Workers' Union) were elected. This was a partial success and did not remove the leaders in question, but it was pushing labour into the political forefront.

Next the militants sought a constitutional coup d'etat. The Nairobi KAU branch proposed a set of constitutional amendments and political demands all calculated to bring about the desired results. Among them were the demand for full independence, which went counter to moderates' gradualism, and the abolition of the post of vice-president which was intended to finish Tom Mbotela. Joseph Katithi, the general secretary was easy prey: Kaggia was to be elected in his place. Then the Nairobi branch lobbied other branches for support which was easily obtained. It was agreed, however, that Kenyatta should keep his post as president. All other posts were to be contested. After the amendments went through, election followed. Then, the unexpected happened. When it came to the election of general secretary, which was the main target of the militants with Kaggia as their choice and treasurer, it was decided that these were not open to election; rather, it was decided that these posts should be distributed according to provinces to avoid tribalism otherwise the general secretaryship would have gone to a Kikuyu and they were holding the presidency already. The post went to Nyanza Province; J.D. Otiende became general secretary, and P.J. Ngei his assistant. H. Nangurai, a Masai from Narok, became the treasurer. In the meantime, the Nairobi delegates had walked out of the meeting in protest,

set on leaving KAU. However, Mbiyu Koinange dissuaded them. They returned. At the end of it all, they managed to remove Mbotela and Katithi. But they were still determined to control the party to forestall any co-operation of moderates by the establishment and, as the events were to prove later, their fears were not unfounded.<sup>44</sup>

The first members of KAU Central Committee to take Mau Mau oath were the trade union leaders, Fred Kubai and Bildad Kaggia. These leaders represented the growing labour militancy for the labour movement and had learnt since the General Strike of 1939 that they had nothing to lose and everything to gain by such radicalism. Therefore these leaders were determined to bypass KAU to politicize African masses for the impending struggle without the party's knowledge. They decided to use KAU building, Kiburi House, for this purpose. Consequently, after each KAU meeting, the initiated KAU officers, i.e. those who had taken the Mau Mau oath, remained behind to conduct Mau Mau business. The non-initiated KAU officers were not aware of what was happening. In one of the meetings, it was agreed that a committee should be set up to conduct and co-ordinate Mau Mau oathing and spread it far and wide. This committee became the Mau Mau Central Committee, composed of twelve members. However, KAU officers on the committee were very few and were the trustworthy, Kaggia and Kubai among them. For security reasons, KAU officers who were also members of Mau Mau Central Committee were exempted from holding office in the latter. Eliud Mutonyi and Isaac Gathanju became chairman and secretary-general, respectively. The committee decided to administer the oath to the African masses in preparation for the protracted armed struggle. From here, ingestion of KAU would have followed smoothly, but the administration intervened too soon.

As was mentioned previously, the Mbari Society was penetrated

by Mau Mau and subsequently transformed into the Kiambaa Parliament before KAU dominance eclipsed it. The Kiambaa Parliament was in Koinange's House, which was also Mau Mau headquarters. As oathing picked up momentum, it became risky to transport masses of people from Nairobi to Kiambaa without alerting the authorities. And as more and more people joined the oath campaign, militancy increased accordingly. The Kiambaa Parliament failed to keep abreast of events and became critical of this mass radicalization. But this did not deter pro Mau Mau radicals. They recruited oath administrators and sent them to the reserves to accelerate recruitment of peasants into the movement. For better security and efficient management of the Mau Mau movement, a liaison group, the "Group of 30," was created to smooth communication between the Central Committee and its followers and to implement its orders and programmes. It was decided that once the people were united and prepared and the administration failed to heed KAU's demands, which were becoming more or less those of Mau Mau, then armed struggle would be launched. The Committee authorized collection of guns using any means including violence, if necessary. At this juncture, KAU was serving as a convenient cover for Mau Mau. KAU was banned in June, 1953. By then Mau Mau struggle was raging on.

### III

The Mau Mau set-up reflected an effective link-up strategy welding town and country and Mau Mau movement together into an effective national liberation movement which was indispensable for the protracted war ahead based on self-reliance in preparation for self-rule which, in all probability, would have precluded neo-colonialism in post-colonial Kenya state. This was made possible by the fact that the African masses were well attuned to the political climate of the day demanding revolutionary change. When Mau Mau

why it was effective

finally emerged, oathing spread quickly to various districts in the country. The increasing membership and work necessitated the shifting of Mau Mau headquarters from Kiambaa in Kiambu to Nairobi, the capital, from where the movement could reach all Africans irrespective of their ethnic background and, above all, the growing working class.<sup>45</sup> From here the armed struggle was launched. In the thick of it, the young men of the Central Committee took the Mau Mau oath and their growing impatience for change drove them to action. However, the Kiambaa Parliament failed to keep up with the events or to accept them unreservedly. In due course, a serious difference developed between the Parliament on one hand, and the Committee on the other. The former was dominated by the former KCA members of the constitutionalist school which they were pursuing relentlessly; the latter by young men militants who were equally determined to use extra-constitutional means to win independence. To attain a veneer of unity, the two worked together which was advantageous to Mau Mau to prevent premature discovery. Nevertheless, as time went on, Mau Mau took the upper hand; the other declined accordingly with some of its members joining loyalists.

After the Mau Mau Central Committee, came four sub-committees - oath-administration, finance, legal and military committees - for management of affairs of the movement. These were based on a cell organizational structure, starting with the province, then the district, right down to the village. However, its vertical structure was largely based on the colonial provincial administration which it was intended to replace: with one major difference - people were involved in the whole process.

The Mau Mau movement was flexible and, just as it was ready to adopt valuable colonial structures, it was equally ready to adopt

traditional institutions which were useful to the struggle in preparing the masses for self-government. One such institution was oathing. Oaths are hallowed in African society and those who take them, depending on the occasion, are bound by them in their lifetime. Therefore, it is not as frivolous as some itinerant writers make it. It is a matter of life and death and, when it involves national struggle, then it transcends life and death: it involves the dead and the living. Consequently, when Mau Mau adopted it, it was intended to unify people during the struggle and thereafter in collective reconstruction. The Committee in question therefore was entrusted with the administration of the oath to create this unifying ideological force in this largely peasant society as the following words illustrate:

"I speak the truth and swear before Ngai and before everyone here  
 And by this Batuni Oath of Miungi  
 That I shall never sell my country for money or any other thing  
 That I shall abide until death by all these vows I have made this day  
 That I shall never disclose our secrets to the enemy  
 Nor shall I disclose them to anyone not a member of Miungi  
 And if I break any of the vows I have today consciously made  
 I will agree to any punishment that this society decides to give me..."<sup>46</sup>

The ideological content of these words is clear. These words were repeated in various ethnic languages, depending on the participants. It conferred unity which enhanced collective responsibility. Besides, it contributed financially to the struggle because the initiates were required to pay an initiation fee according to one's ability to pay.

The finance sub-committee collected initiation fees and all other revenue coming to the movement. For instance, it collected fines imposed by Mau Mau on initiates who broke Mau Mau laws; or money from fund-raising functions conducted by the movement through proxy

organizations such as the Kikuyu Club, the Embu African Education Union and the like. Moreover, its coffers were replenished by contributions from members who gave regular donations for the execution of Mau Mau programmes and military campaigns. To avoid detection, bogus trading companies, for example, the Musical Society, were set up to handle their transactions. The records of these transactions were carefully kept and it was through these records that Mau Mau members identified non-members for recruitment or loyalist for punishment.

The enlarged Mau Mau membership also created a security problem of infiltration which is commonplace in mass movements of this kind. To guard against subversion, traditional tribunal courts were established to deal with offenders. The supreme court of this legal structure was in Mathare Valley, a large Kikuyu village off Nairobi, to the northern side of the city. The high court, together with its subordinate courts, were served by askaris, or "policemen" who brought offenders to justice. Those found guilty of treason - and betrayal of Mau Mau leaders by informing on the movement came under that category - were executed. These proceedings were carried out at night to avoid discovery.

Finally, there was the military sub-committee which handled the armed forces and their material needs. As their fighting forces were conducting guerrilla warfare, they were divided into three groups on the basis of the area in which they were operating. These were the Aberdare Mountains and the Mount Kenya Forest armies. The third was in and around Nairobi. This division was not accidental: the first two were situated in the heartland of Kikuyu reserves among peasants who gave these guerrillas the requisite support for protracted war; the third army in and around Nairobi availed itself of the support of

the working class in the capital and other urban areas. Although the latter was not involved in military operations, it served as the pipe-line, ferrying men and material from the capital to the front. It also kept the Central Committee informed about the state of affairs at the front. The burden of fighting the colonial forces fell to the first two due to their logistic advantages. Besides, these military organizations had their political organization, the Kenya Parliament, to educate forest fighters in the art of self-government. After all, this was the first de facto African government which was intended to replace the colonial administration.

The Kenya Parliament was established to replace the Kenya Defense Council<sup>47</sup> in which the three armies were represented. The problem facing the Council was that it was highly decentralized, which made it less effective. Moreover, the military outlook tended to dominate its political counterpart, resulting in serious setbacks. In order to overcome these weaknesses, the military leaders under Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi's leadership, met and decided to create a centralized political organization which had a wing in Nairobi as well. Its task was to harmonize all aspects of the struggle - harmonize the working relationship between the masses and the forest fighters and the central committee. The Kenya Parliament met as often as the circumstances dictated. It was composed of thirteen elected members from the rank of fighters. The duties of the new bush parliament were (a) to initiate a sustained offensive against enemy property, (b) to consolidate unity among the fighting forces and the masses in order to eliminate the divisive regional and social elements, (c) to recruit other ethnic groups into the nationalist struggle, (d) to organize the masses to neutralize enemy propaganda in the form of counter oaths or cleansing ceremonies accompanying



villagization of Kikuyu reserves. But in spite of all these laudable efforts to politicize forest fighters and their followers in the reserves, still the ideological conflict remained between the illiterate majority of fighters who saw the struggle in terms of the past or tradition and their leaders who saw it in modern terms. This conflict made the nationalist ideology fairly elastic in order to satisfy all sides and, in due course, lost clarity in the post-emergency society. Yet, the armed struggle continued fairly well, both in political and military aspects: an administrative network was built up and worked smoothly; militarily, freedom fighters were conducting bold military campaigns and raids against loyalist establishments until the growing threat to the administration by the insurgency invited metropolitan intervention from the Suez Canal Zone, reversing the situation. The organizational and administrative capability and foresight of the Mau Mau movement exploded the official myth that Africans were not ready for self-government; next it was up to this liberation army of peasants and workers to put an end to a parallel myth of the jolly docility of Africans. And so it happened.

#### IV

The outcome of the war between the contesting classes of settlers and the African loyalists backed by Britain on one side, and the Mau Mau movement of peasants, workers, squatters led by petty-bourgeois intellectuals would decide which class or classes would rule decolonized Kenya - and each side was determined to be the victor: but did both sides have such equal chances? No. The Mau Mau movement was faced with long odds which did not bode well. Therefore, before dealing with Mau Mau military exploits against the colonial military machine, let us examine at the outset the external

and internal factors which limited the overall success of the movement. It is a truism that for guerrilla war to succeed, the guerrilla movement concerned has to have sanctuaries in neighbouring territories which serve as training camps and military depots and refuge bases after military operations. Besides, they serve as propaganda outlets through which the world is told of the struggle. This was the case for F.L.N. when it when it was fighting French forces in Algeria in the late 1950s; it had such bases in Morocco and Tunisia. The same set-up was used by the African liberation movements in the former Portuguese colonies. All these guerrilla movements wrested political power from the metropolitan powers. Mau Mau had no such bases or sanctuaries; all countries bordering Kenya, with the exception of Ethiopia, were British or dependencies of other Western powers, allies of Britain: hence, hostile to Mau Mau. All these countries were interested in crushing the first armed struggle on the African continent in order to prevent its repetition elsewhere. This was not so for Ethiopia. There, in the latter part of 1954, an attempt was made to secure such help as Ethiopia could offer. The venture failed for the following reasons: first, the movement lacked money to pay for it; second, the terrain was not favourable - the area between Northern Kenya and Ethiopia being a semi-desert. Hence all these factors confined Mau Mau to Kenya. Even internally the movement was restricted further to Kikuyuland because it lacked support from the other ethnic groups. And to make the matter worse, Kikuyu support was also split. Under these circumstances, Mau Mau was forced to be self-reliant and to rely on the Kikuyu majority who backed it. So, Mau Mau guerrilla campaigns were confined to the Abedares Mountains and the Mount Kenya forests of the Central Province; in the reserves, the campaigns were limited to those areas which were

conducive to this kind of warfare, namely Nyeri and Muranga.

Guerrillas in and around Nairobi created their own tactics suited to the urban milieu. The guerrilla force was estimated as between 12,000 and 16,000 strong.<sup>48</sup>

The Kenyan economy was dominated by the settler farming sector. The main objective of the guerrillas then was to undermine it by hitting and harrassing settlers and their farms. The campaign started in the latter part of 1952 and continued in the early months of 1953. It began in Aguthi location in Nyeri district and spread quickly to other districts. It was marked by burning of crops on the farms and in the barns; killing of livestock and occasionally their owners. Missionaries or their establishments became regular targets.<sup>49</sup> Chiefs were even easier targets. There was another side to this campaign; it was also a psychological war. The revolutionary terror was intended to demoralize settlers into leaving the country. A few did recognize the pending end of settlerdom: "there is no future for the white man in Kenya."<sup>50</sup> So, these few left. It also enhanced Mau Mau prestige among its supporters. But most settlers decided to stand by the Empire and fight. In their stand, they had British and Kikuyu loyalist backing.

As mentioned earlier, the Mau Mau liberation war assumed a civil-war character and the latter is the highest expression of class struggle. This is how this class struggle evolved: the majority of peasants stood behind Mau Mau; their campaign was directed against the loyalists. The most successful assault against the loyalists resulted in the Lari massacre. Lari is important in that it illustrates the conflict in Kikuyu society engendered by collaborationism. It is related to land alienation in Kiambu. In Tigoni at a white settled area near Limuru, there was an enclave of Kikuyu peasants,

and the settlers wanted them moved out to make room for more settlers. The administration decided to remove the people concerned. These people were offered land in Lari in exchange for their expropriated land. The majority refused the offer because the land involved was already claimed by Kikuyu of the area, so they went to work in the White Highlands as squatters; others settled in Masai reserves or at Olenguruone, an infertile area in the Rift Valley. KCA backed the resisters. However, a minority led by Chief Luka accepted the offer and settled in Lari on the disputed land, becoming the new land-owners. The settlement lasted from 1939 to 1940. This minority of collaborators was accused of betraying the people and displaced mbari in Lari retained bitterness to their expropriators. As loyal intruders, they refused to take the Mau Mau oath or to help the movement in any way whatever. So the Mau Mau decided to break Lari loyalty in such a way that it would serve as an example to would-be loyalists and middle-rovers so that whether or not they supported the movement, at least they would not support the regime. On the night of 26th March, 1953, Mau Mau struck, killing 74 people, mostly women and children, a further 50 residents were missing and presumed dead; a further 50 were wounded. Among the victims were ex-chief Luka and 26 members of his family. Only the loyalists were singled out for punishment. If any lesson was learned from this assault, it was in the negative: loyalists everywhere joined the colonial side with equal resolve, if not with vengeance. Therefore, this was no less than civil war.<sup>51</sup>

The government seized the occasion to come to the aid of its ally by building a chain of posts manned by the loyalist or Home Guards as they were known. At first these Home Guards were untrained, and ill equipped. Their operations were unco-ordinated and unsupervised on the ground that Africans should not be judged by European

standards. This gave the Home Guards license to plunder the peasants: they commandeered property, livestock and even the wives and daughters of the Mau Mau followers who were either in detention or in the forest. In short, the Home Guards had become a liability to the government; they were "becoming as dangerous to the colony as Mau Mau itself."<sup>52</sup> But they were not as dangerous to guerrillas, most of whom were veterans of the Second World War. The forest fighters over-ran various Home Guard posts which helped them to build up their military stocks. These operations were facilitated by the fact that Mau Mau managed to infiltrate its men in the loyalist quarters and these infiltrators provided excellent intelligence. During this offensive by Mau Mau, the situation was desperate indeed: "The position from this point of view was grave."<sup>53</sup> The situation had to be salvaged, reversed. The government introduced white officers to run these posts, provide training and discipline and better firearms. But the government counter-offensive had to wait until 1953 for British intervention from the Suez Canal Zone.

Security was deteriorating throughout the country. Britain flew in 50,000 troops from the Suez Canal area and Malaya to re-establish her hegemony. Among these troops there were two Royal Air Force (RAF) squadrons.<sup>54</sup> The latter were used to conduct an air war against guerrillas in the Aberdare Mountains and Mount Kenya forests using Harvards and Lincoln bombers. Several British brigades were deployed in the so-called prohibited areas i.e. the free-firing zones, around the forests and the selected areas in the reserves, especially in Nyeri and Murang'a districts. Joint operations by British troops and Kenya African Rifles (which included soldiers from the other two East African territories, Uganda and Tanganyika) were carried out on the slopes of Mount Kenya, supported by the Home Guards. These operations -

air and ground - kept guerrillas on the move and short of supplies. Out of these combined operations, three elements emerged: first, British troops aided by the Home Guards dislodged a strong Mau Mau force from South Nyeri in mid-November, 1953; second, the following year, police in Karatina, adjoining Nyeri, destroyed a number of insurgents. Both areas were Mau Mau strongholds in the reserves and these set-backs did not bode well for the movement. In February, 1954 came the running battle between the insurgents and the government forces in the area between Thika and Murang'a during which 126 guerrillas were killed and 18 captured.<sup>54</sup> These operations started to sap Mau Mau morale. This is shown by what came to be known as the "Green Branch" surrender which brought 800 surrenders. The term "Green Branch" referred to the fact that those who surrendered had to carry green branches as a "peace flag." As the Mau Mau rural offensive petered out, the government forces were able to launch an offensive in urban areas, especially in Nairobi, to break Mau Mau's hold on the capital.

In the meantime, peasants were huddled in protected villages to cut Mau Mau off from its loyal ally. These villages were guarded at all times. Peasants were escorted by guards to and from their shambas (gardens) when they went to gather food or to draw water. They left early in the morning and they had to return before curfew at six the the evening. The plan worked. Denied peasant support, Mau Mau could not hold out for long.

In 1954 Operation Anvil was staged. It was the largest military cordon and police search in the city lasting a whole month. During the operation 16,500 Africans, mainly Kikuyu, were removed from the city.<sup>56</sup> Men were sent to detention camps; women and children were repatriated to the reserves. The few Kikuyu who remained in the city

were bundled together in their locations, Bahati and Kaloleni, surrounded by barbed wire. These locations were under curfew from dawn to dusk. Pass-books were issued sparingly and under strict screening and spot-checks were erected at strategic points in the city in order to control Kikuyu movement. And this control was well maintained. Nevertheless, the plan went halfway compared with the original which envisioned wholesale removal of Kikuyu from Nairobi. The latter was abandoned because it would have crippled the economy. In any case, the operation successively disrupted the Mau Mau structure in the city as well as between the city and the reserves. The movement never recovered from this onslaught.

Immediately before Anvil, the administration initiated negotiations for surrender with the forest fighters, using captured guerrillas, among them General China, Waruhiu Itote, as mediators.<sup>57</sup> The first meeting between the government officials and the guerrilla representative took place on 30th March, 1954 at Provincial Office in Nyeri. Both sides agreed to a cease-fire according to which the government forces were not to enter or bomb the forest and guerrillas would not enter in the reserves. The cease-fire was to last throughout the negotiation period. The next meeting was scheduled on 10th April. It did not take place. On 7th April the security forces surprised a company of guerrillas at Itiati in Mathari Division and captured seven guerrillas. The Mau Mau side viewed this incident as an indication of bad faith on the government side. So the forest fighters decided to press on with the war. This attitude was reinforced by guerrilla leaders who rejoined them after escaping from police custody. If this diplomatic venture dissipated all hope for a peaceful settlement, it welded loyalists into a cohesive group for they felt compromised by the administration which had promised to

crush the rebels and now it was embracing them. After the breakdown of negotiations, the loyalists swung their new-found unity behind the regime. But whatever lay behind these moves, it was becoming increasingly clear that Mau Mau was experiencing mounting difficulties. Yet, the most devastating blow was to come. On 21st October, Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi, the Commander-in-Chief of the forest fighters, was captured, tried and subsequently hanged.<sup>58</sup> His capture marked the beginning of the end of the Mau Mau struggle. The government policy from then on was based on starving guerrillas into submission while bombarding them with demoralizing propaganda. Many succumbed and surrendered as time went on. But not all. Some did not come out until after independence in 1963.

At the peak of the struggle, there were 90,000 Kikuyu detainees in various camps undergoing re-education based on the British South-East Asian counter-insurgency experience:

"Malayan methods of indoctrination are to be applied by special teams to the hard-core of Mau Mau by personal example, communal work, vocational training and family."<sup>59</sup>

This was in line with the official view that Mau Mau was a psychological crisis which could be overcome by spiritual reformation. So churches were enlisted in the crusade; so was the Moral Rearmament Movement. The exercise was capped with physical labour, the so-called construction corps. Under the latter programme, detainees were made to work on such schemes as rice-growing, soil conservation, ground clearance as in the case of the Embakasi Airport, and so on. And if the hard-cores did not mellow, they were bent by inhuman treatment which resulted in tragic incidents such as the Hola massacre in 1959. As for the soft-core, these were taken through a chain of camps (or pipe-line) at the beginning of 1957 on their way to their homes in the reserves. Reaching one's home depended on how fast one got re-



formed in the pipe-line. The hard-cores were detained longest and some were not released until 1960. By then the Mau Mau threat was long gone: the accent was on economic reconstruction. In terms of human cost, 10,000 Africans were killed: in financial terms, the expenditure amounted to £55,585,424. Ironically, although Mau Mau lost the war, the movement won political and economic reforms which were inconceivable before the revolt. Yet, more paradoxically, these reforms were used as weapons to consolidate Mau Mau defeat in all the other fields. What are these reforms? And how were they marshalled against Mau Mau? Or rather: how were they used in consolidation of the political and economic power of the loyalists?

#### V

Many reforms were initiated during the Emergency to promote loyalists into positions of power while reducing the Mau Mau and its supporters to a state of powerlessness. This strategy was taken seriously in order to prove that violence would not force Britain to abandon Kenya, let alone her other continental possessions. However, she agreed to decolonization, but at her own pace and in pursuance of her interests. Whatever concessions the Colonial Office conceded were in the service of those interests and Kenya was the crucible. It is in this light that the political and economic reforms of the period should be viewed. Decolonization in Kenya meant discovering a reliable class ally which would maintain and promote British interests in the country as much as its own. What class could fulfil this function better than the loyalists? Consequently, the reforms in question favoured the loyalists at the expense of the rebels. The first in the pipe-line were the constitutional reforms.

Loyalists had to be given a growing stake in the system. This stake was embodied in the Lyttelton Constitution of 1954 and the

Coutts electoral reform of 1955 respectively.<sup>60</sup> The former levelled the racial representation in the Legislative Council by recommending multi-racialism. Or, to put it another way, the ruling class had to be made trans-ethnic, i.e. national, in order to be acceptable because the colonial classes based on race were no longer viable.<sup>61</sup> To encourage the new politics, the ban on African political organizations was lifted, even though it was only a partial lift, since it did not affect the ban on the colony-wide African political parties. Only district associations were permitted and, because of this fragmentation, these associations corresponded with ethnic groupings.<sup>62</sup> However, no such association was allowed in the Kikuyuland with one exception - a Council of Loyalists was nominated.<sup>63</sup> In Kikuyuland and outside it, these associations were loyalist by nature in that they were government controlled through licencing and they tended to be dominated by those sympathetic to the administration, namely chiefs and headmen. Horizontally they were fragmented and antagonistic at times to be able to forge a common front against colonialism; vertically, their leadership shared a common outlook and interests - missionary education, public service or other common social organizations. Therefore, as far as multi-racialism of the Legislative Council was concerned, the African entrants would certainly be drawn from among the loyalists: "Kenya needs co-operation of all races, not only to overcome the Mau Mau rising, but also to build up the country in future."<sup>64</sup> Loyal co-operation would be better served by a qualified franchise.

This was the primary purpose of the Coutts electoral reform of 1955 anticipating the Lennox-Boyd constitution of 1957 which was to enlarge the African representation in the Legislative Council.<sup>65</sup> The increased representation was to be drawn from "those areas which,

and people who, have so loyally supported the government during the past few difficult years."<sup>66</sup> The African electors and their elected representatives had to meet stiff electoral qualifications:

"Having had five years honourable service, in the armed forces, or police, prisons or tribal police, or seven years continuous service in any form of the government or local government employment, or in the government of the High Commission, provided that such employment shall not have been terminated by dismissal, or seven years employment in commerce, industry or agriculture such employment having been undertaken eight years preceding registration."<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, these qualifications were plural: the more qualifications an elector had, the more votes he had. The qualified people were issued with Loyalty certificates.<sup>68</sup> The class bias inherent in these qualifications is quite clear; this bias was also extended into the economic sphere:

"Equal salaries for officials...a start to the survey for individual land holdings in Nyanza and Kikuyu, and gradual reduction of colour bar in Nairobi hotels... the essential thing is to win over the Kikuyu by a new deal, through reconstruction committees, and a development of local government below district level, with officials better able to understand the Kikuyu mind."<sup>69</sup>

Here is a blueprint for the development of the African loyalist class and a Kikuyu loyalist class in particular.

One of the most radical land reforms of the period was ushered in by the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 which placed African agricultural sectors firmly on a capitalist footing.<sup>70</sup> It consolidated peasant land into individual holdings and by so doing, undermined communal land tenure. This plan enabled loyalists to get better and larger farms for the following reasons. First, the loyalists had no opposition since their opponents were either in the forest or in detention; in some cases, they were simply liquidated to forestall any opposition. Second, the loyalists dominated the land consolidation committees which were responsible for sorting out mbari and individual

land claims. Their dominant role enabled them to influence the outcome of these claims in their favour. Third, corruption helped loyalists to get better and bigger farms than they would have normally got by bribing surveyors and, in some cases, it was the latter who took the initiative by juggling the figures and coming up with "unclaimed" lands which they sold surreptitiously.<sup>71</sup> Although the uneducated peasants could do little to resist this land robbery, they did recognize the phenomenon which they called "migunda ya Wabici", i.e. the land obtained by office wheeling and dealing. Fourthly, the land belonging to freedom fighters was confiscated and wound up in the possession of the loyalists in one way or another. When land consolidation was over at the close of the 1950s, half of the Kikuyu were landless and half of the land in Kikuyu reserves was concentrated in the hands of less than 2 percent of the population.<sup>72</sup> Landlessness was the primary cause of the Mau Mau rising, and the land reform presented here did not solve the problem; if anything, it made it worse.

Next came the new deal intended to develop the rural areas. Once land consolidation was over, loyalists were able to obtain permission to grow cash crops such as tea, coffee and suchlike; if the area was suitable for dairy farming, they were allowed to keep dairy cattle. Their growing prestige is indicated by the fact that the exclusive settler organizations opened their doors to them. For example, Harry Thuku, an inveterate loyalist, joined the Kenya Planters Coffee Union (KPCU) in 1957.<sup>73</sup> It was through such organizations that the loyalists i.e. the African Progressive farmers, were able to advance their interests.

With their growing interests, these farmers needed their own organizations to cater for their class. Hence, the emergence of

coffee co-operatives. These set-ups had government support. Besides helping to market farmers' produce, these societies provided loans to their members to improve their performance. Government interest in these societies is indicated by the fact that the administration committed loans to them to help their members. Moreover, the administration extended credit to individual farmers. To help them to improve productivity, the government provided agricultural extension services and to facilitate transportation of their produce, infrastructures were provided too. Socially these farmers were advancing as evidenced by their stone or brick houses. Their children were attending expensive schools locally or abroad. In short, the class in question was attaining a trans-ethnic character.<sup>74</sup>

It would be misleading to confine the interests of this loyalist class to farming per se; it had commercial interests too.<sup>75</sup> Its members acquired commercial plots in market and other trading centres, where they built commercial premises with loan money. They were issued with trading licences. In addition, they obtained transport licences for buses and lorries to carry people and products to and from urban areas. In due course, this class came to identify its interests with those of the colonizer. This common interest is reflected in its advocacy of constitutionalism, i.e. its promotion should not be challenged.

In the political field, this class dominated rural politics in the local councils and their co-operative societies served as their political forums. These were reinforced by the Council of Loyalists. Above all, the loyalists had their own churches such as the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Anglican Church (AC), African Inland Mission (AIM) and so on, which provided a moral base for the emerging class. After all, most of the church elders were loyalists

in their own right. The religious mission was coached with propaganda and evangelism.<sup>76</sup> The government did not minimize their value: they were enlisted in the spiritual rehabilitation of Mau Mau followers. And the churches responded wholeheartedly. Loyalty had found spiritual sustenance; the status quo was very safe indeed.

This then was the situation at the close of the Emergency. By this time, there had emerged a landed gentry, or Kikuyu bourgeoisie. It was this class in and outside the Central Province that was being groomed to step into the boots of the departing colonizer. Neither class - the incoming African bourgeoisie, nor the outgoing colonial class - could do without the other. Before the hand-over day, Kenyan politics boiled down to the politics of security for both classes.<sup>77</sup> This security demanded no less than the complete subordination of the restive classes of peasants and workers to the other two, with the African bourgeoisie assuming political hegemony. It is in this context that the so-called graduated decolonization must be viewed. How then was this subordination achieved? Let us turn now to the co-optation of the peasantry.

## VI

Rural support for Mau Mau came mainly from the peasantry - the landless, squatters and poor peasants - whose longstanding grievances over the "stolen land" went unheeded. These grievances were aggravated by land concentration in the hands of the landed gentry.<sup>78</sup> The situation was made worse by the repatriation of Kikuyu from urban areas and even from other East African territories, swelling the population of the already crowded reserves. These developments enhanced peasant militancy which found expression in their support for Mau Mau. The administration was worried about the situation getting out of hand or spilling over to the other territories. To reassert its authority,

the government resorted to its perennial method of divide and rule aimed at breaking peasant militancy and above all, denying it its enlightened leadership by deportation. But the most thoroughgoing defusion of peasant militancy was effected through political manipulation: peasants were denied any legal party or political participation in electoral politics since they were disenfranchised through exclusive electoral qualifications based on plural votes. Since this manipulation could not by itself banish peasant political commitment, the latter had to be translated into a manageable drive, into an economic programme of agrarian reforms.<sup>79</sup>

Besides the Swynnerton capitalist agricultural plan of 1954, there were two other economic reports which came out of this time which reinforced the capitalist orientation of one another, and would, in time, set the country firmly on a path of capitalist development. On one hand, there was the East African Royal Commission Report which recommended abolition of peasant communal land tenure in favour of free market land: land was turned into a commodity. On the other hand, there was the Carter Report aimed at pacifying urban workers by raising wages and effecting general improvements in working conditions.<sup>80</sup> Co-optation was the order of the day. As far as the peasantry was concerned, the Swynnerton Plan and the Commission were intended to establish two rural classes - a class of yeoman farmers on one hand, and a class of agricultural workers on the other. How were these classes created? They were to be established through resettlement schemes during which yeoman farmers experienced a remarkable growth while peasants underwent a qualitative underdevelopment. To illustrate this, let us examine the Swynnerton Plan and the initial One Million Acre Resettlement Scheme to show how the class structure inherent in them evolved.

The Swynnerton Plan envisioned rural classes as follows. To begin with, there would be self-sufficient families in food production and a cash income of at least £100 annually from the sale of cash crops. These families would comprise an economic mosaic of about seven to eight acres; some had zero to two; others two to five; still others in North Nyanza had fifty to a hundred acres. Income distribution would be £200, £300 and others would reach as high as £500. And as the East African Royal Land Commission foresaw, farmers would specialize in certain cash crops such as coffee, tea or dairy production, depending on the area. Such being the case, and given the labour-intensive nature of farming in consolidated areas, where would labour for the agricultural sector, i.e. for the remaining white settlers and the African landed gentry, come from? The plan is quite explicit on the labour supply to this sector:

"There will develop a class of people who, having allotments of one or two acres, will have to train as artisans, or go out to work for African farmers or in the towns."<sup>81</sup>

The consequences of the plan in terms of the commercialization of peasant agriculture can be gleaned from the following figures. In 1952 in the Central Province, there were 5,000 African coffee growers. This figure leaped to 32,000 in 1957. Coffee nurseries in existence were enough to fill 5,000 fresh acres annually. Tea followed a similar pattern: it was expected to jump from 400 to 3,000 acres by the end of the Emergency in 1960. The same happened to other cash crops grown by Africans. However, neither the land consolidation nor the projected agricultural employment with all its seasonal problems could solve the problem of either rural unemployment or landlessness. Neither could the urban industry whose confidence was badly shaken by the Mau Mau revolt. Consequently, there still remained surplus peasants seeking employment or land or both without finding either.



This contradiction was serious enough to engage the attention of the economic planners. In the meantime, the situation was aggravated by the arrival of 60,000 ex Mau Mau detainees while the population continued to increase at 3.2 percent each year. Even more serious was the growing political consciousness of the masses who were affected by the nationalist expectation of Uhuru which accompanied the termination of the Emergency. How could this cumulative discontent be contained? The most ominous development, however, was that the disaffected classes were regrouping into new insurgent groups and organizations among them the Kiama Kia Muingi (KKM) and the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA) in the former classes supporting Mau Mau - squatters, workers, landless and poor peasants - found new direction under the former Mau Mau leadership. This is confirmed by the then Minister for Internal Security and Defence, Mr. Swann, when he says:

"Of the men known to be in the organization (KLFA), nine percent were ex-forest terrorists (read: guerrillas), fifty-two percent were ex-detainees and fifty-two percent had previous criminal records."<sup>82</sup>

The last category is misleading because many of the acts which were categorized as criminal under the emergency would not have been classified as such under normal circumstances. In any case, the statement reflects the growing disaffection of the African classes in question. And their aim was to wrest political power from the settlers and their African allies in order to improve their economic position, especially in land "particularly that of Europeans or Kikuyu loyalists."<sup>83</sup> Therefore, the defeat of Mau Mau had not ended the class struggle it was intended to resolve: it was intensifying it. Urban unrest could easily be sparked off by the influx of members of these classes from rural areas, forests and detention camps in

search of work. Therefore, their migration was kept under tight control to prevent another emergency. It is at this juncture that the economic planners came up with the Million Acre Resettlement Scheme in 1960 to confine these classes in the countryside by offering them land and employment. Yet, could this scheme defuse the situation?

Like all colonial pre-emptive programmes, it was a political strategem to defuse the nascent insurgency which sought to expropriate the settlers and the loyalists and therefore involved economic risks since the scheme was set in the most productive area of the White Highlands. However, the propaganda behind this choice was intended not to wreck the colonial economy, but to give the illusion of dismantling settler political economy symbolized by the White Highlands while, in fact, reinforcing it, for the scheme entailed marginal land, leaving ranches and plantations in settler and metropolitan hands. Out of 7.5 million acres in the so-called Scheduled Areas, 3.5 million acres of it constituted mixed farms, i.e. the farms which combined agriculture and husbandry; that is, these farms were producing livestock and cash crops such as coffee, tea, sisal and so on. It is from this mixed farming sector that a million acres were acquired from the 7.5 million acres for the scheme. The loan to pay for the land so acquired came from the British government, from the Commonwealth Development Corporation and the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development. These lenders imposed tight conditions on the way the loan money was to be spent and maintained influence over the scheme throughout, insuring the fruition of its capitalist content.<sup>84</sup>

The capitalist content of the programme is reflected in the following. On the one hand, there was the "high density" aspect of

the scheme covering about 80 percent of the total area intended to provide an income over and above family subsistence level starting from £25 to £70 per year; and, on the other, there was the "low density" aspect, entailing the remaining 20 percent bringing in incomes of £100 over and above family subsistence. In case of "high density" sectors the new African settlers had simply to be landless and unemployed and be able to raise £6 down payment to qualify, whereas those in "low density" sectors were required to be experienced in farming and be able to come up with £100 down payment to qualify. Therefore, the scheme differentiated between the small capitalist farmers in "high density" sectors and yeoman farmers in "low density" sectors. Initially the latter class was expected to occupy plots fetching £250 per year. After repaying the principal and interest, these were referred to as "yeoman farmers."<sup>85</sup> However, before the project had run its full course, yeoman farmers' plots were replaced by what was known as "Z-plots" of 100 acres each centered around the house of the outgoing European settler. These were reserved for the "leader" of the African community. And the "leaders" emerging from this class were expected to maintain political stability then and after decolonization:

"Local Kikuyu leaders had agreed that if this was done they would try to hold the position...they would support the eviction of illegal squatters and strictly apply the Trespass Ordinance in this area and give full backing to the authorities in applying the law."<sup>86</sup>

This scheme expanded the very capitalist production relations already set in motion in the reserves. The extension of the emerging African bourgeoisie enhanced its power which was further consolidated by its subsequent control of the resettlement schemes that followed. It dispensed with the original bias toward peasants by insisting on de-peasantization of the White Highlands, i.e. the emerging black

bourgeoisie had the sole claim to substitute itself for the white settlers. Hence, the resettlement discrimination in favour of the emerging black bourgeoisie marked the defeat of peasants in their struggle for land. No one summarizes this defeat better than the Provincial Commissioner for the Central Province at the time, when he says:

"Had we not at last made a start with the settlement of Kikuyu it (the diehard Mau Mau element) would be bigger and it would be growing daily. As it is, the fact that resettlement has started has had an exceedingly good effect in Kikuyu country...What we now have is on the one hand a large and growing group of non-violent Kikuyu, which includes loyalists, government servants, farmers and now the new settlers, and on the other a small very hard, very resolute violent group, but, which if properly watched, should not be more than temporary embarrassment should it later decide to take some sort of action."

From this statement it is clear that the colonial regime had found a reliable class ally to continue with its counter-insurgent measures to insure that the peasants were completely subdued. This is what one colonial official meant when he said that "Her Majesty's government had completed their examination of methods of ensuring this security up to and after independence."<sup>88</sup> This substitution of black for white class is the essence of decolonization.

## VII

In urban areas the majority of workers were sympathetic to Mau Mau. However, open support for the movement came primarily from two types of Kikuyu workers - the target proletarians and the fully proletarianized workers. The former sided with Mau Mau because of its very nature: these semi-proletarianized workers were sojourn workers who went to work in urban areas for a fixed time or target income only and then returned to their respective reserves to develop and enlarge the land they already had, or, if they had none, they bought

it, and if they worked beyond their targets, they still looked forward to retiring on land in the reserves: they remained peasants in their outlook. Therefore, the Mau Mau struggle for land attracted them into the movement. Since they retained their link with the reserves, this bond enabled them to serve as the link between towns and reserves during the struggle.<sup>89</sup>

The proletarianized workers supported Mau Mau struggle for a different reason. Unlike the land-hungry workers, this group of workers had cut off links with Kikuyu reserves. Their detribalized nature led them to depend solely on the sale of their labour. It was their worsening position as sellers of labour in terms of their declining purchasing power, and bad housing that forced them to support Mau Mau resistance. In the years preceding the resistance, the situation of unskilled workers was becoming increasingly precarious. On the average, the money earnings of employed Africans were rising between 1946 and 1952, but this rise was not enough nor was it felt equally among all categories of workers. On the contrary, the evidence shows that all the gain went to white-collar workers, skilled and semi-skilled and their real income actually went up. Nevertheless, compared with non-African workers - European or Asian - this rise was minimal and they blamed the colour-bar for the unfairness. The situation was worse for the unskilled and casually employed workers, who received wages at or near the statutory minimum wage, because it was below what it should have been.

Between 1948 and 1953, the only available measure for an African cost of living was the Mombasa African Retail Price index. It showed a 60 percent rise whereas the minimum wage in Nairobi had risen by only 50 percent.<sup>90</sup> As the minimum wage formula was designed to reflect rises in the cost of living and it was not always exact or

commensurate with it, it is fair to say that a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers on the minimum wage level were not getting any better; if anything, they were worse off. Moreover, the standard used for calculating the minimum wage provided for the barest essentials for a single man. As the 1954 Carpenter Committee discovered in the thick of the Mau Mau revolt, it was virtually impossible for a married man to support a family on that wage. In its judgement, almost one half of all urban workers in private industry and one fourth of those in public sectors, were in "receipt of wages insufficient to provide for their basic essentials."<sup>91</sup> All these conditions prepared the ground for Mau Mau support by workers.

Nairobi became the headquarters of Mau Mau resistance as mentioned previously. Oathing among workers in the city was conducted along territorial units, i.e. worker-recruiters inducted into the movement people from their respective areas and work places. Moreover, this cell system linked recruits directly with rural leadership. The structure was necessitated more by considerations of security than anything else, given the low level of education among the workers. As tension increased in 1952 following the declaration of the Emergency, oathing spread fast among Kikuyu workers in the towns, especially in Nairobi and Nakuru. Workers' militant commitment to the resistance movement is indicated by the fact that some workers did their jobs in the day and at night worked for Mau Mau. For example, General China, Itotia Waruhiu, worked as a foreman for the East Africa Railway during the day, and as a Mau Mau revolutionary at night.<sup>92</sup> Workers' support for the struggle came in various forms, depending on the nature of the employment. But financial support came from all members of the movement as oath-fees levied from all initiates.

On 21st October, 1952, trade union leaders Bildad Kaggia and Fred Kubai, together with other African leaders, two hundred in all, were arrested during Operation Jock Scott and detained.<sup>93</sup> Workers' response to the detention of their leaders was immediate, but divided between moderate and radical wings, depending on union membership and leadership, and especially the latter's alignment with either of these wings of the nationalist organizations - the Kikuyu Central Association and the Kenya African Union - of which workers were closely associated in the 1920s and 1940s. But labour militancy overtook moderation as colonial proscription and obstructionism of African political organization became the stock in trade. The final blow came in 1953 when KAU and the East Africa Trade Union Congress were banned. The proscription was followed by the Emergency with all its anti-labour outlook motivated by fear of a general strike.<sup>94</sup> These events pushed African workers in general, and Kikuyu workers in particular, into the nationalist struggle.

These arrests and detention of labour leaders provoked a widespread reaction not only among the labouring people, but also incensed the majority of Kikuyu, employed and unemployed alike. They were all threatened by deportation or detention and possibly death. Those with nothing to lose but their miserable lives, were the first to join the forest fighters. However, those with something to lose, even though oathed, reacted in a mixed way; they were torn between their nationalist conscience and their economic stake. But one thing was clear - this group was not prepared to part with its privileges deriving largely from its education acquired either in mission or government schools, both of which shared the same outlook, i.e. preservation of the colonial status quo by educating collaborationist elites. Consequently, these elites kept out of the forest and out of

the ranks of Mau Mau leadership. This serious defection could not go unnoticed by some workers.

Nevertheless, most Kikuyu workers actively supported Mau Mau just as most of the privileged workers tended to support it passively. The support developed along occupational lines.<sup>95</sup> Kikuyu blue-collar workers who stayed behind, continued to conduct oathing to raise money, men and materials for the movement. These workers were well placed in the colonial services - medicines were supplied by those in public hospitals and dispensaries; uniforms, arms and ammunition by those in the colonial armed forces, i.e. police, Kenya African Rifles (KAR), and government-office workers; and still others operated as intelligence gatherers and conveyors of information. For instance, Embu latrine cleaners, employees of Nairobi City Council, served in this capacity because the mobility required by their work made them ideal for the operation. Taxi drivers, too, operated similar services.

Urban support for Mau Mau was not limited to workers alone; it also came from itinerant traders who served as conveyors of information and "banks" for the movement. Again their mobility and knowledge of the urban situation prepared them well for the job. As a result, the noisy and crowded Nairobi markets were converted into exchange counters for Mau Mau information and activities. Unemployed youths became the strong arm of the movement. Kikuyu operators of small independent businesses such as hotels, tea kiosks, vegetable stands, garages and suchlike, became havens of Mau Mau activists.<sup>96</sup> All these types and various grades of workers merged in the struggle to give Mau Mau its nationalist character.

#### VIII

Trade unions were not only driven into the nationalist struggle by administrative obstructionism of the colonial Labour Department,<sup>97</sup>



but also by balkanization of African politics along tribal lines by disallowing and colony-wide political parties. Consequently, trade unions offered the best alternative because of their pan-tribal membership and the fact that the outlook of their leaders transcended tribalism. The struggle was directed against the entire colonial political economy. Therefore, labour leaders viewed themselves not simply as defenders of workers' interests, but also as champions of the masses. In short, although the colonial administration had worked so hard to prevent it, Kenyan labour organizations became politicized.

Even so, the trade union movement, like its members, was equally divided on Mau Mau resistance. To understand this division, it is not enough to recall the split in the defunct nationalist organizations; it is essential to turn to two other factors which brought it about, namely the union leadership and the colonial administration. The latter was crucial because it was committed to the policy of de-politicizing unions, i.e. limiting union activities to economism, the counterpart of agrarianism. And the corollary to it was the creation of African Labour leadership imbued with this ideology, of course. The implementation of this policy is exemplified by the case of the African Workers Federation (AWF). On the 13th January, 1947, the AWF called a general strike in Mombasa and its 15,000 members struck, paralyzing docks, railways, all hotels, offices, banks and private houses (domestic servants went on strike, too).<sup>98</sup> What was most ominous about the strike was that it was spreading upcountry and, as the Kisumu General Strike had shown, it was not only hard to stop such a strike once it was on, but it was equally difficult to stop it from turning into a political strike. Therefore, to prevent this eventuality, the authorities took a pre-emptive action by deporting AWF leader Chege Kibachia, to the Northern Frontier Province on the

grounds that he was subversive. Deprived of its leadership, AWF withered away. From this point on, the administration would not allow any country-wide or even industry-wide unions, let alone multi-racial ones; but would only permit craft unions or associations along the British model, i.e. apolitical unions guided by an economic ideology.<sup>99</sup>

Unions had to be purged of the politically conscious leaders if economism was to succeed. The unions, on the other hand, were determined to resist it. Union political commitment is indicated by the formulation of the East Africa Trade Union Congress (EATUC) which showed its opposition to economism by advocating political objectives. It was formed by Makham Singh in 1949. Politically it was connected with nationalist politics because its prominent African leaders, Bildad Kaggia and Fred Kubai, were also leaders in Kenya African Union (KAU). Besides, TUC's constitution placed it in the thick of the nationalist struggle by stipulating that it was dedicated to the improvement of "social and political conditions of workers."<sup>100</sup> Registration was refused on the grounds that it did not square up with the relevant ordinance prohibiting political unions. In 1950, the TUC called a general strike against the "racial and anti-union attitude of the government."<sup>101</sup> The political aspect of this strike is seen in the demand for freedom and independence not only for Kenya, but also for the other East African territories. The authorities reacted to the TUC's growing boldness by arresting its leaders, Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai. TUC members answered by calling a general strike. The strike failed because the regime resorted to massive use of force which resulted in arrest of 300 strikers. After this confrontation, TUC militant leaders and members went underground to become part of Mau Mau.

The interlocking nationalist and trade union leadership enhanced co-operation between Kikuyu-led unions and the Mau Mau. Such a co-operation is seen in the Transport and Allied Workers Union (TAWU) led by Fred Kubai, also a KAU leader, and other officials in TAWU such as John Mungai. The two men were among the leaders in the Central Committee which directed Mau Mau oathing in Nairobi. They continued with recruitment of TAWU membership which actually served as a cloak for spreading oathing. Bildad Kaggia, also a member of the Central Committee, headed the Labour Trade Union of East Africa (LTUEA), a focus of Mau Mau activism. Willie George Njui Kamumbo led the Clerk Section of LTUEA and for some time the Night Watchmen, Clerks and Shopworkers' Union (NCSU) happened also to be in the Central Committee and in leadership of the Embu Branch Committee of the secret movement. The co-operation between trade unions and Mau Mau reached its pinnacle between February, 1951 and October, 1952.<sup>102</sup>

The colonial administration defeated the Kikuyu workers' co-operation with Mau Mau by massive deportation and detention. Operation Anvil, mentioned previously, reduced and to some extent reversed the ethnic composition of workers in Nairobi. The operation removed an estimated 27,000 Kikuyu, Embu and Meru workers from the city and these were replaced by the apolitical workers from other ethnic groups, such as Kamba, Luhya, Luo and so on. This change is well reflected in the following table:<sup>103</sup>

TRIBAL PERCENT OF AFRICANS IN EMPLOYMENT					
Tribes	1953	1954	1956	1957	1958
From Nyanza	28	37	39	38	38
Kikuyu, Embu, Meru	47	27	22	25	26
Kamba	18	25	28	27	28
Other Kenyan Africans	4	7	7	6	6
Non-Kenyan Africans	3	4	4	4	4

Operation Anvil was not the first of its kind, nor the last; neither were expulsion of Kikuyu workers limited to Nairobi; they were extended to the entire country and to East Africa as well. Neither the removal of Kikuyu union leaders nor the reduction of the Kikuyu work force were sufficient in themselves to bring about apolitical unions; rival puppet labour organizations had to be set up. In June, 1952, the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions (KFRTU) was formed under government auspices to replace EATUC. The office bearers were Muchegi Karanja as president and Aggrey Minya as General Secretary respectively. Among its affiliates were NCSU and EAFBCWU; the Domestic and Hotel Workers Union (DHWU); the Tailors' Union and TAWU; KLGWU, RAU and the Civil Servants' Association. The Federation's objectives were: first, to prevent any political strikes engineered by Mau Mau; second, to provide a "responsible" outlet for workers' grievances, i.e. the federation would confine itself to economism. The economistic outlook was discernible among some of its member unions even before affiliation. For instance, KLGWU, RAU and the Civil Servants' Union Association were public employees' unions and had fairly advanced along this road due to pressures exerted by their employer, the colonial government. With these non Mau Mau unions aligned to it, their assistance was solicited by the administration in undermining pro Mau Mau unions, such as DHWU, TAWU, EAFBCWU, the Tailors' Union and NCSU. On the one hand, the regime resorted to Emergency measures by detaining union leaders of the union in question. On the other, with the help from the Labour Department, the KFRTU reorganized them.<sup>104</sup> The screening of Mau Mau leadership and its influence in the labour movement is shown by the fact that NCSU, EAFBCWU, the Tailors' Union and DHWU experienced a change of leadership during the Emergency. The new leadership dis-

associated themselves from the Mau Mau movement.

The Federation was not only seeking to neutralize Mau Mau influence in the labour movement, but it was also hardening its anti Mau Mau stance.

Undoubtedly the Labour Department was exerting pressure to this effect. And in March, 1953, the Federation passed a resolution condemning Mau Mau and pledging non-support to any strikes inspired by leaders outside the union movement. Besides, the Federation's position vis-a-vis Mau Mau was made known to the world and to the international labour movement in particular in July, 1953, when the head of the organization, Aggrey Minya, said at the Third World Congress of ICFTU that:

"My Federation has recently published a decision on its attitude to the organization known as Mau Mau and instructed our members not to associate with any organization which was not legal. My Federation believes that violence will accomplish nothing of lasting value to the welfare of my country and it therefore condemns all violence."<sup>105</sup>

Tom Mboya assumed the leadership of the Federation in September, 1952. Although he avoided condemning Mau Mau openly, he thwarted Mau Mau attempts to call a general strike. This stance remained the same even after the Federation became the Kenya Federation of Labour in June, 1952. During his leadership from 1952 to 1962, Mboya, like his predecessors, upheld an economistic ideology. This position could not help but undermine the working political relationship between peasants and workers. After all, their economic interests were not identical.

By way of conclusion, it is fair at this point to recall what Mau Mau has been made out to be and what it is not, so that we can see the true nature of the movement. Since the movement came into being in the 1950s, writers, depending on their disciplines, have

projected one thesis in variant forms about Mau Mau - the thesis that Mau Mau was a collective madness or some form of disease or other. But these various diagnostic approaches have this one thing in common: they are idealistic interpretations whose function is to absolve colonialism of its crimes which were discussed previously by attributing the nationalist-liberationist violence of Mau Mau to some innate evil in the make-up of the African.<sup>106</sup> No one refurbishes this dust-collecting clinical thesis better than J. Bowyer Bell in his latest book, On Revolt. He writes:

"...Mau Mau was a savage and secret descent into barbarism that lurked below the black surface. The obscene rites were the dark side of Africa not yet eliminated through the benefits of European guidance. This Kikuyu savagery was not simply another cult, but a very serious pathological condition that threatened European civilization in Kenya. Both the cultists and the pathologists, however, agreed that there was very little 'civilized' content to the Mau Mau...the savagery and brutality - nostalgia for barbarism - was in effect a perverted form of Kikuyu nationalism, pathological, dangerous, brutal, and not susceptible to traditional forms of accommodation. Adjustments of the existing political and economic structure in Kenya, though desirable in themselves, would not rectify the situation. The key problem was the conversion of the Kikuyu to brutality, and this could not be rectified by 'political' means."<sup>107</sup>

This exposition reveals par excellence the racist myth-making which has been dealt with elsewhere. Yet, it offers much more: this idealism according to which "adjustments of the existing political and economic structure would not rectify the situation" if Mau Mau won the war of independence, the question which arises is: why wasn't it possible for it to work under Mau Mau? Because the movement was backed by uncompromising classes of squatters, peasantry and workers who were committed to ending all forms of colonialism, old and new, and their method of liquidating it testifies to this fact. Dr. Odhiambo summarizes this liberationist vision thus:

"[Mau Mau] more than any other people, hit upon the only correct solution to the problems generated by colonialism: namely armed struggle. It is alone the correct solution to the fundamental contradictions of the colonial, capitalist societies of the twentieth century. Waged to its logical conclusion, and supported by a correct ideology, its correctness has been more than vindicated in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, not to mention Cuba and Vietnam. And so we should salute these eight thousand men, and women, for having correctly interpreted the march of history."<sup>108</sup>

Here then is the secret of the denigration of the Mau Mau liberation movement by the writers of the above school and its variants. Mau Mau encompassed classes - workers, peasants and squatters - which were not yet corrupted by the colonial system and which bore the colonial burden and were therefore determined to rid themselves of it once and for all, i.e. they were not susceptible to traditional forms of accommodation. Hence, these classes had not only to be defeated in the battlefield, but also in the ideological field. This is the mission of the racist-idealist interpretation of Mau Mau. Its function is to cover up the way the urban petty-bourgeois nationalists of whom "not a single well-known nationalist declared his affiliation with the movement, or even tried to defend the men involved"<sup>109</sup> and who were susceptible to the traditional forms of accommodation or neo-colonialist reforms, came to terms with the British after the defeat of Mau Mau. This then was the essence of Mau Mau and the nationalist struggle it led even though it lost. Yet, it was a partial victory for Mau Mau because Uhuru came. But for Britain to consolidate her partial victory, she needed a new class because the land-owners in the rural areas could not rule the country alone when Britain left. The class of land-owners had to be enlarged to include the urban petty-bourgeois nationalists. This was the essential strategy of decolonization.

FOOTNOTES

1. The following are a few examples of non-Kikuyu resistance movements against British colonialism in Kenya some of which continued until early 1920s:

John Lamphear, "Aspects of Turkana Leadership During the Era of Primary Resistance," Journal of African History, XVII 2 (1976), pp.225-243; Kenneth King, "The Kenya Masai and the Protest Phenomenon, 1900-1960," Journal of African History, XII 1 (1971), pp.117-137; Diana Ellis, "The Nandi Protest of 1923 in the Context of African Resistance to Colonial Rule in Kenya," The Journal of African History, XVII 4 (1976), pp.525-575; Robert Mason, "Early Gusii Resistance to British Rule 1905-1914," in Protest Movements in Colonial East Africa: Aspects of Early Response to European Rule (New York: Syracuse University, 1973).

2. Kibara Kabutu, Mbara ya Wiyathi wa Kenya 1890 - 1963 (Nairobi: African Press Ltd. - ), pp.5-12. I would like to include the address of the writer appearing in the book because some parts are not legible because of the condition of the book. (Kibara Kabutu, P.O. Box 8084, Nairobi, Kenya).
3. W.R. Ochieng', The Sheep and Goats Among the Kikuyu: Being Some Random Reflections on the Study of Colonial African Chiefs in Central Kenya: 1888-1963. Seminar Paper No.78, Department of History, Kenyatta University College, Nairobi, Kenya, p.8.
4. Lionel Cliffe, "Underdevelopment or Socialism? A Comparative Analysis of Kenya and Tanzania," in The Political Economy of Africa ed. by Richard Harris (New York: Schenckman Publishing Company Inc., 1975), pp.151-153.
5. Leonard Woolf, Barbarians at the Gate (London: Victor Gallancz Ltd., 1939), pp.116-117.
6. Ochieng', p.8.
7. Robert L. Tignor, The Colonial Transformation of Kenya : The Kamba, Kikuyu and Masai from 1900 to 1939 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), p.55.
8. Ibid., p.55.
9. Ibid., p.48.
10. Ibid., pp.56-57.
11. Ibid., p.227.
12. James Ngugi, The River Between (Heinemann, 1965), p.33.
13. Tignor, p.241.



14. R.L. Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, Vol.1 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928), p.320.
15. Tignor, p.177; Bildad Kaggia, Roots of Freedom 1921-1963 (Nairobi: EAPH, 1975), pp.108-109.
16. N.S. Carey Jones, The Anatomy of Uhuru (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), p.110.
17. Tignor, p.231; L.S.B. Leakey, Mau Mau and the Kikuyu (London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1955), pp.70-71.
18. Buell, p.374.
19. R.M. Wambaa and Kenneth King, "The Political Economy of the Rift Valley : A Squatter Perspective," in Hadith 5 ed. by B.A. Ogot (Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House, 1974), pp.199-200.
20. For further information on the hardships befalling workers see: A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, Government and Labour in Kenya 1895-1963 (London: Frank Cass, 1974), especially the first four chapters.
21. Leakey, p.730
22. Ibid., p.70.
23. Harry Thuku with assistance from Kenneth King, Harry Thuku, An Autobiography (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.22.
24. M. Singh, History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952 (Nairobi: EAPH, 1969), pp.15-16.
25. Leakey, p.41.
26. -- The Origin and Growth of Mau Mau : An Historical Survey, Sessional Paper No.5 of 1959/60 (Nairobi: The Government Printer, 1960), p.190.
27. Ibid., p.189.
28. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, Government and Labour in Kenya 1895-1963 (London: Frank Cass, 1974), p.126.
29. Singh, p.37.
30. Ibid., p.38.
31. Buell, p.404.
32. Tignor, p.242.
33. Quoted by C.G. Rosberg and I. Nottingham in The Myth of Mau Mau (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1966), p.85.
34. Tignor, p.242.

35. Singh, pp.83-94.
36. Ibid., p.94.
37. Sessional Paper No.5 of 1959/60, pp.48-49.
38. Chief Kanange's role is contradictory. Since his mbari lost land in Kiambu, this made him nationalistic; as one of the chiefly functionaries in the colonial administration, he behaved as a loyalist. He was a leading figure in the loyalist Kikuyu Association (KA). The latter took the best of him in spite of everything.
39. Thuku, p.97.
40. Sessional Paper No.5 of 1959/60, p.62.
41. Bildad Kaggia, Roots of Freedom 1921 - 1963 (Nairobi: EAPH, 1975), p.64.
42. Ibid., p.100.
43. Ibid., p.66.
44. It is not surprising then to find that these so-called moderates ended up being prominent in the decolonization politics of the late fifties while the radicals were being harassed or detained.
45. Ladislau Venys, A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya (Prague: Charles University, 1970), pp.46-48; Sessional Paper No.5 of 1959/60, pp.202-218.
46. D.L. Barnett and K. Ngama, Mau Mau From Within (London: Mac-Gibbon and Kee Ltd., 1966), p.69.
47. Ibid., p.329-374.
48. Venys, p.58.
49. Missionaries were Mau Mau targets because they were not only colonial agents but also big land-owners.
50. L.S.B. Leakey, Defeating Mau Mau (London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1954), p.100.
51. For further information on this aspect of the Mau Mau war, see: M.P.K. Sorrenson, Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp.100-102.
52. Alan Gray, "Quarterly Notes." Journal of the Royal African Society, vol.54 (1955), p.84.
53. Leakey, p.101.
54. A. Clayton, Counter-Insurgency in Kenya 1952-1960 (Nairobi: TransAfrica Publishers Ltd., 1976), p.22.
55. Ibid., p.25.
56. Ibid., p.25.

57. Waruhiu Itote (General China), Mau Mau General (Nairobi: EAPH, 1967), 185-191.
58. Barnett and Ngama, p.489.
59. Henry Swanzy, "Quarterly Notes," African Affairs, vol.52-53, (1953-54), p.283.
60. A. Sik, The History of Black Africa, vol. IV (Budapest: Alcademiai Kiado, 1974), pp.45-48.
61. E.A. Vassey, "Economic and Political Trends in Kenya," African Affairs, vol.55 (1956), p.103.
62. Barnett and Ngama, pp.36-37.
63. Sik, p.46.
64. Alan Gray, "Quarterly Chronicle," Journal of the Royal African Society, vol.54 (1955), p.3.
65. Sik, p.47; see also G. Bennett and C.G. Rosberg, The Kenyatta Election: Kenya 1960-1961 (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp.14-15.
66. Vassey, p.108.
67. "Kenya Vote Plan," Journal of the Royal African Society, vol.55, (1956), p.177.
68. Kaggia, p.183.
69. Henry Swanzy, "Quarterly Notes," African Affairs, vol.52-3 (1953-1954), p.105.
70. Roger van Zwanenberg, "Neo-colonialism and the National Bourgeoisie in Kenya between 1940-1973," Journal of Eastern Africa Research and Development, Vol.4, 2 (1974), pp.165-166.
71. D. Mukaru Ngang'a, Some Aspects of Muranga Political History: Mau Mau, Loyalist and Politics in Murang'a 1952-1970. Seminar Paper No.75, University of Nairobi, Institute for Africa Studies, 17th February, 1977, p.10.
72. Ibid., p.9.
73. Thuku, p.75.
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75. Ibid., p.103.
76. Mary Shanon, "Rehabilitating the Kikuyu," Journal of the Royal African Society (1955), p.131.

77. Parliamentary Correspondent, "African Affairs at Westminster," African Affairs, Vol.60 (1961), p.174.
78. Ng'ang'a, p.3.
79. Parliamentary Correspondent, "African Affairs at Westminster," African Affairs, Vol.58 (1959), p.48.
80. Zwanenberg, pp.166-167.
81. J.R.M. Swynnerton, "Kenya's Agricultural Planning," African Affairs, Vol.56 (1957), p.214.
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83. Ibid., p.94.
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86. Wassermann, p.146.
87. Wassermann, p.145.
88. Parliamentary Correspondent, "African Affairs at Westminster," African Affairs, Vol.60 (1961), p.174.
89. Leakey, Mau Mau and the Kikuyu, p.73.
90. Sharon B. Stichter, "Worker, Trade Unions, and the Mau Mau Rebellion," Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol.IX, 2 (1975), p.267.
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92. Itote, p.41.
93. Sessional Paper No.5 of 1959/60, p.70.
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96. Ibid., p.268; Frank Furedi, "The Social Composition of the Mau Mau Movement in the White Highlands," The Journal of Peasant Studies 1 (1973-4), p.503.
97. Sandbrook, p.30.

98. Singh, pp.141-160.
99. Sandbrook, pp.29-30.
100. Ibid., p.31.
101. Ibid., p.31.
102. Stichter, pp.269-274.
103. Frank Euredi, "The African Crowd in Nairobi : Popular Movement and Elite Politics," Journal of African History, Vol.XIV 2 (1973), pp.288-289.
104. Stichter, p.272.
105. Quoted by Stichter (p.272) from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Report of the Third World Congress held in Stockholm, 4-11 July, 1953, Brussels, 1953, pp.306-310.
106. Some of these idealist interpreters of Mau Mau, see Dr. J.C. Carothers, The Psychology of Mau Mau (Nairobi: The Government Printer, 1954); Stuart Cloete, Storm Over Africa (Cape Town: Culemborg Publishers, 1956); -- The Origin and Growth of Mau Mau : An Historical Survey, Sessional Paper No.5 of 1959/60 (Nairobi : The Government Printer, 1960); L.S.B. Leakey, Defeating Mau Mau (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1954); J. Bowyer Bell, On Revolt (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1976) and so on.
107. Bell, p.99.
108. Atieno Odhiambo, "Who Were the Mau Mau?" African Perspectives, No.2 (February - March, 1978), p.7.
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## CHAPTER IV

THE EMERGENCY AND THE EMERGENCE OF  
NEW AFRICAN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP 1955-1963

The state of the Emergency lasted for eight years from 1952 to 1960; the transitional or decolonization period for three years from 1960 to 1963. The two periods have one thing in common: it was the most hectic era in the political history of Kenya marking the transition from direct colonialism to indirect colonialism or neo-imperialism. The latter is indirect because, unlike its predecessors, it does not depend on direct political control of the country, but on direct economic control through foreign aid which reinforces the extant colonial dependence while forging new ones which, in turn, exert indirect political control through foreign aid administrators or "personnel debt" and embassy representatives.<sup>1</sup> Yet, these expatriate administrators and diplomats are not enough for the smooth working of neo-imperialism: it is dependent on an indigenous ruling class. The application of foreign aid policy in the country began in the 1950s and specifically in 1954 under the Swynnerton Plan<sup>2</sup> which required the participation of the Commonwealth Development Corporation and the World Bank.<sup>3</sup> The aim behind the participation of these agencies - national or international - was to insure, on the one hand, that the neo-colonialist strategy prevailed, and on the other, to accelerate the formation of an African ruling class to "inherit (colonial) responsibilities."<sup>4</sup> Before pursuing the formation of this class-based African leadership further, it is important at this juncture to review the economic mechanisms which neo-imperialism uses to enable it to realize its objectives.

These mechanisms are well spelled out by the British Government in the Duncan Report. The following summary of the Report, as given

by Edmondson, will do for the present analysis. He writes:

"The Committee at the outset admits to the importance of aid as a tool of statecraft in the contemporary international system. In initially considering the question from the standpoint of Britain's enlightened self-interest; the Committee performs a useful, if limited, service in drawing attention to the economic rewards of aid accruing to the British economy from (a) helping to develop 'more lucrative trading partners'; (b) the tying of bilateral aid to purchase of British goods; (c) the fact that when British aid is distributed through international organizations... British industry gets back more in the form of the resulting orders, which are put out to world-wide tender, than is contributed by the British Government ...at least two-thirds of the British aid programme is spent on British goods and services; and for every shs.20 of multilateral aid by Britain, there had been resulting export orders of shs.30."

These aid objectives expose the myth of preparing Kenya and other colonial territories for independence and its twin myth of foreign aid as an instrument of development. Hence, aid as applied in the country since the 1950s was intended to develop Britain, not Kenya. If anything, Kenya has experienced distorted growth or has continued to develop the underdevelopment of the bygone colonial period. This is confirmed by Holtham when he observes that:

"[The] donors as a whole, though not singly, not only influence the inter-sectoral balance of Kenya developmental spending, they also undermine the functions of the Treasury and Planning Division."<sup>6</sup>

In short, neo-imperialism is incompatible with the normal development of Kenya. It is also interesting to observe that when it came time to integrate the settler ruling class into this neo-imperialist system in the mid 1950s, they resisted it because it negated their independent development. This fact should be borne in mind because this conflict will re-emerge again in independent Kenya between the African comprador bourgeoisie aligned with neo-imperialism and the national bourgeoisie seeking to break from it. In any case, the question remains: what made settlers change their stance vis-a-vis

neo-imperialism? The answer is to be found in Mau Mau resistance which sought to liquidate colonialism in all its forms. In this respect, Carey-Jones makes this apt remark:

"The Mau Mau had the effect of stimulating different thinking among Europeans based on the concept of one nation being developed and brought into the modern world under European leadership, a concept which alone held the hope of bringing Kenya into the modern world effectively...The Europeans who had formed the bulk of the support for Sir Michael Blundell were more ready to accept the idea of African rule because they regarded it simply as a change of government much, as governments change in Britain after elections."

Therefore, as far as decolonization was concerned, there was consensus between settler and metropolitan bourgeoisie on its desirability. The issue was how to create a multi-racial or a national class that would maintain the neo-imperialist dependence. The majority of this class would be African and its members would be drawn from petty-bourgeois intellectuals. E.A. Vassey, a settler and member of the Legislative Council, had this class in mind when he said that:

"The Europeans have been conscious of a tendency on the part of the more advanced Africans to follow an intensely capitalist trend of thought, to press forward in the interests of themselves on their particular groups rather than of the Africans as a whole. It can be said the African had our example before him, but this selfish type of thought is something from which we hope, as Europeans, are emerging and few of us wish to see the African make<sub>g</sub> the same mistakes and suffer the same penalties."

The mistakes Vassey wishes the African petty-bourgeois leadership to avoid are those of counter discrimination or extreme nationalism which could easily upset the transition to neo-imperialism in which their common interests converged. This strategy required the avoidance of even a worse mistake: that of mobilizing the African masses to whom colonialism and capitalism were the same thing, a thing which had to be destroyed. Therefore, the emerging African politicians



defended, on one hand, the emerging dependent capitalism by denouncing colonialism in general under an elastic nationalism devoid of a consistent ideology, and this was to be expected since British imperialism was taking the initiative;<sup>9</sup> on the other hand, these politicians were defending their own class position under multi-racialism by denying the existence of classes in the African community. As one of their spokesmen, Tom Mboya, put it:

"The division there might be would be those of tribe or individual ambition, but very rarely could there be <sup>10</sup> genuine ideological or class differences."

As a result, class antagonism was buried for a while under the settlers' call for multi-racialism and the African nationalists' call for national unity against tribalism and racism. But this was not a genuine call because as will be shown later, these same politicians did not hesitate to use either to achieve their objectives. And just as the African political leaders were using nationalist ideology to camouflage their class interests, the metropolitan power was using anti-communism to mask its real intention which was to denigrate, and in some cases, destroy the incorruptible nationalists who, as Whittlesey points out, repudiated neo-colonialist "co-operation with Europeans and [refused] to grant time for a solution acceptable to all groups in the country."<sup>11</sup> Once these nationalists were removed from the scene, the way was cleared for the multi-racial ruling class to emerge under the multi-racial ideology. The latter was advocated by the liberal section of the settler class grouped around the New Kenya Group (NKG) under the leadership of Michael Blundell. He defined his party's ideology in the following way:

"[Multi-racialism will] win time for an orderly transfer of responsibility to an educated and responsible African leadership <sup>12</sup> under conditions acceptable to the settlers."

The settlers had agreed to the British neo-imperialist strategy and the new multi-racial class was bound to prevail in spite of the reservation and resistance by some sections of classes of settlers and Asians which felt threatened by the emerging system.

The anti-communist ideology was intended to tie Kenya firmly into the Western camp. Consequently, the political struggle in the country cannot be separated from the international geopolitical struggle between the East and the West or rather the international class struggle. This was demonstrated in the first instance by the colonial administration's allusion to communist influence in the Mau Mau movement, even though all the available evidence proved the contrary at the time. This remained the case until late in the 1950s. But from 1958 onwards, the impact of the Cold War made itself felt progressively as each side to the international class struggle, between capitalism and socialism, sought to promote its class ally through nationalist politicians. Under this anti-communist crusade, the United States performed well: she was able to penetrate deep into Kenyan politics via Kenyan unions through AFL-CIO surrogates who channelled CIA money to their favourite nationalist and trade union leader, Tom Mboya.<sup>13</sup> There was always a lingering fear of socialist ideology slipping into the country via the Asian community, the largest in East Africa, as trade unionism and nationalism had done and, as far as Britain was concerned, American hegemony was preferable to the former.

Yet, Eastern influence could not be kept out of Africa indefinitely. In the Kenyan context, this influence came into the country in two ways: on one hand, there was the Indian influence which was mainly concerned with promotion of the welfare of the Indian nationals in the country. This did not prevent the colonial officials describ-

ing it as communist as will be shown later;<sup>14</sup> on the other hand there was international anti-imperialist solidarity extended to African nationalist movements and Kenya movements in particular by their Asian counterparts. Since these Asian movements - nationalist or socialist - had one thing in common, anti-imperialism, which coincided with the position of the Eastern European socialist countries, Western imperialism tended to see them as agents of the latter. It was this error that led the West to advance its anti-communist ideology and counter-insurgency to contain communist expansionism which was elaborated into the domino theory. Vietnam became the celebrated testing ground for containing and then rolling communism northwards whence it came. In the meantime, counter-insurgency was not working according to theory; it was proving ineffectual in practice. A new strategy was advanced which advocated "giving" independence to countries least threatened by insurgency or where insurgents were fairly under control.<sup>15</sup> Such countries as India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya and Indonesia were "granted" independence. The chain reaction could not stop at these countries, nor in Asia: it spread to the rest of the colonized world. Whether liberated through armed struggle or non-violence, the newly independent Asian countries found themselves drawn increasingly into the anti-imperialist struggle to help those still under imperialism. This anti-imperialist struggle culminated in the Bandung Conference in 1955.<sup>16</sup> The irrepressible Asian nationalism forced Western imperialism to retreat to Africa where it intended to stay.

As the time came for this strategic withdrawal, Western imperialism could not afford to repeat the mistake of maintaining direct colonialism in Africa but would put its Asian experience into good use by turning to indirect colonialism or neo-imperialism which,

instead of opposing African nationalism, prefers to work with it and guide it to profitable ends. This view was systematized into theory of collaborationism in 1959 by Sir Andrew Cohen, the former governor of Uganda and head of the African Division of the Colonial Office, who argued that "successful co-operation is our greatest bulwark against communism in Africa."<sup>17</sup> Just as this theory was being elaborated, it was being overtaken by events: African nationalism was asserting itself violently in Algeria and triumphantly in Ghana. The reason for this nationalist upsurge is not hard to find. Instead of this neo-imperialist policy addressing itself to the causes of nationalism, i.e. discrimination, unemployment, poverty, hunger, repression and the like - the colonial powers were busy attributing these causes to external sources, to communism. Even more ominous for Britain, African nationalism in Kenya and in the neighbouring territories was going Pan-Africanist as the formation of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa in September, 1958, revealed.<sup>18</sup> British concern was deepened by the fact that Kenyan nationalism was receiving moral and material help from the East. The Kenyan nationalist leader associated with this connection was Oginga Odinga. The link was forged when he visited Ghana and Egypt in 1959 and again in 1960.<sup>19</sup> During these visits, he was able to win socialist support for the Kenyan struggle. However, it should be pointed out at this juncture that Odinga was not a communist.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, there is no doubt that this Pan-Africanist assistance given by African states leaning "eastward" and the socialist help given by the Soviet Union and China compelled Britain and her ally, the United States, to speed up decolonization of the country to forestall radical African nationalism led by Odinga and his like. Cohen's theory was to be tested in Kenya. It was endorsed

by no less a person than Lord Howick, the former governor of Kenya, early in 1962. This neo-imperialist policy is summarized by Gary Wasserman in the following way:

"Lord Howick viewed Tom Mboya as the man to back since the real danger was those who would look east whether the old Kikuyu guard or those associates of Odinga supported by the Chinese. The attempt should be made to align three groups: KADU, Mboya and his followers, and other milder KANU followers such as Kisii and those Kamba not committed to Ngei. This might prove easier, Lord Howick thought, due to Mboya's American funds (read: CIA money via trade unions) drying up and his position weakening. What Howick feared was KANU winning the election and facing strong opposition from 'eastward extremists' who would prevail on every issue. The prevention of this justified the use of money and of any Bruce McKenzies, etc., who could help to bring KADU and the Westward looking half of KANU together, under whatever name and in whatever relationship to Kenyatta himself."<sup>21</sup>

As this statement shows, this policy was not to depend solely on anti-communism but on tribalism as well in order to weaken African nationalism. But once embarked on, "Kenya must be kept moving, otherwise thugs would emerge and seize control from moderates."<sup>22</sup> The McKenzies whom Howick had in mind who would guide African nationalism safely, were mainly drawn from NKG liberals. The key figures were Bruce McKenzie and Michael Blundell. The former was the Minister for Agriculture at the time and had strong connections with international capital and, with his active help, laid down the foundation for the foreign aid nexus that ensured integration of the country into the world capitalist system.<sup>23</sup> McKenzie joined KANU which posed real challenge to the system. Blundell joined KADU. Their mission was quite clear: "the preservation of European interests and privileges, even if in a new, more cleverly concealed guise."<sup>24</sup> Consequently, these trojan horses would make sure that only those Africans whose outlook did not conflict with their own came on top at the end of decolonization.

The New Kenya Group (NKG) was formed in April, 1959, by Michael Blundell when he resigned as the Minister for Agriculture in order to lead the liberal section of the settler ruling class. Upon his resignation, he was joined by all the Specially and Nominated members and ten other European representatives. It was well represented in the government and, outside parliament, commanded substantial following among Europeans.<sup>25</sup> The party was aware that colonial racism was the root cause of African nationalism and, since the latter could not be contained, racism had to be scrapped if Europeans wanted to safeguard their future interests in independent Kenya. Therefore, the party rejected racism in favour of multi-racialism or race partnership. By so doing, they expected to integrate African leaders into the party provided these African leaders shared the "same ideals" as NKG leaders.<sup>26</sup> To lure African members, other policy statements were made in a further attempt to create a multi-racial nation, among them: opening of the White Highlands to qualified Africans by reducing racial and economic barriers which excluded Africans; white schools began to admit limited numbers of non-Europeans; hotels phased out discriminatory practices and so on.<sup>27</sup> The party promised to extend abolition of the colour-bar to all aspects of Kenyan society. However, according to NKG's view, it would have taken at least ten years to achieve this goal. And if this timetable were followed, Kenya would have attained her independence in 1969 instead of 1963. But the intensity of African nationalism upset the timetable. Nevertheless, NKG could not escape the accusation of being a European party because its key committees were dominated by them and the NKG branches outside white areas were moribund. European domination of party organs was manifest in, for instance, the Executive Committee in which nine out of its fifteen

members were Europeans. Moreover, Michael Blundell, its leader, had close links with the British Tories and the British government both of which reinforced African suspicions. Some African leaders believed NKG was in league with Whitehall.<sup>28</sup>

India, too, was vying for a sphere of influence in the country given the fact that her nationals outnumbered British nationals, i.e. they were the second largest community after the African. This was not new. However, this influence had unforeseen divisive effects on the Kenyan Indian community which undermined India's overall strategy which depended on treating this community as a unified overseas constituency. This divisiveness emanated from India in 1947 when the latter was partitioned before independence giving rise to a predominantly Moslem country, Pakistan. The partition divided the Asian community in Kenya along the same religious lines between Hindu and Moslem groups<sup>29</sup> initiating the decline of Asian politics in the country because political energy was consumed by communal rivalries and conflicts. And Britain did not fail to exploit them when it was in her interest. In this situation, India reacted by supporting the winning side, African nationalism and, by so doing, she could protect the interests of her nationals. Nevertheless, in spite of the aforementioned split in the Asian community, Asians were brought to a tenuous unity by two factors: on one hand, the settlers' policy of expediency which sought to promote African interests at the expense of Asian interests in order to gain African goodwill; on the other, the perception by African nationalists that Asians were blocking their advancement.<sup>30</sup> These two political pressures compelled them to come together. In this context, India urged her nationals to support African nationalism and, in turn, she sought support for her nationals from Kenyan nationalists. Besides, she did not ignore her traditional role of lobbying Whitehall on behalf of her nationals,

while reminding Britain that she would remain Britain's dependable ally long after her independence. Of these two-prongs of Indian diplomacy on behalf of her nationals, the one which is crucial to our concern here is the way in which India's pressures on her nationals in Kenya led them to collaborate with the emerging African leadership whose outlook was not very much different from that of the Indian bourgeoisie.

India's political influence in the Asian community in Kenya is of long standing. India had maintained strong links with this community via the Indian National Congress which had extended its organization in the form of the East African Indian Congress which split up in 1952 along territorial lines, giving rise to the Kenya Indian Congress.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, the political influence from India filtered into the Kenyan Asian community through the Kenya Indian Congress. The main worry for India was that the Kenyan Asian commercial bourgeoisie was supporting - even if passively - the colonial administration, especially during the emergency and thereafter. In fact, this class wanted colonial rule to continue as long as possible; colonial rule was good for business.<sup>32</sup> The outlook of this commercial class is well summarised by Shivji:

"The Asian commercial bourgeoisie could be considered subordinate partners of the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the latter being the ruling class in the real sense of the word. This must be distinguished from a situation (for instance in advanced capitalist countries) where there may be two sections of the ruling bourgeoisie, for example, industrial and commercial. In this case, each one of them may be organised as a political faction ready to seize political power to serve its interests and the interests of the capitalist class as a whole. The Asian bourgeoisie was not such a faction of the ruling class. It did not, nor did it expect to, partake of political rule. It was only protected, and therefore politically it was a ward under the guardianship of the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Economically dependent and politically servile, this bourgeoisie occupied a historically curious situation of controlling an important sector of the economy



without ever hoping to protect it with political power. Power and property were apparently divorced, but only in a unique historical situation which was soon to give way to a 'purer' form of class struggle after independence."<sup>33</sup>

But would this Indian commercial bourgeoisie continue to thrive in independent Kenya under nationalists who would be accusing it of lack of patriotism? The Indian government saw the danger inherent in its collaboration with colonialism and urged her nationals to cast their lot with the African nationalists. Carey-Jones portrays this change in policy in these words:

"The Indian government, after Indian independence, abandoned its role of protecting Indian interests in Kenya. As a country which had itself attained independence, it supported the principle of independence in Kenya as a simple proposition. It seems to have assumed that it could best look after Indians in Kenya by supporting African nationalists and advising the Indian community in Kenya to identify themselves with movements of independence."<sup>34</sup>

Of course, the bourgeois nationalists in India could not see any inconsistency in their policy of supporting their counterparts in Kenya. But could the Kenyan Asian commercial bourgeoisie who were threatened by independence go along with this policy? The Asian bourgeoisie in Kenya remained ambivalent, supporting either the colonial administration or the nationalists, depending on the circumstances. However, this situation could not go on indefinitely. It resulted in a split in 1960 between the reactionary members of the Kenya Indian Congress (KIC) who supported settlers openly, and the progressives who formed the Kenya Freedom Party (KFP) which supported the nationalists.<sup>35</sup> In the final analysis, the two Asian bourgeois factions ended up backing the same system because there was no real ideological difference between them: they disagreed only on the rate at which the country should decolonize, i.e. each faction aligned with the settler class or African petty-bourgeois nationalist, which it felt would best safeguard its interests. Moreover, the

latter two were consolidating their alliance which would result in a multi-racial national ruling class that would in turn render the two Asian parties superfluous. This is exactly what happened in 1961. KIC and KFP dissolved with their members joining African parties.<sup>36</sup>

Of all the external influences affecting African class formation in the country, the most fundamental was that exerted by Britain deriving partly from past colonial associations, but the most determinant influence was dictated by the changing British position in the international system which threatened British capitalism at home. Therefore, the decolonization strategy was predicated on a defense of British capitalism at home and abroad by translating the old empire into a new empire or commonwealth. This strategy required, on one hand, that the decolonization in Kenya should proceed in such a way as to leave British African possessions secure in East and Central Africa especially in the latter where the colonial federation comprising Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (Malawi) was under nationalist attack: therefore, Kenya was to be the neo-colonial model to be emulated by the others. On the other hand, the new empire was also threatened by American "Open Door Policy" under which "Americans would never countenance the continuance of British colonies"<sup>37</sup> without their participation and possibly annexation. Therefore, Britain was compelled to decolonize before she was displaced by the United States. The Anglo-American rivalry in Kenya is reflected by the following remark made by American capitalists reported by Carey-Jones:

"An American party of businessmen visiting Kenya a few years ago told a party of Africans that when they had got rid of the British who had held them back [Americans] would show them how to do things."<sup>38</sup>

And the corollary to this peaceful penetration of the British empire meant the eventual annexation of Britain herself which was already going on.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, it was imperative for Britain to get a dependable class in Kenya and elsewhere in the empire to forestall this satellitization.

As a result of this inter-imperialist rivalry and the dislocation of the British economy by the war, the British government was forced to revise drastically its colonial policy. The British economy emerged from the war badly battered and subordinated to that of the United States. Consequently, the Colonial Office exerted maximum pressure on the colonies to produce more food to meet food shortages in the metropolis and more raw materials for the reconstruction of the British economy; and above all, to meet the balance of payments deficit which stood at £311 million in 1948.<sup>40</sup> Kenya was one of the colonies called upon to "aid" Britain. Therefore, Kenya experienced increased exploitation of her human and material resources, whose cumulative effect was reflected in the declining living standard of Africans. This exploitation was recognised by the East African Royal Commission in 1955 when it observed that:

"In certain African circles, new industrial expansion is both desired and feared: desired because of the contribution which it can make to the income-earning opportunities of the African population, and feared because of the increase in political and economic influence which it is thought will accrue to non-Africans if the capital required for the expansion has to come from overseas. In some cases this fear is so pronounced that those who share it would be prepared to sacrifice the advantages of further industrial development..."<sup>41</sup>

Consequently, the African masses responded to this exploitation and falling standard of living by resistance through their political and labour organizations.

Due to this growing resistance by African people which led to the crystallization of divisions within the nationalist movement, the

rival imperialist powers were able to pick their respective allies among the nationalist leaders. However, the inter-imperialist rivalry remained at a low level in Kenya until the mid-fifties. In the late fifties and more so in the sixties, it became open and sharp. Britain and the United States were backing their respective African parties. The Americans backed Tom Mboya who led the moderate faction in KANU against Oginga Odinga who led the left faction. The American choice was strategic because Mboya was also a prominent labour leader who could be relied on to moderate the labour movement. The British backed Ronald Ngala, the leader of KADU, a moderate party.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the British were discreet about their support for KADU: it was conducted indirectly through the settlers who "provided administrative, management, intellectual and financial resources,"<sup>43</sup> to KADU. Yet, British diplomatic acumen went further: some settlers with British approval joined KANU and, in due course, helped to create a predominant number of moderates who eventually took over control of the party. Bruce McKenzie and Derek Erskine were the men behind the internal evolution of moderates in KANU.<sup>44</sup> But Anglo-American competition gave way to co-operation to hasten the formation of moderate nationalist leadership which was facing growing opposition from the KANU left-wing who commanded greater mass following than their opponents. Gary Wasserman recapitulates this inter-imperialist co-operation with nationalists as follows:

"In the political sphere, alone, the NKG-KADU merger, the British commercial backing of KADU, the AFL-CIO support for Mboya, and the Colonial Office's efforts to strengthen Kenyatta and isolate Odinga were alliances which were neither one-sided nor limited to racial or national boundaries."<sup>45</sup>

It is this neo-imperialist power behind this alliance that finally ensured the emergence of the African moderate leadership.

The alliance raised a fundamental question: which nationalists

should be included in the new partnership? And given the racial nature of Kenyan society, which sections of classes of Europeans and Asians should be brought into the partnership? What would make it hold together? The answer to these questions is to be found in the imperial policy toward the three communities. Since all three were under British control, Britain could make and unmake such alliances to suit her own interests. The imperial policy was not uniform and each group was affected differently depending on its political or economic importance in the country. Politically, the most important group was the nationalists for they had the African masses behind them who could be mobilized to extract political concessions from London.<sup>46</sup> The British policy toward this group was fairly cautious so as not to alienate the nationalists and force them to mobilize the African masses whose political awakening might undermine the anticipated balance of political forces. Economically, the most important class was constituted by the settlers who controlled the highly developed agricultural sector which was vital for domestic stability and foreign exchange earnings. And since the Kenyan economy depended heavily on this group, here too the imperial policy was cautious so as not to disaffect this class which could precipitate an economic crisis whose consequences could not be predicted. Asians were economically important in commerce, but this commercial class could be compromised without precipitating an economic or political crisis. However, to retain the confidence of investors, local and foreign, it was imperative to keep an even-handed policy. How was this balance maintained?

In the final analysis, the balance was struck by finding sections of classes in the immigrant communities and in the African community, which were also seeking such a balance as a mode of adaptation to political change necessitated by the growth of African

nationalism. In the case of the settlers, imperial policy was interested in promoting liberal sections of the settler class which accepted far-reaching reforms - political and economic - in order to come to terms with African nationalism; correspondingly the same policy phased out support for the reactionary settlers. The progressive section was organized around the New Kenya Group (NKG) under Michael Blundell's leadership; the reactionaries were grouped around the Kenya Coalition led by Cavendish-Bentinck.<sup>47</sup> As already pointed out, the Asian commercial bourgeoisie had joined African nationalist parties. Therefore, the key to the future leadership problem lay within the African community. The solution was discovered in the African petty-bourgeoisie. This class, as was pointed out in an earlier chapter, was opposed to Mau Mau; it was composed of various sections: in rural areas, it comprised the yeoman farmers or the landed gentry and a small section of the yeomanry which was on its way to becoming the rural bourgeoisie; in urban areas, it was comprised of people in the learned professions, top civil servants and the intelligensia.<sup>48</sup> The rural section was parochial and would have taken longer to train to run the emerging Kenya modern state and economy. Conversely, the urban section was well educated and its cosmopolitan outlook qualified it for the job. Therefore, the latter came to dominate the decolonization process. The rise of the petty-bourgeoisie to power marked the decline of radical nationalism based on a worker-peasant alliance. This evolution was sealed by the subsequent constitutional development which further marginalized mass politics in the country.

## II

British policy in Kenya since the Second World War was designed to maintain effective control in the country indirectly. The new policy was realized through a gradual reduction of official represen-

tation in the Legislative Council in such a way that the unofficial members eventually would outnumber the official members without undermining imperial power. This process came to be known as decolonization or preparation for self-government. It involved the introduction of successive constitutional reforms through which selected allies were placed in power. Although the time span of decolonization was very important, the single most important factor was the selection of an African leadership and its accession to power for any mistake here could undo everything else. Hence, cautious constitutional reforms.

The main constitutional reforms carried out during the Emergency were four and were calculated to marginalize worker-peasant politics which had led to the emergency. On one hand, there was the Lyttelton constitution which introduced multi-racial government in 1954; on the other, there was Coutts electoral reform of the same year which granted plural votes to qualified, mainly African voters. The qualifications behind this plurality of votes - education, property, loyalty etc. - speak for themselves of the bias inherent in these reforms in favour of the African petty-bourgeoisie.<sup>49</sup> Both reforms met a concerted African opposition: the African petty-bourgeoisie opposed them because they were not moving far or fast enough and they feared that this slow pace could awaken the masses to the real intentions of this class which was projecting itself as the representative of the people; the African masses opposed these reforms because they did little to alter class power relations and they suspected that the settlers still retained power under the facade of multi-racialism. The African petty-bourgeoisie could not ignore this popular view and refused to back the colonial administration. A deadlock was reached and, unless resolved quickly, it could have led to the crystallization of class antagonisms which could have upset

constitutional development. To deflect attention from the emerging class conflict, the Colonial Office introduced a new constitution, the Lennox-Boyd constitution in 1958 which was intended to broaden multi-racial representation to satisfy the African petty-bourgeoisie. Consequently, this class accepted the new constitution and agreed to co-operate with the colonial administration on condition that it was only a preparatory step to a full constitutional conference in 1960 that would usher in independence in 1963. Let us follow this constitutional development that enabled the African petty-bourgeoisie to attain political power.

The Lyttelton constitution split the settler ruling class into two sections: one section comprised of right-wing settlers who were committed to maintaining white supremacy and opposed African participation in the government accordingly; the other comprised of liberals who supported African participation in government and eventual dismantling of colour-bar, the basis of white supremacy. The former and the smaller of the two formed the Federal Independence Party (FIP) under Group-Captain Briggs' leadership; the other formed the United Country Party under Michael Blundell's leadership. British sympathy was with the latter group and both worked together to promote a multi-racial society in the country. The Lyttelton constitution was geared to this end: it diluted settler political dominance by creating a multi-racial government. The constitution replaced the Executive Council with a Council of Ministers. The new structure, in addition to the governor and the deputy governor, included six official members and eight unofficial members; three elected Europeans, two elected Asians and one appointed African plus two nominated European members. In the final analysis, the new set-up did not affect settler power immediately in spite of its progressive character. To give this



progressiveness substance, African representatives demanded at least two ministerial posts. Their demand was turned down. Thereupon Eliud Mathu, the sole African nominated member since 1944 and the only African in the Executive Council, resigned in protest. The administration shifted its attention to A.H. Ohanga, a Luo, and prevailed on him to take a portfolio, the Ministry of Community Development, which he accepted. He was the first African to hold a portfolio in the colonial government. Two facts emerge from this constitutional development: first, the implementation of multi-racialism marked the beginning of the end of settlerdom in the sense of selective integration of African petty-bourgeoisie into the settler ruling class with a view of subordinating settlers to the petty-bourgeois rule.<sup>50</sup> Second, the manner in which this selection of African petty-bourgeois representatives was made, marked the decline of Kikuyu dominance in nationalist politics and the rise of Luo leadership in its place. The latter development was facilitated by the imposition of the Emergency which suppressed Kikuyu politics until the end of the Emergency in 1960. In the meantime, the Asian representatives were also fighting for enlarged representation of their community in the government. To allay its fear of discrimination, it was allocated one portfolio, the Ministry of Works, which went to a Moslem leader, I.E. Nathoo. And the same colonial policy of divide-and-rule applied to the African community. It was operating here in the form of preferential treatment of the Moslem group vis-a-vis other Asian groups such as Hindu or Ismaili, even though it was acknowledged that these groups had different interests. Anyway, the multi-racial ideology remained attractive to all racial groups because of its inherent premise that each and every racial group would be granted political power in proportion to its size and economic power. This was accept-

able to the liberals who were becoming a dominant force in the white community. An election was held in 1956 to test the acceptability of this policy. All FIP candidates lost except its leader, Briggs; UCP won six; the rest went to independents. Blundell and others in UCP accepted portfolios in the government; independents followed suit and Briggs was prevailed on to accept one.<sup>51</sup> The two groups announced their united front in the Legislative Council which led to the formation of the European Elected Members Association and the UCP was formally dissolved in January, 1957.<sup>52</sup> This marked the beginning of the ascendance of the liberal leadership in the settler community which culminated in the formation of the New Kenya Group (NKG) in 1959. Nevertheless, this multi-racialism was not accepted wholly by the other races and even less by Africans. The latter remained cautious and unco-operative until their claims were satisfied.

The African opposition to the settler version of multi-racialism was demonstrated in the 1957 elections during which all African candidates campaigned against the Lyttelton constitution and the Coutts electoral system and the newly elected members were propounding "radical views."<sup>53</sup> To placate the growing African opposition, African representation in the Legislative Council was raised from six to eight. However, this increase of African members of the Legislative Council was not followed by universal suffrage, the chief one of the African demands which would have raised African petty-bourgeoisie to a dominant position in the council. Instead, suffrage was limited to forty percent of the African voters due to stiff qualifications imposed on the African electorate by the Coutts electoral reform. But the real blow to settler liberalism came after the election: the African elected members boycotted the Legislative

Council's functions. This put multi-racialism in limbo for a while. Yet, the Colonial Office was determined to press on with it by ensuring quantitative growth of African representation.

To salvage the situation, the new Colonial Secretary, Lennox-Boyd, came up with the Lennox plan or constitution of 1957. Under the new plan, the African representation in the Legislative Council was raised from eight to fourteen; that of Asian to eight. The Legislative Council sitting as an electoral college was to elect an additional twelve members, the so-called national members comprising four Europeans, four Asians and four Africans. The constitution set up the Council of State constituted by members appointed by the governor. Its job was to consider racial discrimination and report to the Colonial Secretary. The aim of the plan was not only to increase the African leadership in the Council, but also to remove the colour-bar in order to allow the movement of other races into the ranks of the dominant class. But were African and Asian leaders prepared to accept this arrangement?

The new constitutional development was still in favour of the settler although African and Asian representation in the Legislative Council was approaching parity with European representation. African representatives were against it; Asians were in favour of it. The Asian leaning toward the settlers was due to the fear arising from the rapidly growing African nationalism. What was particularly objectionable to the Africans was the specially elected members, the so-called national members, because the government was in a position to impose such leaders by using the votes of the nominated members and the settlers would vote for the pro-government candidates. As a result, the Africans representatives decided to boycott the Council and anathematize any African who broke the boycott as a traitor.

When the election was held, eight African members broke it by joining the government side. The attacks were particularly directed against Musa Amalemba, a Muluha from North Nyanza, who accepted a portfolio in the government, the Ministry of Housing. This collaboration widened conflict and divisiveness within the African community while exacerbating racial tension between Europeans and Africans even though the Emergency was still in effect. Under this atmosphere charged with ethnic and racial emotions, the class interest behind the abandonment of African electorate by their petty-bourgeois representatives was lost sight of. Most of the African representative joined the boycott and the colonial government could not continue indefinitely without them. The dead-lock was resolved in two ways: on one hand, Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary at the time, revealed in the House of Commons his plan to transfer power to the African majority and a constitutional conference to be held in 1960 before the pending general election in order to finalize his plan. African representatives accepted the new plan and ended their boycott. On the other hand, NKG was busy recruiting non-white members to demonstrate its commitment to multi-racialism. This campaign made up for its lost settler support by appealing to the

"relatively wealthy long-term residents, the European and Asian business and bureaucratic communities and had both the support of the colonial administration and the British government."<sup>54</sup>

It was the party that was to loom large in the decolonization process and to play a crucial role in restructuring society from one split on racial lines to one divided along class lines. It is the latter objective that lay behind the dismantling of the colour-bar which had created classes on colour or racial lines and the substituting of a multi-racial ideology in its place.<sup>55</sup> This multi-racial class dominated by African petty-bourgeoisie formed the basis of neo-imperialism

in the country.

No one played a more outstanding role in the decolonization of the country as outlined above or symbolized the contradictory nature of colonial politics, than Michael Blundell. The new leadership in other communities as well as that of the settlers centered around his personality. He was both actor and author in this drama of the politics of transition.<sup>56</sup> The son of an English solicitor, he was educated at Wellington College and thereafter went to Kenya to become a settler in 1925. In 1938 he was elected to the Coffee Board. After the war, he became the chairman for the European settlement schemes. In 1948, he entered into the Legislative Council as representative for the Rift Valley constituency. When the UCP was dissolved in 1958 after the formation of all European Elected Members Association, he became the leader of the Association. During the Emergency he held a position in the War Council as a minister without portfolio and was actively involved in counter-insurgency planning and operations against the Mau Mau. The latter involvement brought him face to face with the inherent danger in blind resistance to legitimate African nationalist aspirations. Consequently, he turned his attention to a long-term solution to colonial problems which he formulated in his multi-racial ideology.<sup>57</sup> In 1955 he left the War Council to join the ministry of Agriculture until 1959 when he resigned to form NKG. He held the same portfolio from 1961 to 1962. It should be pointed out that the latter office placed him in a strategic ministry to influence the far-reaching rural land reforms and resettlement schemes which were being carried out at this time to rehabilitate the landless, squatters and ex-Mau Mau. The Crown recognized his outstanding services for which he was knighted in 1962.

What did he and his party, NKG, represent? In urban politics, he was the spokesman for British commercial interests. In fact NKG finances came from these sources.<sup>58</sup> As was pointed out earlier, Blundell enjoyed access to the British ruling class through family and personal connections and, on the local scene, he had intimate links with a government whose administration was subordinated to the Colonial Office. From this relationship, he also represented British estate interests in the country.<sup>59</sup> It was this link with British administration and capital that explains why his settler opponents accused him and his party of being a "government party." The opposition's fear of the new alliance emerging from the above alignment left no illusions among the small, mixed farmers as Wasserman points out:

"A major criticism of [Blundell] group voiced by up-country, is that much of its original membership and support was commercial and professional as opposed to country support. This is regarded as a weakness because people feel rightly or wrongly that commercial and professional men are not as firmly tied to Kenya by their investment as farmers, and that they are not so vulnerable to nationalism. It is considered that they can, therefore, subscribe more readily to liberal policy."<sup>60</sup>

The difference in outlook between the two sections of the same class is that each faction sought to preserve its long-term interests beyond decolonization. The upcountry settlers especially the small mixed farmers feared that the new class alignment behind Blundell's NKG was directed against them and that they would be sacrificed to preserve the liberals' interests, and their fear as it turned out was justified: their mixed farms were later bought out to provide land for the landless under various African resettlement programs and schemes. The Asian commercial bourgeoisie found itself in the same position as the mixed farmers: the liberal settlers were prepared to placate the African petty-bourgeoisie at the expense of this

class. Consequently, both mixed farmers and Asian commercial bourgeoisie were traded off by the liberal-metropolitan bourgeoisie in order to win the co-operation of the African petty-bourgeoisie. However, the bargain was profitable to all the classes involved because market forces were around to play their full role according to the principle of willing buyer, willing seller and the latter had the option of investing locally or abroad; if the property was acquired by the state, the owner was given full compensation. Above all, the transition was gradual. It proved a boon to the African petty-bourgeoisie who seized the opportunity to climb up the economic ladder which they could not do before because of the colour-bar.

### III

The emergence of the new settler leadership under the banner of multi-racialism had its counterpart in the Asian community. The choice before the Asian leadership had to be made along the same lines. The conservative Asian leadership wanted an extended de-colonization period to consolidate their interests against the growing African nationalism and were sympathetic to the right-wing settler politics of Group Captain Briggs and Cavendish-Bentinck. There were, on the other hand, those who sympathized with liberal views and saw co-operation with the African nationalism as the only safe choice. Here too the victory of either group would depend on its adaptive politics because many factors essential to its victory were beyond its control.

On one hand, like their African counterparts, Asian leaders were opposed to the Lyttelton constitution because it gave them "second-class status in the Executive and Legislative process."<sup>61</sup> They demanded through their party, the Kenya Indian Congress (KIC), equality with Europeans. Their claim to parity with Europeans was based on

the fact that numerically they were more than Europeans, i.e. they supported multi-racialism without inequality. On the other hand, they opposed the Lennox-Boyd constitution on the ground that the new constitution was planned to serve European interests only. In the meantime, African nationalism was overtaking the settlers. The KIC was now vacillating<sup>62</sup> between supporting settler rule and co-operating with African nationalists; this confusion was aggravated by internal divisions along ethnic and religious lines - along Hindu, Moslem, Goan (Christian), etc. lines.<sup>63</sup> But the external pressures posed by the settler and African communities minimized these internal divisions in the Asian community and, by so doing, compelled the Congress Party to take ideological sides. As political pressures grew, so did the strain and stress in the party causing a split in 1960. Shortly thereafter the two factions joined their respective nationalist parties.

Discussion of the Asian contribution would be incomplete without mentioning contributions made by the Asian trade union leaders among them Makhan Singh, a Sikh communist, who was actively involved in organizing workers into non-racial unions. His efforts culminated in the formation of the Labour Trade Union of East Africa in 1936 from the Indian Labour Trade Union. He became the editor of the union's paper, Kenya Worker. The union led a successful strike in 1937. He saw the formation of the East Africa Trade Union Congress (EATUC) in 1949.<sup>64</sup> His deep involvement in the labour movement is illustrated by the fact that after his arrest in 1950, he spent ten years in jail, a reflection of the importance the authorities attached to his trade union activities. By the time of his detention, trade unionism was firmly established in the country. Over time, Asian and African co-operation grew strong and reached its pinnacle in 1961 when the Asian political leaders joined African nationalist parties.



## IV

The aforementioned constitutional reforms were so devised as to create in time an acceptable new African nationalist leadership based on an emergent African middle-class rather than race or tribe as had been the case in the past and to eliminate radical nationalists. However, this did not mean that racism and tribalism would not be used. Far from it. They would be used if the situation demanded it.<sup>65</sup> In any case, the political strategy behind these reforms was the removal of the radical leadership of the Kenya African Union (KAU) and the leadership in Mau Mau. Almost all the fundamental changes in question were introduced during the Emergency. KAU leaders, Jomo Kenyatta, Fred Kubai, Bildad Kaggia, Ochieng Oneko, Walter Odede, Paul Ngei, etc., were in detention;<sup>66</sup> others were forced into exile, Joseph Murumbi, for example.<sup>67</sup> The Mau Mau leadership was destroyed by detention or death. The leader of Mau Mau, Dedan Kimathi, was hanged in 1956. Once this uncompromising leadership was swept aside, the stage was set for the new leadership to emerge. The necessary condition for its growth was a change in the central political power. Who would constitute the new leadership? The constitutional changes and the economic reforms of the period, i.e. land consolidation, Swynnerton Agricultural modernization, African resettlement schemes, etc., were initiated as the answers to this question. The ideology of multi-racialism was used to justify the new social-political developments. However, an analysis of the latter shows that they were not meant to benefit the masses: only a limited number of Africans who qualified under the constitutional arrangements justified by multi-racialism would enjoy commensurate privileges with migrant communities.<sup>68</sup> These reforms and their superstructure were intended to win time for the settlers and the

British government for an "orderly transfer of responsibility to an educated and responsible African leadership under conditions favourable to the colonialists."<sup>69</sup> Which side would this leadership support, the colonial side, or that of the African masses?

The answer to this question is provided by a leading member of the East African Section of the London Chamber of Commerce, when he says that:

"the transformation wrought by the land consolidation in Kenya is beginning to create an agricultural middle class of Africans with vested interests in ordered progress, and if only time can be gained for this great change to spread, there will be thousands of Africans with much to lose by political extremism and therefore with no sympathy for it."<sup>70</sup>

The change spread beyond agriculture into commerce and business to broaden the base of the emerging leadership which would develop its own institutions and which would eventually link with its rural counterparts. As one of its representatives, the President of the Central Nyanza African Chamber of Commerce, put it in 1959: there were a number of African trade associations, chambers of commerce, co-operatives, companies, and farmers associations which were united to discuss the formation of a national businessmen's association. Besides co-ordinating every aspect of African business life in the country, the new association would also encourage the establishment of African banking and insurance industries.<sup>71</sup> These industries would forge important links with the rural African landed class. The goal of the economic reforms is quite unmistakable. The fact that this reformism had become the cornerstone of the imperial policy can be observed elsewhere in the British African possessions. For example, Sir John Moffat in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) was advocating a similar policy whereas in Southern Rhodesia which had the highest white settler population in British Africa, excepting South Africa, and which had internal self-government since 1923, a different course

was followed that has today culminated in armed struggle, and if the latter succeeds, it will be a blow to neo-imperialism; if it fails the latter will succeed as happened in Kenya. As events have shown in these countries and in Kenya in particular, neo-imperialism needs an African collaborationist class, like the one which was being groomed in Kenya, for neo-imperialism to prevail.

As it usually happens in any nationalist struggle, the elimination of nationalist leaders is not accomplished by a single stroke: it is a protracted process during which new leaders emerge to lead the struggle. This proved to be the case in Kenya too. After the detention of KAU leadership in 1952, those who survived kept a low profile by allowing non-Kikuyu leaders to carry on with KAU's business until the party was banned in 1953. With the President of KAU, Jomo Kenyatta, in detention, Walter Odede, the Vice-president of KAU and a nominated member to the Legislative Council who happened to be a Luo, took over the party leadership. He too was detained on suspicion of having links with Mau Mau, only to be replaced by another Luo, W.W. Awori, also a nominated member of parliament. He held the presidency of the party until it was formally proscribed on 8th June, 1953.

Denied political organization and with African papers banned, there existed a political vacuum in African nationalist politics which was effectively filled by the labour movement which became "the vanguard of the struggle against colonialism"<sup>72</sup> under the leadership of Tom Mboya. The latter joined KAU immediately after the arrest of its leaders in October 1952 to protest against the hostile attitude which the colonial administration was displaying toward the African parties. Mboya, like Kenyatta before him, was employed by the Nairobi City Council as a health inspector. He rose rapidly in

the labour movement. In October, 1953, Mboya became the General Secretary of the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions which changed to Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL) in 1955. With the successful settlement of the Mombasa Dock Strike in March, 1955, his leadership in the union movement was established. With his leadership firmly consolidated, he turned the Federation into a force to be reckoned with by the colonial government because it was "as much political as trade unionist."<sup>73</sup> It was openly advocating the KAU's policies. And like KAU, the Federation believed in non-violence. While on a tour in Britain, Mboya denounced the government at a press conference in London and demanded the constitutional reforms which KAU had made earlier. In Nairobi the Federation was making a similar denunciation against the Lyttleton-Coutts constitutional reforms. Instead of Coutts limited plural voting, the Federation demanded universal suffrage; the additional six seats for Africans in the Legislative Council were denounced as inadequate and the Federation went so far as to demand a constitutional conference to decide on more representative institutions for the country. For this boldness, the government told the Federation to choose between continued politicking which would lead to its being banned, or sticking to bread-and-butter issues, i.e. to economism. Mboya chose the latter, even though the Federation continued to take political stands. This political dimension did not bring about the ban because Mboya had gained an international reputation in Britain and America during his tours there in 1955 and 1956 respectively. His international position was enhanced by the support he got from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU); this support stayed the government's hand against him or his organization. But the threat continued to hover over the Federation because of the government's determination to

prevent any colony-wide African organization whose aim was to unite Africans. Yet, Mboya's political acumen and his organizational ability preserved the Federation under multi-ethnic membership which was to prove crucial to his political future and Kenya's. It was this pan-ethnic-based politics which preserved the integrity of the country amidst tribal based politics - and later regionalist politics - which was threatening the territorial unity of the country.<sup>74</sup>

Unlike urban inter-tribal politics, rural politics remained tribal or parochial in outlook and commitment: it was more of a tribal nationalism. Among the leaders who emerged as representatives of this rural politics was Oginga Odinga whose power base was in his home district of Central Nyanza. He, too, had entered into politics via KAU which he joined at Maseno soon after its founding in 1944. However, because of limitations on KAU's activities in his area - partly due to tribal suspicion deriving from the Kikuyu dominance in KAU and partly due to colonial obstruction - Odinga turned his organizational talent to the Luo Thrift and Trading Company and the Luo Union. And this became the trend in rural politics evolving into what has come to be known as "boss politics."<sup>75</sup> Taken together, the urban inter-tribal politics represented by Mboya and tribal-based politics represented by Odinga, marked the development of the new African nationalist leadership which emerged during the Emergency.

"In the place of the old leadership, the political initiative was taken by a new elite which had little direct<sup>76</sup> connection with the earlier KAU leadership."

Neither did it have any link with Mau Mau. And it is not surprising to discover that the new leadership would seek to ignore both KAU and the Mau Mau leadership.

Just as the new leadership was committed to removing colonialism, the latter was equally determined to resist and its repression took the form of the destruction of nationalist parties and in their place

the establishment of tribal associations. The ban on African political parties was lifted in 1955; the ban on country-wide parties remained in effect. The latter restricted the emerging African political parties to district association and, by so doing, entrenched tribal consciousness in African politics. This was the case because these districts coincided with the tribal administrative units which were set up in the 1920s. In this period, administrative districts were used as a tactic to balkanize African society in order to defeat African resistance; they were being used again for the same end in the fifties. The official aim was to encourage simple associations and orderly development of African political life and growth of responsible opinion. After their formation, these associations would be linked eventually with their respective members in the Legislative Council and provide them with advice. Later on, a colony-wide convention of Associations would be permitted, but not before these associations had matured and learned to handle their local problems. These associations were not allowed in Kikuyuland for fear that Mau Mau members might infiltrate them.<sup>77</sup> However, Kikuyu loyalists were allowed to have their own association even though it was composed of nominated members whose functions were to advise the colonial administration on affairs concerning the loyalists. This development of tribal parties or associations had very serious consequences on Kenya's political development.

From that point onward, Kenyan politics would be dominated by associations and their bosses, all competing for the resources of the central government in order to develop their tribal areas and, in so doing, to entrench themselves. The forerunner of these associations was the Kenya African Congress which was founded in 1955 by Argwings Kodhek, one of the first African lawyers. And like its

counterpart, the Kenya Federation of Labour, it opposed the balkanization of the African community and its inherent tribalism. It was refused registration since it was seeking country-wide support. The official reason for non-registration was that it would fall under Mau Mau influence, but the real reason was colonial fear of African unity. However, after the modification of the name, it was finally registered in April, 1956, as the Nairobi District Congress. It became very active in the city which was receptive to pan-ethnic politics. Shortly before the election of 1957, a split occurred in the party giving rise to the Nairobi People's Convention Party led by Tom Mboya. Nevertheless, the Congress Party continued with its work under Kodhek until it was absorbed by KANU in 1960. The two parties dominated Nairobi African politics with Mboya's Convention Party gaining the upper hand. In the meantime, other associations were coming into being, among them the Mombasa Democratic Union, the African District Association (Central Nyanza), the Kisii Highland, Abagusii Association of South Nyanza District African Political Association, the Taita African Democratic Union and the Nakuru African Democratic Party and so on. These organizations were to develop into nationalist parties along coalition lines or tribal alliance highlighting boss politics which tended to be exacerbated by the uneven colonial development in the provinces and the bosses' competition for central government's resources to boost their positions in their respective areas.

The 1957 election was a watershed in African politics and Kenya's political development. African candidates campaigned against the reforms mentioned previously since they were intended to boost government support by permitting loyal candidates to qualify. This was clearly marked in the Central Province, where loyalty certificates

were issued to the loyalists, the purpose of which was to exclude Mau Mau followers. In spite of the discrimination inherent in plural voting, almost all pro-government candidates, and especially the nominated members, were defeated. The outcome was a blow to the government and a boon to the African nationalists. It was a victory for the new nationalist leadership or elites as Dr. Gertzel calls them. The result shows that the victors were the men who were "benefiting from the expanding educational and economic opportunities."<sup>78</sup> In Nyanza, Odinga overwhelmingly defeated Ohanga. In Nairobi Mboya defeated the former nominated member for the area as well as a fellow Luo, Argwings Kodhek, his former colleague in the Congress Party. Ronald Ngala defeated the former member for the Coast. Similarly in Nyanza North, Nyanza South and Central Province, the winners were younger men and representatives of the educated group which had emerged recently from local politics.

The educational background of the group is reflected in the following: three were graduate teachers - Masinde Muliro of Nyanza North graduated from Cape Town University; Ronald Ngala and Oginga Odinga from Makerere University; Tom Mboya, a trade unionist, and Argwings Kodhek, a lawyer, came from Oxford; Dr. Julius Kiano came from the United States, etc. It was these petty-bourgeois elements, as Colin Leys observes, which were being groomed to serve as "a buffer class to be interposed between European supremacy and the African's challenge."<sup>79</sup> This is why the reforms were introduced step by step and convention associations were introduced in the same way to allow enough time for the petty-bourgeois leadership to crystallize. Once formed, these leaders would in turn demand sweeping political and economic reforms to accelerate their integration into the dominant ruling class and, if their claims were not heeded,



there was always the muscle of mass support to flex in order to wrest concessions from the administration.<sup>80</sup>

After the election, these new members went to the Legislative Council not as members of a national party nor did they have a national programme: they were guided mainly by boss politics or personal ambitions which made their united front vis-a-vis the colonial rulers elusive, if not impossible. To achieve a measure of common purpose, the African elected members formed an all-African organization known as the African Elected Members Organization (AEMO) in order to co-ordinate their efforts. The organization held a number of leadership conferences after October, 1957. In May, 1958, an attempt to create a convention of African Associations failed simply because the administration refused to permit it on the ground that it was country-wide and therefore conflicted with the official policy of allowing only district associations. In spite of this set-back, all African elected members including Asians, Arabs and one European (S.V. Cooke) formed the Constituency of Elected Members Organization (CEMO) to continue opposition to the Lennox-Boyd constitution and to urge the convening of a new constitutional conference to work out a new democratic constitution. To accelerate unity among their supporters, CEMO initiated a campaign for the release of Jomo Kenyatta who was still held in detention after serving his seven year sentence which expired in 1959 and there was enough evidence to show the administration was trying to bypass him in favour of the young and moderate leaders. But CEMO could not avoid the internal conflicts and disunity which characterized all political organizations of the time. Unlike AEMO, the divisiveness in CEMO was exacerbated by racial suspicions. Even so, the main factor was personality clashes and ambitions especially between Masinde Mulino, a Muluhya

and Tom Mboya, a Luo. In addition, individual ambitions aggravated the situation. All these factors were bound to break up the new parliamentary groupings.

## V

The first African party to emerge after the collapse of AEMO and CEMO was the Kenya National Party (KNP) which was formed in July, 1959. It was a multi-racial party in membership; it had Asians, Arabs and Europeans in it. However, this multi-racial support did not extend beyond parliament. Mr. S.V. Cooke was the only European member of parliament in KNP. Nevertheless, it had rural support mainly in areas from which the African KNP leaders came. The chairman was Masinde Mulino; vice-chairman, Cooke; its secretary, Ronald Ngala; and treasurer, Arvind Jamidar, an Asian. The conflict of interests within the party between rural and urban interests continued to grow and its multi-racial front lasted until November, 1959 by which time it was clear that the multi-racialism of KNP was aimed at blocking African aspirations and advancement. This is demonstrated by the fact that Africans wanted universal suffrage and the other races were opposed to it: the latter wanted qualified franchise. The radical African nationalists opposed to this gradualism broke away from the party to form their own.

The Kenya Independence Movement (KIM) was founded in August, 1959, with Oginga Odinga as its president, Tom Mboya as secretary: both were Luo; Dr. Julius Kiano, a Kikuyu, became chairman. KIM had an advantage over KNP in that it had rural as well as urban mass support due to the fact that it was supported by the two major tribes, Kikuyu and Luo, from which most urban workers came. As a result, KIM started off with a solid mass support which could be effectively used against colonialism. Among its immediate demands were a general

election, abolition of "specially elected" seats, reduction of minority reserved seats followed by responsible government by the party which won the majority, opening of the White Highlands to Africans, compulsory eight-year education for African children and abolition of exclusive racial schools, and so on. In short, KIM was a bit more radical in its demand for independence than the moderate KNP with its evolutionary multi-racial approach. KIM saw the latter as a device to delay African progress to independence and was determined to mobilize its mass supporters to speed up independence:

"African freedom will be achieved only through African nationalism. We refuse to sacrifice our nationalism for vague and deceptive non-racialism, designed to deflect the African from his rightful goal - that Kenya must be free and independent."<sup>81</sup>

It remained to be seen whether KIM would achieve this end, or would succumb to internal conflicts and administration's pressure to turn it to a district association. To avoid the latter, KIM worked under the umbrella of Mboya's Convention People's Party. But internal factionalism endured. Consequently, African leaders were under great pressure to make a common front in the forthcoming constitutional conference in January, 1960, in London. KIM and KNP called a leaders' conference at Kiambu to spell out their strategy. As a result, a joint delegation was formed with Ronald Ngala of KNP as leader and Mboya of KIM as secretary. The two parties established a pattern on which the succeeding nationalist parties followed. In the absence of any ideological differences, the crucial issue was which party would win the confidence of the immigrant communities, European and Asian, and by so doing, acquire access to the political economy of the country.

The short-lived united front of KIM and KNP fell apart after the London conference of January, 1960. After the ban on national parties was lifted in that same year, there was an urgent need to create national parties. To this end, a leaders' conference was held at

Kiambu in early March attended by ten elected members with the intention of organizing a national party, Uhuru Party of Kenya. One of the prominent African leaders, Tom Mboya, was going to be kept out of the party. Moi and Muliro objected to his membership because of personal animosities; Odinga and Kodhek, both from the same ethnic group as Mboya, the Luo, opposed his membership because of Mboya's American connections. But Mboya was a match for his detractors. He was well entrenched in his thriving Convention People's Party whose influence stretched from the capital to the most strategic rural districts and in the labour movement all of which made him indispensable. So, when the next meeting was convened on 14th March, Mboya brought his forces to Kiambu to lobby for him. They joined with thirty other African organizations convened to launch the Kenya African National Union (KANU). The new party was very popular. It had the advantage of incorporating KAU's initials, colours and symbols; besides it was dedicated to East African Unity or Federation. Above all, it enjoyed the combined Luo-Kikuyu support which constituted the majority of Africans in the country. The party's commitment to internal and external unity can be seen in the fact that its name and initials were almost identical with those of its Tanganyikan (Tanzanian) neighbour, The Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). When election results came out James Gichuru, the former President of KAU, became the acting president, waiting for Kenyatta to occupy the post upon his release from detention. Odinga, the consistent opponent of Mboya, assumed vice-presidency; Mboya became Secretary-General with Arthur Ochwada as his deputy. Ngala, the then labour minister in the caretaker government, was at a commonwealth conference and was elected deputy treasurer in absentia too. The latter two declined their respective posts in KANU after their return

to the country and embarked on organizing an opposition party.

Even so, this apparent unity was threatened by the coalitionist nature the party assumed. KANU was formed by the merger of the district associations and, after the merger, these associations became KANU branches headed by their respective bosses. Since there were no ideological differences among these leaders or between the major African parties, the field was wide open to tribalism, individual ambition and personality clashes which made African unity ever elusive. For example, Muliro preferred to keep his party, the Kenya African People's Party, out of KANU because he and Mboya could not get along. Others who feared the alleged Kikuyu-Luo domination decided to form an opposition party to counter it. This was the case with the Kalenjin and the Masai. Their fears were reinforced when Towett, a Kalenjin leader and the newly appointed minister of agriculture, was shouted down at the second Kiambu meeting. These personal and tribal antagonisms initiated a new wave of alignment within the African polity and among the three communities - Asian, European and African. Whichever party won the over-riding confidence of these communities and above all the African community, would lead the country to independence.

The new line-up emerged between March and April, 1960, with the formation of Kalenjin alliance comprising the four district independent parties - Baringo, Kericho, Nandi and Elgeyo-Marakwet - of which Moi played a leading role in their formation between 1958 and 1959. The alliance represented 900,000 Kalenjin-speaking members and was created to protect rural interests of these groups, mainly land. They claimed the land in Western Kenya as theirs prior to colonization and that it should revert to them after decolonization. The alliance was directed against the mobile members of KANU especially the landless Kikuyu who intended to migrate to this area. However,

what is interesting is that the alliance did not worry the white settlers who had most of this land: they were welcome to stay. This provides the explanation behind the collaboration between the alliance and these settlers which culminates in the latter's total support for the enlarged alliance in KADU. The alliance's opposition to KANU was made public on 21st August at a public meeting in Eldoret in which the alliance rejected KANU leadership and decided to go national by inviting the "gentle and well-behaved" Africans to join the alliance. Its outlook is discernible in the aristocratic decorum demanded of the prospective members. Yet, their claim to land in the White Highlands would be challenged by the Masai unless an accommodation with the latter was reached. Contact was already initiated between Muliro and Tipis, a Masai member of the Legislative Council and the two joined with the Kalenji elected members, Moi and Towett: their alliance was formally announced on 21st August at a mass meeting at Kapkatet in Kericho District. To press their claim on land, the Masai United Front was formed on 22nd May and it was committed to keeping Kikuyu and Luo out of Masai areas. What is of interest in the Masai turnabout is that it smacks of opportunism rather than tribalism since Masai and Kikuyu had been living side by side conducting commerce through barter and socially through intermarriage. Therefore, it is fairly important to go beyond the tribal hostilities to discover the source of antagonism. In June the link was established among the Kenya African People's Party, the Kalenjin alliance and the Masai United Front. At Mombasa another group came into existence, the Coast African Peoples Union under Ngala who had refused the post of treasurer in KANU on his return from the United States of America. The Somali in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) had formed the Somali National Association with a Pan-Somali outlook. The latter

wanted to secede to join Somalia. All these diverse organizations met at Ngong in Masailand on 25th June to form a new national party, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) with Ngala and Muliro as leader and deputy leader. Like KANU, KADU was a coalition of tribal groups and district associations mainly from minority pastoralist tribes; unlike KANU, the latter represented conservative tribal and settler interests.

There was a constitutional conference to be held in London in 1960 to smooth out the claims and counter-claims made by various communities in Kenya to Whitehall. The conference promised an election in the following year to confer power to the national class which was created by political reforms in the past few years as is made clear by the Colonial Secretary and the man behind these changes, Mr. Lennox-Boyd, when he proclaimed in parliament that:

"I can claim that the emergence of this middle-of-the-road group of non-sectional opinion, moderate, yet forward-looking, challenging extreme opinion among all communities, undoubtedly stems from the adoption in the present constitution, a principle which, I know, has long been regarded with favour on both sides of the House. It is the presence of elected members in the Legislative Council with a responsibility to all races and not to people of only one class (read settlers), which has undoubtedly been a stimulus to fresh thought on their problems by many of the people of Kenya."<sup>82</sup>

The election was held in February, 1961. The electoral strategy was calculated to give political power to this class and the party reflecting its interests and outlook. Therefore, the aim was to give power to KADU at the expense of KANU, and, since the latter had greater mass following in rural and urban areas, the administration had to resort to manipulation and gerrymandering in order to place KADU in power. This practice is confirmed by the election result: nineteen seats were won by KANU, fifteen by KADU, three by the Kenya Indian Congress, two by the Kenya Freedom Party, seven by the New

Kenya Group, including its leader Michael Blundell and three European seats went to the Kenya Coalition led by Cavendish-Bentick. The remaining sixteen seats were won by independents - European, Asian, Arab and Somali independents. In any case, the Africans won the majority of the seats with independents supporting either of the African parties. As far as seats go, KANU won over KADU by four seats; but when this victory is translated into ballots, it reflects a crushing defeat: KANU had 590,661 votes to KADU's 143,079, i.e. KANU canvassed eighty percent of the African votes. Gerrymandering was responsible for this abnormality. Yet, KANU victory could still be countered by the government since the White Paper of 25th February 1960 authorized the administration to pack its side by nominated members who would be either KADU followers or sympathizers.

However, what the election proved was that there was no ideological difference between KANU and KADU on how to reconstruct the post-colonial society in Kenya; their difference lay in the pace of decolonization with KANU favouring accelerated decolonization and KADU graduated form. Therefore, Britain was interested in the latter for that very reason which coincided with her interests. Internally too this is what motivated settlers and Asian commercial bourgeoisie to support KADU. Backed by these internal and external forces, KADU strategy focused on intensifying factionalism in KANU between moderates led by Tom Mboya and radicals led by Oginga Odinga, with the hope of winning support of the former which enjoyed Anglo-American backing. Odinga was sympathetic to the East and received moral and material support from there.<sup>83</sup> The acting president of KANU could be won over to Mboya's side because he was pro-West as the following statement shows. In November, 1960, Gichuru said:

"We in Kenya are now busily engaged in preparing for a bigger share of the responsibility of a government which we are determined shall be founded on the best



precepts of democracy. In order to develop our resources to the full, vast sums of capital will be needed, and this is where we turn to the countries of Europe to demonstrate in practical terms the meaning of international co-operation and goodwill with money and skill that Europe has in such large measure, and the markets we offer in Africa, there is scope for collaboration to our mutual benefit."<sup>84</sup>

And then he added:

"The threat that looms over Africa from the communist world is big and a real one - a threat that we cannot afford to ignore if the peaceful conditions are to continue..It would be a matter of great pride to us to feel that we enjoy the full confidence of the immigrant races in our country and we want them to work<sup>85</sup> with us as colleagues and fellow citizens."

Hence, KANU moderates were prepared to co-operate with KADU. However, before this co-operation could be effected, KANU radicals such as Odinga had to be defeated or co-opted. The manoeuvre to defeat the latter centered around the exclusion of former KAU leaders who were returning to politics as KANU leaders after the expiration of the Emergency and thus reinforcing Odinga's hand. In fact, most detainees were suspicious of the leading African parties to the extent that they formed their own parties while still in detention. For example, Kenyatta and his fellow detainees had formed the National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1957 with the intention of turning it into a national party after their release. NDP would probably have come out better than either KANU or KADU because its leadership was respected by the African populace and was associated with the nationalist struggle. Moreover, NDP leadership came from the major African ethnic groups: Kikuyu were represented by Kenyatta, Kaggia, Kubai and Kungu Karumba; Luo by Ochieng Oneko; Kamba by Paul Ngei, and Asians by Pio Garva Pinto.<sup>86</sup> This leadership had no doubt as to its national commitment:

"It is our firm belief that though the struggle may be bitter, the African cause must triumph over imperialism and colonialism."<sup>87</sup>

And the leadership was Pan-Africanist too in its outlook: it believed in "a continuous liberation of Africa."<sup>88</sup> Once in KANU, this group was bound to back Odinga who was their colleague in KAU and who had continued to advance KAU's objectives as well as defending the detainees. Therefore, it was in the interest of colonialism to keep these men out of KANU by detaining them longer after the expiration of their seven year sentence due on 14th August, 1959. So these men were kept in detention beyond that date. For example, Kenyatta was not released until the end of 1961.

Even though KANU won a large enough majority to form the government, the party leadership, Gichuru and Mboya, said they would not form such a government without Kenyatta: "nothing short of Kenyatta's release will satisfy the Africans."<sup>89</sup> Governor Remson was equally determined: Kenyatta would not be released immediately. The dead-lock was sealed by the uncompromising attitude of both sides initiating another phase of political manoeuvres to break KANU's stance.<sup>90</sup> The British government sided with the administration in Nairobi. To break the dead-lock, the two African parties decided to send a delegation to consult Kenyatta on this matter at Lodwar where he was detained. After the meeting, both parties issued a joint statement which stressed among other things that "KANU and KADU agreed to co-operate for the attainment of two principal aims: complete independence for Kenya in 1961 and Kenyatta's unconditional release."<sup>91</sup> Hardly a month went by without such a delegation of both parties visiting Kenyatta which was now facilitated by his being shifted to Maralal, nearer to Nairobi. In any case, these pledges were fragile and short-lived because manipulation kept pace with events.

The KADU leader, Ngala, had consultations with the Colonial Secretary, Iain MacLeod, in London and on 19th April carried further

discussion with Governor Renison about forming the forthcoming government. Three days later, the governor and the KADU parliamentary group, headed by Ngala, appeared at Government House to announce a new agreement that KADU would form the government and that the governor had consented to KADU's building a house for Kenyatta at Kiambu which he would use upon his release from detention. The motive behind this move was necessitated by the fact that detainees could not be detained any longer without weakening KADU's support while strengthening that of radical nationalists in KANU who were fighting relentlessly for the release of detained nationalists. Hence, KADU's attempt to co-opt Kenyatta and his colleagues while collaborating with the administration: KADU formed a minority government with settler and Asian support.

The neo-colonial nature of KADU minority government is revealed by its composition. It had four high officials of the colonial administration and eight elected ministers: four Africans - Ngala, Muliro, and Towett, all KADU and one KANU defector, Bernard Mate; three Europeans - Wilfred Havelock, who had been a minister of local government; Michael Blundell, minister of agriculture, and Peter Marian, minister of tourism. The latter resigned to join KANU parliamentary group and was replaced by an independent, Howard-Williams, and one Asian. The neo-colonial structure inherent in this set-up is that the European minority secured a two-thirds majority in the government turning KADU into a settler tool. KANU did not change its pledge. MacLeod recognized Ngala as the "leader of government business." To hold its ranks together, KANU threatened to expel any member who did not adhere to its position of non-participation in the government. The only way to make the minority government work was for the Governor to resort to nomination of more members as spelled out in the White Paper of 1960: he nominated eleven members to swell government support. The settler-KADU align-

ment in and out of parliament was intended to bypass the political prisoners, Kenyatta and his colleagues and to undermine KANU as the defection of Mate demonstrated. When these detainees gained their freedom, they found a hostile African government in power which effectively kept them out of politics.

Even more revealing was the settler strategy of double-dealing. Before the election, the New Kenya Group and the Kenya Indian Congress had pledged their support to a KANU government which at that stage was in no doubt. Consequently, NKG enjoyed KANU electoral support without which the Group would have suffered serious set-backs because it had lost settler confidence and its urban white support could not make up for the lost settler support. And in spite of KANU support, NKG switched to KADU and its key leaders, Blundell and Havelock, accepted portfolios in the minority government as did the Kenya Indian Congress: Arvind Jamida accepted a portfolio. But the settlers did not put all their eggs in the KADU basket; two leading NKG members, Bruce McKenzie, the former minister of agriculture, and Derek Erskine, joined KANU. The settlers had a firm hold in both parties and could influence the evolution of leadership in both parties. Given the intra-party factionalism and inter-party rivalry, unity was the prime need, but there was nothing or no-one who could impose such a unity except the charismatic Kenyatta: agitation centred around his release and no political progress could be achieved without him.

Kenyatta gained his freedom on 21st August. But Kaggia was kept in detention longer. Upon his release, a joint KANU-KADU delegation went to see him at his Gatundu home on 22nd to tell him of their agreement to work together. On the same day, Governor Renson went to see him. After their talks, KANU and KADU issued a statement on 24th

August to the effect that they agreed to form a provisional coalition government and demanded independence for Kenya in February 1962 and the convocation of a Kenya constitutional conference for September to put an end to the racial distribution of parliamentary seats, plus repeal of the Ordinance under which Kenyatta as an ex-convict could not be elected to the Legislative Council. They also agreed to the abrogation of the treaty between Britain and Zanzibar which gave the latter control over the coastal strip of Kenya. Having been forced by mass pressure to work for the release of Kenyatta and his associates, KADU had to devise new methods to thwart a KANU victory. KADU leaders went about breaking their pledges and continued to attack radical wing of KANU and Kenyatta in particular. Towett and his fellow Kalenjin leaders launched their attack on KANU and even those in KADU who had worked for Kenyatta's release, Ngala and Muliro, joined the black campaign. Kenyatta, realizing the futility of uniting the two parties, joined KANU. And in November, the Governor called upon the two parties to form a coalition government and prepare for constitutional talks. But KANU with the majority in the Council should form the government. Yet, KADU, with settler backing, insisted that the majority in question should be limited between the two parties, i.e. the government should consist of four Africans from each party and four from the European community representatives, and there is no doubt as to where migrant communities' support lay when it came to choosing between the two African parties. Nevertheless, the Kenya Coalition and the Deputy Governor, Eric Griffith-Jones, came up with a compromise which gave KADU only a slight majority and KANU was prepared to accept it because the latter hoped to acquire greater support than KADU by mobilizing mass support in and out of parliament. But the Governor's fear of KANU victory compelled him

to insure KADU's triumph by nominating pro-KADU members. This stance killed the idea of a coalition government. KANU remained in the opposition. This shows the British-settler-Asian determination to secure an African leadership acceptable to them; conversely, KANU leaders and their supporters were as much determined to foil this alliance. Which side would win? Only actual struggle could decide the issue.

## VI

When the campaign to denigrate KANU and its leaders failed because the latter had a long association with the nationalist struggle, the opposition directed their attention to driving a wedge between Kenyatta and his most dedicated defender and vice-president of KANU, Odinga. The aim was to isolate Odinga and defeat him and his allies in KANU, especially his former KAU associates such as Ochineng Oneko and Bildad Kaggia. If the plan had succeeded, KANU would have become no longer a threat and probably there would not have been any need for two parties which had no ideological differences. Although the settlers were backing KADU, they knew the limits to which they could push their ally without provoking the African masses; they were also working within KANU so that they had nothing to lose if KANU won independence. The role of transforming KANU from within was carried out by two NKG members, McKenzie and Erskine, who were members of KANU. For example, when a KANU parliamentary group met in Nairobi, a meeting engineered by both men to which Odinga was not invited; it was decided that Kenyatta should be asked not to demand a seat in the Legislative Council on the ground that this would raise dissension in KANU for no member of parliament was prepared to surrender his seat. This claim was not correct: there were African members of the Council who were prepared to do so. And the

refusal to give up such a seat on Kenyatta's behalf would be embarrassing. After these deliberations, Erskine telephoned Odinga to tell him that he had been elected head of the delegation which was to inform Kenyatta of the party's decision. Odinga declined of course. Kenyatta's entry into parliament was left in the air until after the Lancaster Conference.

After the failure of these tactics to undermine Odinga, the anti-Odinga figures in both parties turned to anti-communism: they alleged that Odinga was a communist and, by so doing, intimated that he was subversive. This was not new since even Kenyatta was subjected to this malicious campaign in the fifties. The new anti-communist campaign, unlike its predecessors, involved Africans too. On 14th February, 1962, Kenyatta led a KANU delegation to London to discuss a constitution for self-government. Odinga's foes seized the occasion to isolate Kenyatta from Odinga and like-minded leaders in KANU by assigning various advisors to him and giving delegates separate accommodations so that they could neutralize Odinga's influence and subsequently smear him when so isolated. In fact the scenario was set in advance so that when the delegates got to London, an anti-Odinga campaign was already under way. As Odinga points out:

"Preparation for a London conference next month on a new constitution for Kenya is being hampered by bitter personal rivalry within the colony's largest political party, the Kenya African National Union. Involved in the situation are: a threat to the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta, who became president of the party after many years of jail and detention has angled large amounts of money received from communist China to build a sizeable personal following...Reports that Tom Mboya, general secretary of the party, is preparing to lead about fifteen top members of the party to form a new party that would ally itself with the Kenya African Democratic Union, the colony's second largest party, to form a powerful opposition to the Kenyatta-led party...From outside the party Masinde Muliro, vice-president of the rival Democratic Union...said 'once the British forces leave Kenya we will have a communist onslaught upon us...

Political observers regard Odinga as a threat to both Kenyatta and Mboya as well as a disruptive force at the forthcoming constitutional conference and in Kenya afterwards."<sup>92</sup>

It remains a puzzle why Odinga would oppose Kenyatta after fighting relentlessly for his release from detention. However, this was part and parcel of the Cold War crusade against communism which equated anti-colonialist nationalist struggle with communism whose suppression justified any means with the aim of bringing together "those dedicated to a free and modern Kenya," i.e. Kenya subordinated to neo-imperialism.<sup>93</sup> Yet, this objective could not be achieved without a prolonged struggle.

Besides the frontal attack levelled against KANU and its leaders there was another far-reaching design by KADU and its allies to undermine the unitary government in which KANU was bound to emerge as the dominant force. KADU's plan advocated regionalism or majimbo as it was called in Swahili. This plan had been advanced by the settlers in the fifties, but it was rejected and many keen observers of the Kenya scene in 1961 did not expect it to go through. Yet, the idea was propagated as the best way to counter Luo-Kikuyu domination of Kalenjin and other minority tribes which composed KADU. But behind the alleged domination, it is not difficult to detect an anti-communist insinuation; the allusion in question is provided by KADU leader, Ronald Ngala, when he claims that the

"Unfortunate experiences in some ex-British colonies have shown just how easily the Westminster pattern of government can be perverted into a ruthless dictatorship. I assure you that the adoption of an orthodox Westminster pattern for Kenya would inevitably result in placing power in the hands of a dictator."<sup>94</sup>

Ngala overlooks the fact that colonialism was not a school to cultivate "Westminsterists." Nevertheless, the fear of centralized government had gained currency in Africa during the process of decolonization. For example, the Katikkiro (prime minister) of Toro



in Uganda sent a cable to the British Colonial Secretary in 1960 to make it abundantly clear that his people could not accept a unitary government.<sup>95</sup> As will be shown shortly, regionalism was designed to weaken the central government in various ways, but the most serious was that it set secessionism in motion - all these problems would direct attention of the central government from the pressing issues and, by so doing, the vested interests would be relieved of their fear. Even though KANU was aware of the dangers inherent in regionalism, KANU leaders were prepared to allow limited powers to the six regions in order to clear the way for the constitutional conference. Besides, they were aware that there had been delegations to London who returned to their countries empty-handed. The situation at home demanded of them to return with something or risk alienating their supporters whom KADU would be more than glad to take. What is interesting in this plan however is the convergence of KADU and settler interests.<sup>96</sup> If regionalism succeeded, it would have enabled settlers to realize their earlier plan for provincial autonomy and they would have controlled one of the six regions, the White Highlands, and the core of the Kenya agricultural based economy and by so doing, they would have retained enormous economic power over the other regions - Western, Northern, Eastern, Central Province, and coast - most of which were not viable economically with the exception of Western and Central Province. Settler economic power would have conferred political power on them. And KADU would have presided over the new set up because "the task was to establish a constitution to enable KADU to remain as a force in it."<sup>97</sup> Regionalism then was a device to preserve the status quo by preventing structural changes in the economy which would have profound political effects.

The inherent divide-and-rule principle behind regionalism is s

in the growth of secessionism which was not heard of before de-colonization. The Somalis in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) wanted their would-be autonomous region to join the Republic of Somalia. There was a similar movement in the Coast Region since the coastal strip technically did not belong to Kenya, but to Zanzibar according to the treaty of 1888 between Britain and the Sultanate of Zanzibar. But the most serious was the exacerbation of tribal nationalism or chauvinism intended to confine Kikuyu and Luo to their respective regions.<sup>98</sup> Tribal consciousness became an integral part of national politics, an obscuranist ideology to hide the emerging alliances.

KANU accepted a limited decentralization; KADU wanted a thorough confederation. They were tugged in a dead-lock. But the stalemate was working against KANU and it was becoming clear KANU would be the loser. Could Kenyatta and KANU go along with this compromise over regionalism and by so doing sacrifice radicalism in KANU or radical nationalists?

This would be determined by the way the dead-lock was resolved. To break it, the then Colonial Secretary, Reginald Maudling, gave both parties an ultimatum; they must form a coalition government. Each side was asked to forward a list of seven ministers. On Kenyatta's list, Odinga's name was there as Finance Minister. The Colonial Office vetoed his appointment and the British government refused to give any explanation.<sup>99</sup> In addition to Governor Renson's recommendation for the exclusion of Odinga from cabinet, support for this move came from the moderates of both parties. The collaboration of KANU and KADU against the radical wing of the former had begun.

The next phase of the "regrouping" of moderate elements in KANU was centered in parliament. This aspect was directed to widening t

division in the party concentrating on the moderate wing which would be integrated in KADU or vice versa. This strategy required prolonging the duration of coalition government and delaying independence to allow the contest to be played out. In this regard, Wasserman writes:

"[The parties'] energies would be so dissipated in fighting each other that the chances are we could continue to rule the country until the elections had decided which party would be in the majority and thus to resume the task of government."<sup>100</sup>

And if this plan failed, the settler-backers of KADU such as Michael Blundell felt that the use of force would bring about the same results: "the governor [would] rule by decree with a small body of nominated advisers."<sup>101</sup> Nothing would be left to chance.

KANU too was very much aware of this eventuality. In a speech on 14th November, Kenyatta requested the British government to set a definite date for the election in the Spring of 1963 and independence by the end of the year; he also demanded that Britain dismantle her military bases in Kenya. Kenyatta gave expression to this demand in his cable to the Saudi Arabian delegation to the United Nations after its disclosure that Britain was stock-piling nuclear weapons at her Kahawa base in Kenya. This prompted the British Foreign Secretary, Duncan Sandys, to visit the country in February 1963 where he stayed for three weeks. His aim was to bring KANU and KADU closer or to a compromise on the controversial points of the independence constitution, the details of which experts in both capitals, London and Nairobi, were hammering out. However, their positions were getting further apart and the most fundamental difference between KANU and KADU was the type of government Kenya should have: the former was committed to unitary government; the latter to confederation. In spite of this crucial difference, the

Foreign Secretary did make them agree on a constitutional provision granting self-government to Kenya and putting an African majority government headed by an African Prime Minister in charge of the administration.

The election was held from May 18th to 28th. The problems raised by regionalism, tribalism and secession were manifested in various regions. For instance, in the township of Isiolo in the Northern Frontier District (NFD), a crowd of a thousand Somali secessionists assembled on 24th May to prevent voters from voting. Police opened fire and several people were killed. There were also armed incidents in Ukambani initiated by the African Peoples Party (APP), a tribal-based splinter group of KANU headed by Paul Ngei who feared he might be denied an influential position in KANU. There was to be a KANU election meeting at Kangundo, an APP territory. So APP supporters, five hundred in all, went armed with their traditional weapons - bows and arrows and clubs - and staged an attack against KANU supporters. The police were around and contained the violence. There were numerous such incidents. Their importance lay in that they demonstrate graphically how the strategy to undermine KANU and its leadership was carried out.

Nonetheless, the election went on as planned. The African electorate totalled 2,668,569 voters out of a population of 8,300,000. They were to elect 119 members of the House of Representatives and 40 senators. The contesting parties included the two major ones and three other minor ones - APP, the Baluhya Peoples' Party and the Coast Peoples' Party. The latter three were sympathetic to KADU. The Somali population in the NFD boycotted elections and their boycott left 112 seats in the House of Representatives and 38 in the senate to be contested, and only six of the seven regional assemblies

were involved. The results show that KANU came out stronger in spite of all the machinations to deny it victory.

Kenyatta won his seat unopposed. KANU and its independents supporters won 71 of the 112 seats in the House of Representatives and 20 of the 38 seats in the Senate and thus controlled three of the six regional assemblies. However, what reflects the actual strength of KANU is the fact that in Nakuru, the centre of the White Highlands and a KADU stronghold, KANU won all the seats. The same thing happened in Kericho and in Voi at the Coast Province. In the municipalities, KADU did well only at Mombasa. Even here, KADU's victory is attributable to its leader, Ngala, whose charismatic leadership and long-established Coast Peoples' Party which had been absorbed by KADU, swung the coast region behind his party.

As expected, the newly appointed Governor to Kenya, Malcolm MacDonald, announced on 1st June that Kenya would be granted self-government with Kenyatta as Prime Minister and the new constitution would go into effect immediately. The Governor kept to himself the portfolios of External Affairs, Defense and internal security. The government had another twelve members, including Odinga as minister of Home Affairs; Gichuru as minister of Finance and Economic Planning and Koinange as minister of State for Pan-African Affairs. What is interesting at this juncture is the entry of Odinga into the Cabinet which was rather a tactful move by the moderates to avoid another popular uproar like the one which followed his exclusion from government by the British authorities earlier. This is confirmed by the fact that Odinga was excluded from the government three years later in 1966 and for the same reason which proves the continuity of the old colonial policy. Given this continuity, it is fitting at this point to ask: what was the nature of this leadership executing an

outmoded policy? And what would be its outlook?

The answers to these questions are to be found in the ideology and the economic development of the country as promulgated by the head of the party and government, President Kenyatta, soon after KANU electoral victory:

"On this great day in the history of our nation, I pledge that the KANU government which is about to take office, will be guided in its task by the principles of democratic African socialism. We shall build a country where every citizen may develop his talents to the full, restricted only by the longer aim we have of building a fair society. The right of all to their property will be fully protected...Our government intends to do away with the terrible poverty of so many of our people... We do not do all this from foreign charity. We are not going to compromise our independence by begging for assistance."<sup>102</sup>

This announcement is fundamental to understanding the nature of the new African leadership. The so-called African socialism is a petty-bourgeois obscurantist ideology which is neither African nor socialist, but a denial of colonial history by insisting on the non-existence of capitalists in the colonial capitalist system.<sup>103</sup> Of course there is a good reason for this denial. It stems from the fact that the anti-colonialist struggle - conscious or not - was anti-capitalist and, as was pointed out earlier, decolonization was speeded up to prevent the African masses from linking one with the other because that logical connection, once made, would have transformed decolonization into a struggle for socialism to forestall neo-imperialism. No one was as much aware of this threat as Bruce McKenzie who warned the settlers and the British government of "the dangers of frustrating KANU too much"<sup>104</sup> which would have forced the Kenyan masses to struggle resolutely and, in the course of this struggle inevitably to have drawn the logical connection between the two phases of their struggle. Given this premise, the leadership of the two

parties shared the same concern which is reflected by their common interest in confusing the African masses by this mystification known as African Socialism. It was this outlook which led to the merger of the two nationalist parties in 1964. The new leadership would lead post-colonial Kenya along the neo-colonialist path as Wasserman shows when he asserts that:

"Kenyan independence under an African government was a dead letter by February, 1960. (Admittedly which African would rule was an important dispute among the personalities involved). But the type of society that would evolve, the position of the great bulk of Africans in that society and, in a real sense, the reason why one wanted independence in the first place were questions which their failure to pose at this time the nationalists showed themselves accepting the colonialist's answers. They inherited a ready-made state with sufficient resources to make their rule profitable without coming to terms, other than those of the colonizer, with the problems and potentials of Kenya."<sup>105</sup>

The purpose of creating the new nationalist leadership and its neo-colonial partnership is abundantly clear. After consensus among parties and partners was reached, independence was granted in December 1963. The next phase is the story of how this leadership used its political power or state power to gain economic power, thus to overcome its own underdevelopment as a ruling class.

## FOOTNOTES

1. G.H. Holtham, "Current Dilemmas in Aid Policy : Observations from British aid to Kenya," Overseas Development Institute Review, No.1 (1976), p.41.
2. N.S. Carey-Jones, The Anatomy of Uhuru (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1966), p.69.
3. Ibid., pp.153-178.
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5. L. Edmondson, "Foreign Aid and Third World Interests : Some Reflections on the Duncan Committee Report," Bulletin Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Vol.2, 1 (October, 1969), p.27.
6. Holtham, p.40.
7. Carey-Jones, pp.94-95.
8. E.A. Vassey, "A European Standpoint in Kenya Controversy," (London : Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1947), p.19.
9. For further information on how Britain took initiatives in regard to independence of Kenya, see the speech given by the then Secretary of State for Colonies, Mr. Iain MacLeod, quoted in footnote four.
10. Tom Mboya, Freedom and After (London : Andre Deutsch, 1963), p.89.
11. Derwent Whittlesey, "Kenya, the Land and Mau Mau," Foreign Affairs : An American Quarterly Review, vol.32, Nos.1-4 (October, 1953 - July 1954), p.89.
12. Jack Woddis, Africa : The Lion Awakes (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961), pp.176-177.
13. Opoku Agyeman, "Kwame Nkrumah and Tom Mboya : Non-Alignment and Pan-African Trade Unionism," Presence Africaine, No.103 (3rd Quarter, 1977), p.75.
14. This allegation goes as far back as the 1920s. As E. Powys Cobb points out in The Thermopylae of Africa, Kenya Colony (Nairobi : The East African Standard Ltd., 1923), p.13, of which he writes: "White Race was able to turn back Asiatic invasion. It lies in the subtle plausible forms of the attack, which may take the White Race unprepared. Already Asiatic advance guards have established bridge-heads in many territories where the White watch was not alert; for example Natal, East Africa, Mauritius, Fiji and British Guiana. The cosmopolitans, both the secret agents of Bolshevik propaganda and their unconscious instruments, the sincere exponents of rigid political theories, may so play



upon the lower and material cravings and so drug the higher senses of the White Race, that it might awaken too late."

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22. Ibid., p.95.
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31. Ibid., p.72.
32. Ibid., p.78.
33. Issa G. Shivji, Tanzania : The Class Struggle Continues, Development Studies Papers, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, 1973, p.42.
34. Carey-Jones, p.96.
35. Margat, p.177; Tandon, p.81; Bennett, p.154.

36. Tandon, p.81.
37. Carey-Jones, p.125.
38. Ibid., p.123.
39. Ibid., p.125.
40. Nicola Swainson, The Role of the State in Kenya's Post-war Industrialization, Institute for Development Studies, Working Paper No.275, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya (September, 1976) (mimeographed), p.5.
41. --- East Africa Royal Commission 1953-1955 Report, Cmd. 9475, H.M.S.O., 1955, p.111.
42. Wasserman, p.67.
43. Ibid., p.67.
44. Odinga, p.210; Wasserman, p.67.
45. Wasserman, p.129.
46. F. Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (Hammondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), pp.48-49.
47. Wasserman, p.29.
48. Shivji describes this class on page 57 as follows:  
 "In Kenya, there were important sections of the petty-bourgeoisie - yeoman farmers and traders, for example - besides the urban-based intelligentsia, who had already developed significant 'independent' roots in the colonial economy. Thus the petty-bourgeoisie itself as a class was strong and different sections within it were more or less at par."
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50. Blundell, pp.253-254.
51. Bennett, p.140.
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53. E. Sik, The History of Black Africa, Vol.IV (Budapest : Akademiai Kiado, 1974), p.47.
54. Wasserman, p.16.
55. Ibid., p.16.
56. Ibid., p.39-40; for the details on life and political career of Sir Michael Blundell, see his autobiography cited on footnote 26.
57. Blundell, pp.211-220.

58. Wasserman, p.40.
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60. Ibid., p.40.
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80. Fanon, pp.48-49.
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83. Wasserman, pp.96-98.
84. --- "Mr. MacLeod Says: No Timetables for Independence,"  
New Commonwealth, Vol.38, 12 (December, 1960), p.765.
85. Ibid., p.765.
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89. Sik, p.64.
90. Ibid., p.65.
91. Ibid., p.65.
92. Odinga, p.223.
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94. Donald Rothchild, "Majimbo Schemes in Kenya and Uganda,"  
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Politics, ed. by Jeffrey Butler and A.A. Castogno (New  
York : Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967), p.294.
95. Ibid., pp.293-294.
96. Wasserman, p.73.
97. Ibid., p.98.
98. Rothchild, p.298.
99. Odinga, pp.230-231.
100. Wasserman, p.121.
101. Ibid., p.121.
102. Sik, p.86.
103. Kwame Nkrumah, Class Struggle in Africa (New York: Inter-  
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## CHAPTER V

## UHURU AND AFTER

## I

There is an on-going debate whether or not an independent national bourgeoisie is emerging in Africa and in Kenya in particular as is evident elsewhere in the Third World countries. In the course of this debate, two contesting schools of thought have emerged. One holds the view that the evolving African class is so subordinated to the Western bourgeoisie that it cannot hope to emerge as an independent African or Kenyan national bourgeoisie. This view is forcefully argued by Basil Davidson, among others of all persuasions, when he writes:

"The idea that you can have an indigenous capitalist growth in ex-colonial Africa - that you can have the growth of the national bourgeoisie which eventually will impose its cultural, political and economic hegemony over the whole country and thereby give rise to capitalism, after which you have class stratification and move on to socialism - all this seems to me to be complete moonshine.

I don't believe that any of that is possible, with the single possible though very doubtful exception of Nigeria, a large country with some sixty-five million people in it. If you take the average state which is supposed now to be growing a national bourgeoisie and a local capitalist system - for instance the Ivory Coast or Kenya - you find when you look into it that nothing of the kind is happening: that in so far as wealth is being accumulated in the hands of a capital-owning and a capital-investing bourgeoisie, then that bourgeoisie is not in Africa. So, it seems to me that there is no question of the old scheme of building a national bourgeoisie and having capitalism before you go to the socialist revolution. There isn't going to be that kind of development in Africa."<sup>1</sup>

According to this view, the development of a Kenyan national bourgeoisie is ruled out. True to its logic of under-development, Kenyan national bourgeoisie is condemned to absolute social under-development.

This interpretation is reinforced by the transnationalization thesis. The latter view was developed by various scholars in the course of their analysis of Latin American dependence on North America

and Western capitalism.<sup>2</sup> Steve Langdon has applied this method to Kenya and has demonstrated how the Kenyan economy is being transnationalized, i.e. how the disintegration of the economy of the country is going on while at the same time reinforcing and reconstituting the previous colonial dependence in a new way in the course of integrating Kenyan economy into the world capitalist system. During this process, social polarization is exacerbated. But the most serious aspect of transnationalization as far as Kenyan economy is concerned is that the latter is denied an economic multiplier effect which results in uneven and disarticulate development. In turn, this development gives rise to a small "transnational community"<sup>3</sup> whose interests concur with those of transnational corporations. Like the dependent bourgeoisie of Basil Davidson's school, this transnational community cannot hope to rise above that social station assigned to it by multinational corporations.

Let us now turn to the other school. The writers in this group hold the view that a bourgeois class is indeed rising in Kenya as various designations of this class indicate, such as comprador, auxiliary, salariat or bureaucratic bourgeoisie. The lack of consensus as to the nature of this class is due to the perspective or continuum adopted by these writers. This perspective sees the transfer of the metropolitan power from the old-colonial state via decolonization to the post-colonial state under local bourgeois leadership as nominal: the international bourgeoisie retains control over the commanding heights in the economy and, by virtue of this economic power, it exercises indirect political control to preserve the status quo. Consequently, the indigenous bourgeoisie, in spite of its political power, cannot hope to achieve equality with its metropolitan counterpart, let alone local control over it. What is not made clear by these

writers is, why is it that the Kenyan bourgeoisie fails to use its political or state power to rectify this economic imbalance either by expropriating the foreign-owned assets or by following a non-capitalist course to win economic and political independence? In short, this approach is too deterministic: it denies political initiative of the Kenyan bourgeoisie to change the inherited colonial system to serve its own interests. However, the change has occurred in the other direction. Unlike the old colonial system where Britain maintained control over the settlers, in independent Kenya, the Kenyan bourgeoisie reserves the right to intervene in economic matters in the name of national interest to restructure the system. This gives rise to class struggle between international bourgeoisie behind international companies and local bourgeoisie on one hand, and on the other, between the latter and other Kenyan classes, especially the emerging working class and the peasantry. In this struggle, the aim of the Kenyan bourgeoisie is to master state power and then utilize it against its challengers. This state power was partially won in December 1963; since then power has been consolidated in an all round manner in order to create a national bourgeoisie in the country. This development was clear to any non-partisan observer as early as 1965. This is what Mwai Kibaki, the then Minister for Information, had in mind when he said that if Kenyan society continued without change, and change was not envisioned, there would be "a new social class with vested interests in control"<sup>4</sup> of the state in five years. The following analysis will focus attention on the areas of the state apparatus mostly affected by the post-colonial restructuring of the state power, namely the constitutional law, the ideology (the so-called African socialism), the party (KANU) and the economic aspect.

In order to put this analysis in its proper perspective, it is imperative to examine the nature of the state, the core of the struggle

during decolonization between metropolitan bourgeoisie on one hand, and the future African national bourgeoisie on the other. The former wanted to install a puppet regime under Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) "in an unholy alliance to coerce the majority and delay independence."<sup>5</sup> The strategy was to be realized through prolonging decolonization up to 1965 to allow "educational and economic development (to) continue to grow under British surveillance."<sup>6</sup> Conversely, the African national bourgeoisie wanted independence immediately as is shown by its slogan of "uhuru sasa," independence now! This demand for independence straightaway was intended to counter British surveillance which would have undermined the independence of the new African class.

By the state then is meant the post-colonial political apparatus for enforcing the will of the African bourgeoisie upon the other classes, workers and peasantry. However, the state machinery has been reorganized to remove its colonial odium, especially racism or the colour-bar. Race-class antagonism was replaced by non-racial or multi-racial-class struggle. Or to put it differently, Kenyan bourgeoisie had ceased to be exclusively white; it had become predominantly black without excluding whites or Asians. In short, Kenyan bourgeoisie had become national. Therefore, the post-colonial Kenya State is an embodiment of law together with other superstructural elements<sup>7</sup> all of which are put to the service of the indigenous bourgeoisie. In this respect, H. Okoth-Ogendo observes that:

"The institutions inherited at independence were heavily weighted towards the protection of the settler, and, in the case of governmental institutions, they were particularly well adapted for the control of the African political activity at provincial level. Hence from the beginning law was used as an instrument of class domination, particularly since the colour differentia was<sup>8</sup> co-extensive with economic stratification."

This was the state power partially handed over to the African



bourgeoisie with minor legal modifications but still heavily favouring foreign interests:

"Once that transfer was achieved not only the values but also institutions of colonial rule were received. This led to a mere formal substitution of colour groups and hence of economic groups leaving unaltered the class interests and hence the corresponding administrative power which must sustain them."

In short, the incoming African bourgeoisie was already socialized in a bourgeois mode of behaviour during the transition period to independence.<sup>10</sup> Yet this socialization per se could not be turned into capital because Britain, realizing the inevitability of independence, protected her interests by law or rather through the supreme law of the land, the constitution. Therefore, the latter and "the values underlying it were African neither in content nor in aspirations. Nor were the laws made under the constitution,"<sup>11</sup> which meant the African bourgeoisie had to Africanize the constitution and other institutions after independence or remain content with partial political independence. In this regard, true decolonization comes after independence.

The importance of the constitutional law is realized when it is remembered that Britain ruled Kenya colony without such a constitution at least until the 1950s. She had absolute power over the country. In the 1950s and thereafter, Kenyan constitutions were conceived in terms of limiting the power of the rising African bourgeoisie. This was also true of independence constitution of 1963.

The first constraint came with the break up of the unitary colonial state imposed by the constitution under regionalism. Seven semi-autonomous regions or majimbo were created in a confederation in which the central government in Nairobi came out the weaker partner in the new set-up. The weakness of the central government was not only in the excess autonomy given to the regions, but also in the

divide-and-rule principle inherent in the new structure. The regions were carved in such a way that the regional boundaries coincided with ethnic boundaries. The effect of this balkanization is reflected in the subsequent tribalism and secessionism as illustrated by the Somali and Arab secessionist movements in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) and at the Coast respectively. However, beneath this fragmentation of the country, there lay the intention to prevent or at least delay the development of indigenous bourgeoisie because regionalism entrenched British and settler interests while breaking the national unity of the African bourgeoisie. Therefore, this state of affairs had to be rectified.

The complement to regionalism was the so-called constitutional safeguards to protect the forementioned colonial interests. Consequently, protection of these interests meant perpetuation of colonial class domination. This protection was enshrined in the Bill of Rights particularly the section dealing with deprivation of property. This section of the constitution is aimed at nationalization in general, and nationalization of settler property (land) in particular. The constitution spells out this anti-nationalization stance in Chapter 1, Section 6, under the so-called protection from deprivation of property. Hence, the domination, to the detriment of local bourgeoisie. Consequently, the post-colonial state was inimical to the African bourgeois interests since it was intended to continue colonial status quo by other means, by neo-colonialism. D.N. Pritt recapitulated neo-colonial relations as follows:

"The essence of neo-colonialism lies in the attempt - too often highly successful - by ex-colonial powers to secure the economic and financial pressures on newly independent ex-colonies the profits which they formerly enjoyed under direct rule. It is operated by the financial control of the industries in the new state, which are naturally enough wholly or partly owned by 'metropolitan' capitalists, by extraction of vast sums for repayment of or interest

on old and new loans, and by the control of world market prices which enables the neo-colonialists both to reduce the receipts the neo-colonized country can get for its raw material exports, and to raise the price it must pay for the imports it needs."<sup>12</sup>

Denied this economic power, the African bourgeoisie would either stagnate or regress. The ultimate guarantor of this neo-colonial constitutional order was the Privy Council to which any discussion affecting the constitution must be referred to. And the Council was supposed to be neutral, of course.

As already mentioned, the British strategy was to give Kenya independence in 1965. Although a partial victory, the African bourgeoisie snatched it immediately in order to turn their partial victory into total triumph by reforming the system. Hence, the constitutional amendments. There have been ten such amendments to the constitution since independence in 1963 to 1969.<sup>13</sup> Here in this first section, the spotlight will fall on those constitutional amendments which concentrated political power in the hands of the African bourgeoisie.

The first amendment against the metropolitan bourgeoisie came twelve months after independence on 12th December, 1964. This amendment turned the country into a Republic:

"The privileges and prerogatives of the Queen in relation to Kenya was transferred to the new Republican Government, to be exercised on its behalf by the president."<sup>14</sup>

The importance of this change is crucial because it removed the royal lynch pin of metropolitan bourgeoisie and, by so doing, gave the Kenyan bourgeoisie political hegemony over the former.

The next step to further African bourgeois hegemony came in 1965. In fact, 1965 should be taken as the turning point as far as the consolidation of black bourgeois hegemony is concerned. In this regard, the 1965 amendment "abolished the special entrenchment of certain sec-

tions of the constitution."<sup>15</sup> Among them, the section requiring a majority of 90 percent in the Senate and 75 percent in the Lower House if any change was to be made in reference to the entrenched clauses. It should be noted that these clauses dealt with the most fundamental factors - those dealing with citizenship, fundamental rights, regions, land and so on - and any change in these fundamentals was bound to alter class balance of power.<sup>16</sup> The set-up worked in favour of the entrenched colonial class comprising of settlers abetted by the African opposition party, KADU. Therefore, to effect change within this structure, it was imperative for the African bourgeoisie to defeat the opposition. Thus, in order to prevail over the opposition, the majority figure was reduced to 65 percent which made it easier to reform the constitution as well as to legislate without KADU obstructionism and the growing power of the African bourgeoisie was increased by the KADU opposition joining the government under the banner of national unity.

Initially there was no serious ideological difference between KADU and KANU. However, there were serious ideological differences in the latter party. Therefore, to defeat the opposition in KANU, KADU had to be won. It was won over in 1965. This strategy is well summarised by the American Ambassador to Kenya at the time, William Attwood, when he writes:

"...One reason was that Kenyatta and his Lieutenants on November 9 persuaded KADU's leaders, Ronald Ngala and Daniel arap Moi, to dissolve their opposition party and join KANU. They became officially a one-party state. But in fact KANU was still divided between its pro-Kenyatta and pro-Odinga factions. By absorbing KADU, most of whose members were anti-Odinga, Kenyatta substantially increased his parliamentary strength. This was the second key move in the developing strategy."<sup>17</sup>

The strategy Attwood mentions in the above statement is the one

adopted by the African national bourgeoisie to defeat their internal challengers. KADU served as a Trojan horse in this strategy, as will be made clear presently.

Therefore, this constitutional amendment not only reduced the majority required in any constitutional change, but also subordinated regions to the central government. As a result of these amendments and KANU-KADU merger, the indigenous bourgeoisie could now bend the law to serve its own interests. It had become national by removing the hurdles which prevented it from behaving as such. Okoth-Ogendo reviews this development in these words:

"The removal of the serious administrative handicaps imposed by the independence constitution correspondingly strengthened the executive, particularly its provincial administrative wings...In many respects this was a reversion to the pre-1963 situation based on a framework essentially colonial and authoritarian."<sup>18</sup>

The national bourgeoisie exercises this authoritarian power through the state apparatus, i.e. the provincial administration. The adoption of colonial style state machinery by the indigenous bourgeoisie is really its discovery of the efficacy of mastering state power. Yet, for this power to be efficacious, it had to spread its tentacles to other social spheres: it had to spread over to the superstructure in order to legitimize this power. The African bourgeois class had to create an ideology to effect this legitimacy.

## II

The colonial ideology is a part and parcel of the imperialist superstructure. By an ideology is meant the systematized social ideas such as political, legal, religious, artistic, philosophical ideas by which men in a colonial society like Kenya, evaluate their social relations.<sup>19</sup> As part of the superstructure, these ideas have corresponding colonial institutions through which these ideas are

realized in social practice. Consequently, when there is a change in the economic base, the supporting pillar of these social ideas, then the corresponding colonial superstructure also changes. The implication of this change is clear: anti-colonial liberation in Kenya, either by the Mau Mau which failed, or by the national bourgeoisie which succeeded, demands substitution of the new ideology for the colonial one. Fanon was one of the first Africans to appreciate this implication in the course of the Algerian struggle against France. Writing in 1967, he warned: "the danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology"<sup>20</sup> to liberate Africa. However, the real danger as it turned out was the presence of diverse ideologies such as negritude, African socialism, Arab socialism (North Africa), humanism (Zambia), Ujamaa (Tanzania) and so on. The African scene was an ideological babel promoting confusionism rather than liberation because African bourgeoisie was not seeking genuine liberation of the African masses: it was seeking its own type of "liberation" at the expense of the latter. The Kenyan bourgeoisie made its own contribution under the so-called Sessional Paper Number 10: African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya. It was produced at the right time in 1965 to smooth out the social relations developing within the changing economic base as the indigenous bourgeoisie Africanized the national economy under the banner of economic development and nation-building.

This ideology, African socialism, cannot help but be dominant in the course of legitimizing bourgeois political and economic control. As the President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, points out dogmatically, the document is "the political Bible of Kenya."<sup>21</sup> It is therefore, intended to establish bourgeois ideological hegemony. In this respect, Kenyatta, writing in the introduction to the Paper, says:

"The government has produced this Sessional Paper which discusses in detail both the theory of Democratic African Socialism and its practical application to planning in Kenya...This should bring to an end the conflicting, theoretical and academic arguments that have been going on."<sup>22</sup>

Dogmatism is not restricted to religion. Whether the Paper put an end to the debate or added fuel to it, is not the issue here; nor is the aim here to deal with the merits or demerits of the document. These have been dealt with elsewhere.<sup>23</sup> The aim here is to follow the ideological strands which rationalize the political and economic power of the rising African bourgeoisie. Consequently, the focus will fall on Africanization, economic policy and the one-party system.

The key ideological component of African socialism is Africanization by which is meant the promotion, or rather, the replacement of expatriates by Africans, both in the administration and in the economic field. It is a major factor in decolonizing the country. Africanization per se has positive and negative aspects. On one hand, if it is used in the Fanonist sense, it is progressive; on the other, if it is limited to switching personnel, it is reactionary. And the latter process of substitution is what actually happened in Kenya: the British made sure that they kept out almost all the Mau Mau freedom fighters from the administration of the state, while promoting loyalists in the state machinery. Ruth First portrays this gentlemanly change of guards in these words:

"Kenya did fight...Kenya had a very painful transition to independence, but I think when you look more closely at Kenyan history, the critical period is the one between the suppression of Mau Mau rebellion and the constitution of the independent regime. The British Government used that intervening period to ensure that those who fought the guerilla war would not be the people who inherited political independence. The successor class were not different from their counterparts in other African countries. If you go to Nairobi and manage to meet people who were in the forests fighting the guerilla war, they're the people who turn round to you and say, 'How is it that we

were displaced? We were the men who fought for Kenya's independence! Those sitting in government are the loyalists; they didn't take to the gun during the struggle against the settler regime in Kenya.'"<sup>24</sup>

This selective elimination of true African liberators made it easy for the indigenous bourgeoisie to consolidate its position without serious internal threat. And in this consolidation, the state has become an effective instrument in the development of capitalism in the country. African socialism as such

"means little more than an active role for the state in subsidizing private enterprise and sharing booty extracted from the producers."<sup>25</sup>

Africanization then, like its counterpart, development of the constitutional law, is an instrument for furthering bourgeois hegemony in the negative sense of the term, i.e. blocking genuine liberation of the Kenyan masses for which they fought for eight years from 1952 to 1960.

Once installed in power, the Western allies did not fail their ally in spite of the latter's claim of non-alignment. The alignment began well before independence and continued thereafter. In 1965, Attwood was writing of it as follows:

"Fortunately, there were many good things we and other Western countries could do to help the government mitigate discontent."<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, the help Attwood mentions came in the form of aid programmes given to the country by the Western countries. It was provided through various organizations. Among aid programmes should be mentioned government loans, most of which came from Britain; others were offered through para-statal organizations such as the British Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) among others; still other programmes were channelled through the international organizations such as the



World Bank and its affiliates; and above all, personnel aid which was given to reinforce imperialist cultural ties, for example, the American Peace Corps and the British experts loaned under the British Technical Assistance programme and suchlike. Other examples from other Western countries could be cited, but the above examples will suffice in demonstrating how international bourgeoisie sought to reinforce the incorporation of the country into the international capitalism in order to protect international capital.<sup>27</sup> Of these collective aid programmes, Leonard Barnes observes that "NATO policies, sometimes wittingly, sometimes not, have wrecked the primal hopes of African self-determination is indisputable."<sup>28</sup> And the whole scheme was being carried out in the name of Africanization, of course.

Africanization as envisioned by African socialism then and thereafter, simply meant the continuation of the old system; its economic content too subscribed to the same end even though the Sessional Paper purports to follow a third socialist road by rejecting both "Western capitalism and Eastern communism"<sup>29</sup> whose political content is non-alignment. However, this rejection of the two systems is a sham since the repudiation of capitalism is intended to neutralize hostility of the masses to capitalism on one hand, and on the other, to put Western allies at ease. The rejection of communism reveals further the document's anti-socialist bias when it is remembered that socialist theoreticians<sup>30</sup> maintain that socialism is only a transitional stage to communism. Consequently, the Paper's rejection of the latter is a convenient way of repudiating its socialist precursor. In short, the Paper turns out to be a coherent programme for developing the national economy along the capitalist course in conformity with the interests of the national bourgeoisie. In fact,

the document advocates extension of colonial capitalism of the 1950s to all those parts of the country which were not yet penetrated. In this respect, the Paper is quite explicit:

"The need to develop and invest requires credit and a credit economy rests heavily on a system of land titles and registration. The ownership of land must therefore be made more definite and explicit if land consolidation and development are to be fully successful."<sup>30</sup>

Instead of arresting or reversing capitalist development in the country, the Paper encourages it in all ways. Although the document refers to putting a ceiling on land ownership, the government has not done anything to this effect. In point of fact, the government has opposed it.<sup>31</sup> This policy has led to accumulation of land in a few hands on one hand, and on the other, to landlessness and increased land litigation.<sup>32</sup> The situation was aggravated by the fact that the much publicized resettlement programmes purported to alleviate landlessness did not help those who needed help; it did not necessarily even go to Africans as Africanization of the economy would have us believe: it remained in non-African hands. Rukudzo Murapa points out this fact when he writes:

"It is most unfortunate that the Kenyan government did not exploit the land settlement discussions as an opportunity to propose a meaningful program of co-operatives or state ownership. As it turned out, its laissez faire approach on this issue left the door open to Britain to sow her seeds of neo-colonialism even deeper and on more fertile soil. In spite of the much publicized massive exodus of settlers during the eleventh hour of Kenya's independence, statistics show that 70 per cent of the land sold to individuals after independence was bought by Europeans."<sup>33</sup>

Landlessness has generated discontent and to some extent restlessness and unless something is done, it will destabilize the country if past history is any guide.<sup>34</sup>

In this capitalist development strategy, economic growth is viewed as the cure-all for Kenya's underdevelopment problems. The

accent falls on production and the growth rate of the national economy (GNP). This view is well summarised by Nellis. He writes:

"...the present emphasis on production downgrades distribution issues, and indeed, that the type of economic strategy being pursued in Kenya leads almost automatically to ever widening gaps between income groups...The countering argument, of course, is that this type of strategy leads most rapidly to economic growth..."<sup>35</sup>

Such being the case, protection and inducement of investment, local and foreign, become paramount. As far as the Kenyan investors are concerned, they have to be induced to invest locally otherwise they will invest abroad (most of these investors are either migrant Europeans or Asians) where investment climates are more favourable; foreign investors, too, have to be attracted into the country and in competition with other Third World countries. Therefore, the Sessional Paper Number 10 goes all out to attract these investors and this attraction demands of the government of Kenya to remove any measures which

- " i) inhibits the rapid accumulation;
- ii) prohibits methods of large scale production where they are necessary; or
- iii) discourages the inflow of private capital."<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, all measures which can or could check the flow of foreign capital into the country should be discarded. One such measure is nationalization. The latter is rejected outright. It is rejected on a flimsy excuse of compensation and foreign confidence:

"The money paid for nationalized resources and the people who managed them before nationalization would most likely leave the country increasing our foreign exchange and skilled manpower problems. There is also the firm likelihood that nationalization would discourage private investment, thus reducing further the rate of growth of the economy. It is also the case that the use of domestic capital to nationalize would reduce our ability to match foreign aid funds leading to an even greater reduction in development expenditure."<sup>37</sup>

And the vicious circle continues. But the real reason is that if

nationalization is adopted toward foreign investors, it would equally apply to African investors as well, and the latter are not known for their abnegation. Instead, progressive taxation on income, inheritance, capital gains taxes, and death duties, are proposed as the best means to arrest class development in an otherwise classless Kenyan society. Consequently, the African bourgeoisie protected itself against expropriation in the name of protecting international bourgeoisie.

Such investors, whether indigenous or not, are entitled to state protection so as to enjoy the proceeds of their capital peacefully.

The Paper declares that:

"Individuals derive satisfaction not only from goods they consume, but also from those they accumulate. If human dignity and freedom are to be preserved, provision must be made for both activities by the individual - consumption and accumulation."<sup>38</sup>

Consequently, capitalist investors rather than the state are seen as the motive force behind national economic development. And individualism inherent in private accumulation and consumption is expected to be a sufficient ethic. It is in this context that the national slogan, *Harambee*, i.e. pulling together of individual and collective energies and resources to build the country, should be seen. In spite of its mystical appeal, it has come to mean something different for workers and peasants as will become clear shortly.

Furthermore, the state provides help for would-be African investors. This help is given in the form of licensing, expert advice, financial aid through state institutions, banks (land) and parastatals (for instance, the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC)) and so on. The aim is clear, as MacWilliam points out:

"The bulk of these efforts (read state efforts) are directed toward establishing Africans in a firm position in the monetary section by ensuring

that large scale expansion is African owned and managed."<sup>39</sup>

As this African group is not all that inclusive, the question which should be posed is: which Africans comprise the group? The answer is that it is comprised of a fraction of national bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie. If the stated aim of African socialism is to prevent class formation, then it certainly is not fulfilling its claim.

Moreover, to accelerate accumulation of capital by these under-capitalized bourgeois classes, the government went further to demand, as the document shows, that foreign investors, in return for security proffered, should in their turn, assume their responsibility:

- " i) by making shares in the economy available to Africans who wish to buy them;
- ii) by employing Africans at managerial levels as soon as qualified people can be found; and<sup>40</sup>
- iii) by providing facilities for Africans."

On their part, foreign investors insist that their host government meet its responsibility as well. They demand of Kenyan government to:

"commit themselves as to the future, to promise that certain measures are not going to be taken, that certain others will continue to be taken, or that the investors will be compensated<sup>41</sup> for any loss due to changes in such measures."

These demands mutually exerted, virtually rule out expropriation or nationalization and firmly set the country on the path of capitalist development. In this give-and-take process, a symbiotic relation emerged between foreign capital and the local bourgeoisie, between foreign capital and the state as the former demands infrastructure facilities and communications to facilitate foreign investment in the country; and as the state becomes dependent on the latter for revenue (taxes, for example) and job opportunities for the local people. This relationship, in turn, promotes state capitalism. As can be seen from the above account, African socialism ends up being

neither African nor socialist: it is a mixture of private and public capitalist enterprises. Samir Amin, a leading authority in this field summarizes African socialism thus:

"In the first place, as the foreign sector develops, a certain place may be found for national capital through the state's efforts to promote this type of development. But this place is necessarily very limited. In the other case, the development of national capitalism at the expense of the foreign sector offers greater possibilities and can take various forms, benefitting either private or state-owned national capital. The transfer of foreign-owned plantations to the well-to-do classes of urban society and acquisition of shares in new foreign-owned industries, are examples of this type of process. In all cases, however, the state's role is essential, because the process would be impossible through the operation of economic forces alone. The local bourgeoisie of planters and traders does not possess the financial resources to buy up the investments of foreign capital. In order to do this, public funds must be made available. The drift toward state capitalism constitutes the essence of what is called Third World Socialism."<sup>42</sup>

Capitalism then develops in Kenya as elsewhere in Africa and in the Third World under a borrowed socialist ideology because capitalism is bankrupt in these areas; it is equated with imperialism and colonialism which have to be destroyed in order to open up the way for genuine development and, even if capitalism manages to emerge as the dominant economic force, still this phase, as Fanon observes, is "a completely useless phase."<sup>43</sup>

This pseudo-socialist ideology is propagated by the ruling class in order to undermine the genuine socialist aspirations of the African masses led by the Kenyan working class and peasantry. Both classes were deeply involved in the anti-colonial struggle after the banning of the African political parties and in the Mau Mau liberation war. The former led the struggle. Therefore, it had its own version of harambee before the national bourgeoisie coined the term. Harambee means to pull together, i.e. to unite and fight together to end colonial exploitation. Hence, the post-colonial struggle took on a

different mode of struggle. The new meaning of harambee struggle could be deciphered from the struggle the labour movement has to put up against the Kenya Employers Federation on one hand, and, on the other, against the government. In both instances, ideology is involved. The struggle is reflected in two ideological strands found in the labour movement between pro-socialism union leaders and pro-capitalism ones in the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL). In turn, these factions find their respective allies within the ruling party, KANU, between the socialist-oriented "Ginger Group" closely associated with Oginga Odinga and the capitalist-oriented Kenya Group, closely associated with the late Tom Mboya.<sup>44</sup> This then was the pre-independence political-labour alignment. This conflict within the labour movement came to a halt at independence because the pro-socialist labour leaders contested for parliamentary seats and won. After their parliamentary victory, they were co-opted during the process.<sup>45</sup> So, the ideological rivalry was suspended for the time being. The ideological rivalry revived again in 1964 just as a similar upheaval was going on in the KANU. This ideological tug-of-war led to the formation of the Kenya Federation of Progressive Trade Unions (KFPTU); it was registered later as the Kenya African Workers Congress (KAWC) to challenge the capitalist commitment of KFL. Emboldened by the Ginger Group under Oginga and Kaggia, KFPTU accused KFL under the veiled leadership of Mboya (the latter was a cabinet minister and had to relinquish his hold on KFL) of subordinating Kenyan workers to imperialism. The accusation levelled against KFL by KFPTU was due to the fact that the former failed to send representatives to an All African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) conference in Ghana. Consequently, Kenya labour movement was polarized between these two ideological camps and the way the dispute is resolved would have serious impact on KANU as well.

Mboya felt personally threatened because his political base was rooted in the labour movement support. As the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and as Secretary General of KANU, Mboya was well placed to undermine his opponents. His first move was to depoliticize workers, i.e. by confining them to issues of bread and butter, to economism. The next move was the expulsion of the dissident labour leaders from KFL in 1964, among them Dennis Akumu and Mak' Anyango and Vicky Wachira. The latter formed their own organization, Kenya African Workers Congress (KAWC). But the decisive move came in 1964 with the passage of the Trade Unions Amendment Act whose aim was the replacement of the incorrigible dissident labour leaders. Due to the division in the labour movement, the Amendment met little or no resistance at all. It established the Kenya Industrial Court. In addition, the Tripartite Agreement between the Government, the Kenya Employers Federation and the Kenya Federation of Labour was concluded according to which the parties involved established an industrial truce in order to increase employment. In effect, the agreement as it turned out, was aimed at neutralizing workers' strike capability. Therefore, these two developments marked the beginning of the erosion of workers' rights or rather their progressive subordination to capital.<sup>46</sup> As will become evident, the Industrial Court has become an important instrument in sapping workers' militancy, just as the Tripartite Agreement has been employed to nullify any strike on the ground of maintaining employment. The Court has become effective instrument in developing industrial law at variance with workers' interests.

The 1964 Trade Union Dispute Act was replaced by that of 1965 and, if the latter is implemented to the letter, strikes would become something of the past. The labour relations envisioned by the 1965



Amendment are well summarized by the President of the Kenya Industrial Court, Saeed Cockar, when he observes that:

"...if both the workers and the management were faithful to follow its provisions, very soon the word 'strike' would disappear from the industrial scene. This Act does not take away from the workers the right to strike; the workers have retained this right, but they are obliged to exhaust all the available negotiating machinery, informal and formal, before taking such action."<sup>47</sup>

The key to the negation of the workers' right to strike is contained in the words 'informal' and 'formal collective bargaining machinery' for it can go on indefinitely. In any case, when such a stalemate is reached, the case can go to the Industrial Court for arbitration.

Moreover, this labour legislation was reinforced by the Presidential appointment of a committee in 1966 composed of sympathizers from the two labour factions, KFL and KAWC, and independents whose job was to reconcile them and, by so doing, set the Kenya labour movement on stable course. However, behind this labour stability, there was a far-reaching government objective as can be seen from the following Committee recommendation, of which Waw-Achola writes:

"The Committee's recommendation, although calling for the de-registration of KFL and KAWC and their replacement by a single union Federation, the Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) (COTU) (K), registered a victory for Mboya-faction in the sense that the movement was to come under very close government surveillance, which was one issue-area this centre had stood for. Significantly, the Attorney General's Department was entrusted with the task of drafting COTU's constitution in view of the Committee's recommendations."<sup>48</sup>

As is clear from the above statement, the recommendations were implemented, the two factions were dissolved, and COTU came into being. As expected, the losers were the workers; the victors were the indigenous bourgeoisies and their international allies:

"COTU was obviously a victory of the political elite over the trade union movement, as not only did the legalization of Government control over the internal and external affairs of unions take root, but also the President of the Republic was empowered to appoint the Secretary-General, the deputy Secretary-General and the assistant Secretary-General from a panel of names submitted to the governing council after the triennial conference of COTU. Similarly, the Minister for Labour was vested with discretion to investigate the conduct of the above three officials and to declare any strike illegal if he felt all the available negotiating machinery had not been exhausted."<sup>49</sup>

There have been few, if any, legal strikes since then.

However, the apparent government victory over labour was short-lived for the defeated trade union leaders, thirteen of them, registered their discontent by joining anew socialist party, the Kenya People's Union (KPU) which came into existence at that time. KPU was formed by KANU opposition led by Oginga Odinga and Bildad Kaggia. The government reacted to the breakaway union leadership by passing the so-called Preventive Detention law in June 1966.<sup>50</sup> Under this law anybody could be detained without trial on security grounds. Consequently, these union leaders were detained on security grounds. This move restored government control over unions, at least temporarily. In the course of bringing unions under government control, two ideological trends were exploited: tribalism and anti-communism with the former assuming a leading role: "tribalism (is) one of Kenya's biggest problems" declares the American ambassador.<sup>51</sup> This happened because the opposition was led mainly by Luos, but neither KPU nor labour leadership was exclusively Luo. Like tribalism, anti-communism was used to discredit the opposition leadership. Yet, the real motive behind these isms lay elsewhere: the aim was to obfuscate the class struggle taking place in the labour movement leadership struggle, in party politics, and between them and the government. Nevertheless, this legislation and the Industrial Court procedures

have resulted in discouragement of strikes.<sup>52</sup> Like their counterpart developments in constitutional law and African Socialism, industrial law is developing in the same direction: "the development of industrial law presents an interesting parallel to the growth of constitutional law,"<sup>53</sup> i.e. it enhances the hegemony of capital over labour, of national bourgeoisie over labouring classes, workers and peasantry.

Simultaneously, these constitutional, legislative and ideological developments have not only crippled the power of workers and peasantry, but these developments have also enlarged the symbiotic relationship between the local and international capital, between internal and international bourgeoisie. In this regard, Waw-Achola observes that:

"The general practice appears to follow lines of close consultation between the government and the private sector at the expense of trade unionists and this is what one may expect in a situation where the government is somewhat dependent on the private sector financing its development projects and where there is official ratification that the private can expropriate a sizeable amount of its net profits. In this last case, the general incentive will be to expand the amount of the profits rather than yield to its depletion through increase in wages. Only when there is government pressure for such an increase will the private sector normally comply."<sup>54</sup>

But is the Kenyan government ready to exert pressure on employers to raise the standard of living of their employees? The opposite is what actually has happened: "government initiated statutory measures indicate limitations which unions face in any attempt to better the lot of the workers."<sup>55</sup>

Just as the 1965 constitutional battle was directed against both internal and international challengers to the emerging African national bourgeoisie, so was the ideology. At the time, Arap Moi, the then Minister for Home Affairs, indicated the directions the ideological campaign would take when he said that Kenya had become "a battleground between capitalism and communism, and that the communist ideology would

not be seen in Kenya."<sup>56</sup> And if communism is to be repulsed, capitalism is welcome and African socialism drops its linguistic make-up. The battle between the two isms was fought within KANU, between the capitalist Kenya group and the socialist Ginger Group. The ideological clashes centered about various institutions and personalities. Among the institutions, the Lumumba Institute was central in this ideological struggle.

The Lumumba Institute was conceived as a KANU party school to rejuvenate the party by training its post-independence cadres to serve as the link between the government and the people. The institute was necessitated by the fact that national rhetoric had begun to give way to disillusionment and alienation of the masses, widening the gulf between the ruling class and the ruled. Party cadres were needed to bridge this gap. Therefore, the ideology of these cadres became the interest of those in power and hence their interest in the Institute's ideological orientation for two reasons. First, the Institute was funded by money from Afro-Asian and socialist countries including the Soviet Union. Second, the presence of several Russian lecturers among Institute staff raised the question of subversion. Initially KANU was not bothered about this threat because of its claim to unity; it was more concerned with her rival, KADU. Moreover, KANU wanted to prove its non-alignment. Therefore, KANU accepted this aid unconditionally. As a result, the Institute enjoyed President Kenyatta's and vice-president Odinga's support, the two became its trustees. Other prominent backers of the Institute were veteran nationalist fighters such as Bildad Kaggia, the chairman of the managing board in which were to be found Kenyatta's long-term co-detainees, Oneko and Ngei, for instance.<sup>57</sup> The Institute symbolized the possible future orientation of Kenyan nationalism. This was

summarized by the head of the Institute at the inaugural address in these words: it was to "define, teach, and popularize African socialism in the context of universally accepted principles and practices of socialism."<sup>58</sup> However, this was not exactly the stand of African socialism: the latter upheld the philosophy of exceptionalism, i.e. African society was unique in the history of mankind in that it has always been classless and class struggle is unknown to it and the aims of political and economic development should be prevention of classes and class conflicts. Therefore, the class based systems of the West and the East have no place in African society. Here the idealist interpretation of African society is clear: Africans are socialist by nature irrespective of their colonial past and international intercourse. Hence, the rejection of "Western capitalism and Eastern communism."<sup>59</sup> As a result of these opposed approaches to socialist development in the country, ideological polarization was occurring in the party. Ole Tipis fired the initial shots when he introduced a motion in parliament demanding that the government take over the Institute to prevent subversion by "a clique of professional infiltrators" set on conquering "all instruments of power in the country."<sup>60</sup> This was said in spite of the fact that there were three Ministers - Oneko, Murumbi and Ngei - among board members and the board controlled the teaching material. It was left to Kaggia as the chairman to defend the Institute against this alleged subversion. He said that:

"all this funny talk...was malicious propoganda, real Western propoganda...which is bringing this House and the people of this country into the Cold War."<sup>61</sup>

The showdown was imminent between the two camps in KANU. When the Institute students demonstrated against the Sessional Paper Number 10 as a deviation from Scientific socialism and pro-West, the government

closed down the Institute. From this struggle, two facts emerge: on one hand, Cold War politics were injected in Kenyan politics and sooner or later the country would be propelled to align itself with one side or the other in the Cold War. On the other, the incorrigible fighters for Kenya's independence which was becoming synonymous with socialism were progressively denigrated as communists. Whether they were communists or not, that is not the issue: what is of interest here is that international class struggle had filtered into Kenyan politics and was bound to re-orientate it in one way or another. In the meantime, anti-socialist forces were regrouping in a coalition which would defeat socialists in the party and in the government. Attwood is quite explicit on this point: "the task ahead was to forge a coalition that could be strong enough to keep Kenya on the steady, progressive course that had now been charted even after Mzee was no longer at the helm."<sup>62</sup> The stage was set.

The next move was to dissolve the KANU opposition parliamentary group comprising of backbenchers. This group was vocal and well organized in opposing government policies which deviated from KANU manifesto and the 1963 election platform. The role of this opposition KANU group in parliament was summarized by Luke Obok when he said that the group constituted a "bridge between the government and the masses."<sup>63</sup> He further observed that there was a growing tendency in the government toward authoritarianism as ministers sought to entrench themselves. This development was also weakening the party since it was being turned into a tool to serve the interests of the ruling class. The opposition insisted that the party must be supreme and should live up to its manifesto and KANU election pledges. But the ruling class was set on preserving the status quo. The climax of this conflict came to a head in February 1965: a leading socialist, Pio Gama Pinto,

was assassinated because "Pinto knew too much, and a lot of politicians (in the Kenya Group) had reason to want him silenced."<sup>64</sup> The showdown came when the election to fill his seat and those of the East African Legislative Assembly was called. The party nominated candidates closely associated with the opposition headed by Odinga. Their capitalist opponents in KANU closely associated with Mboya and the Kenya Group opposed the candidates. This coalition came up with its own candidates. However, the first nominees defied the party and ran as independents and won Pinto's seat and most of the others. The back-bench parliamentary opposition threatened the party with disintegration. And the government had to choose between the opposition or preservation of the party albeit a nominal one. The government chose the latter. The opposition was dissolved in mid-June 1965 when the party members walked out of parliament in protest and, in their absence, an election was held to choose new "opposition" leadership: the winners were ex-KADU right-wingers and members of the Kenya Group. Ronald Ngala became the new chairman and T. Malinda, the secretary of the reconstituted parliamentary group. Late in 1965 the new parliamentary group held a meeting at the President's Office chaired by the President during which it was resolved that the opposition should be disbanded immediately and, in its place, an all-inclusive parliamentary group should be formed. In the new group, Ngala replaced Odinga. Of this parliamentary manipulation, Attwood reveals that the coalition was a viable reality:

"Thanks to the KANU-KADU merger and the formation of the Kenya Group, the moderates (i.e. capitalists) now had the organization, the confidence and the leadership to assert themselves in parliament..."<sup>65</sup>

Once in control of the parliament, the coalition could now turn to usurp party leadership.

The next move was to purge the party from branch levels to the central level or the executive. This would give the coalition national hegemony and the coalition was well placed to use government, especially the administrative apparatus. And this drive for national hegemony was mainly going to be extra-constitutional, i.e. "a fashion not always in line with the constitution."<sup>66</sup> For example, the extra-constitutional manoeuvres to oust non-coalition incorrigible nationalist leaders can be seen in Kaggia's case. Earlier on he had been dismissed from his cabinet position. Now he was to be removed from party branch leadership of his Kandara district. The election, as Kaggia pointed out, was not due until August which gave the office-bearers five months to finish their tenure. On 15th May, Dr. Julius Kiano, the Minister for Commerce and Industry, was elected chairman of Murang'a branch which in effect ousted Kaggia from office; Njiri became the new branch treasurer. The new officers announced that they had support from party headquarters in Nairobi and their priority was to clear up the mess and factionalism created by Kaggia and his associates. The same method was used in removing other party leaders with national support, among them Achieng Oneko at Nakuru branch and Msinafu Kambo at Mombasa. What is interesting in this purge is that these provincial cities were now won by ex-KADU members of parliament, Arap Moi and Ronald Ngala. This should be borne in mind because the strategy behind it will become clear when a national purge is made at Limuru. The final blow to pro-socialist and socialist members of KANU came in March 1966 at the above conference. The conference was unconstitutional. Consequently, 52 members of parliament petitioned Kenyatta to try to stop the meeting.<sup>67</sup> Kenyatta ignored them and the conference went on as scheduled in order to hasten "tying the party more closely to the government (and) insulate it against infiltration."<sup>68</sup>



The meeting was intended to remove the socialist critics of the government among them Odinga and Kaggia. As such the conference abolished vice-presidency of the party, the post held by Odinga and, in its place, created seven provincial party vice-presidents to replace him. This placed Moi and Ngala in KANU executive level. Fortunately, Kaggia won Central Province vice-presidency. The result was nullified. After a sound round of elections and behind the scenes politicking, James Gichuru replaced Kaggia. As it turned out, ex-KADU leadership came out strongly at this conference and reflects the fact that KANU-KADU merger terms were kept. This revolution from the top did not affect the masses. The informal opposition which had always existed in KANU was formalized after Limuru conference with the formation of Kenya People's Union (KPU). The outcome of this political struggle in parliament and in KANU is well recapitulated by Attwood when he observes that:

"Kenya again had a two-party system, this time the only one in Africa drawn on ideological<sup>69</sup> rather than regional or tribal lines."

However, the struggle did not end here. KANU was determined to carry it to its logical conclusion, i.e. to put KPU out of existence.

Frantz Fanon writing in the mid-sixties warned that the danger in Africa was "the absence of ideology."<sup>70</sup> This was true in Kenya until 1965. If KANU African socialism ideology created confusion by its idealist interpretation of Kenya's social history, KPU manifesto was intended to clear this confusion. The document rejects the so-called African socialism because it is "neither African nor socialism"<sup>71</sup> and instead advocates genuine socialism:

"The KPU condemns the Government's and KANU capitalist policies: it is opposed to the creation of a small class of rich people while the masses live in poverty. It will pursue truly socialist policies to benefit

wananchi. It will share out the nation's wealth more equitably among the people, extend national control over the means of production and break<sup>72</sup> the foreigners' grip on the economy."

There was no doubt that KPU would attract the discontented classes and the government had to take precautionary measures to forestall this development.<sup>73</sup>

After the formation of KPU, it took the government 48 hours to change the constitution. This was brought about by the fifth amendment to the constitution since independence. The amendment required those KANU members of parliament who crossed the floor to join KPU to resign from parliament and go to the people in by-elections to seek a new mandate since they had not consulted their constituents when they left KANU. This by-election was called the Little General Election because it compelled 29 M.P.s out of 169 to seek re-election.

The result was revealing: although KPU polled more votes than the pro-government candidates, it lost most of its former seats to KANU. The latter won eight of the ten senate and twelve of the nineteen House seats. KPU's initial 29 members were reduced to 9. The distribution of these 9 members is also interesting: six of the seats were all in Central Nyanza, two from Machakos and one in Busia district. This lopsided result gave KPU an apparent tribal (Luo) support even though it had multi-racial support and all sorts of measures were taken by the government to prevent KPU from going national. In fact, KPU denounced tribalism. Nevertheless, the ruling class went ahead and exploited tribalism in order to prevent the masses from realizing the class struggle inherent in the struggle between the two parties. The bases of this tribalism is fear and its inherent tactic is one of divide and rule. In this respect Fanon observes that:

"The racial prejudice of the young national bourgeoisie is a racism of defense, based on fear. Essentially it is no different from

vulgar tribalism...Now the nationalist bourgeoisie, who in region after region hasten to make their own fortunes and set up a national system of exploitation, do their utmost to put obstacles in the path of this 'Utopia.'"<sup>74</sup>

The obstacles which Fanon mentions in the above quotation can be seen in the administrative and legal hurdles which the Kenya government used to deny KPU victory. Kenneth Good asserts that:

"During the June 1966 by-election (the so-called Little General Election) there were many reported occasions on which the police used fairly strong force against people at KPU meetings and when KPU members or political voters were physically intimidated by KANU members...in the presence of<sup>75</sup> government officials, including ministers."

Even though such tactics were used, the KANU victory did not reassure the government as the postponement of the national election from 1968 to 1970 shows. In the meantime, KPU had to be undermined by the legislative process. In June the Preventive Detention without trial was passed.

This was the sixth amendment to the constitution. It enlarged the emergency powers of the government and specifically those of the president by moving almost all parliamentary control of emergency and law concerning public order; and, by so doing, gave the president a blank cheque in maintenance of law and order. The duration of the emergency powers was extended from 7 to 28 days and in special circumstances the duration can be extended by a simple majority; to repeal them, either the repeal has to be effected by the president or by the majority of all the elected members of both houses. All that emerges from these measures is that KPU would not be tolerated. It is these and such measures which leads Okoth-Ogendo to conclude: "KPU was virtually crippled in the attempt to reach the public...KPU was being stopped from its endeavour to survive at large."<sup>76</sup> KPU managed to survive until 1969. After the Kisumu riot, the KPU was banned and its

leadership detained. Those who survived and sought re-admission to KANU were either denied re-admission or had to follow long procedures which did not always end up in re-admission. Consequently, KANU assumed complete political hegemony. Colin Leys characterizes this overgrown presidentialism as Bonapartism.<sup>77</sup> However, he seems to give too much of an independent role to Kenyatta over and above classes. Yet, Kenyatta is not above these classes but plays a contradictory role: on one hand, he belongs to the bourgeois ruling class as his anti-Mau Mau stance shows - in 1952 he denounced Mau Mau at his trial at Kapenguria;<sup>78</sup> in 1961 he repudiated Mau Mau upon his release from detention.<sup>79</sup> Both incidences show quite clearly where his bourgeois sympathy lies. On the other hand, his charisma and nationalist rhetoric endeared him to the people. Both qualities served the African ruling class well politically in mystifying class struggle for without this mystification, the African masses would have been alienated and political conflicts would have been sharply drawn. Nevertheless, Fanon's portrait of this phenomenon is in accord with reality as sketched above and deserves to be quoted in full. He concludes that:

"The single party is the modern form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie unmasked, unscrupulous and cynical...

The national bourgeoisie turns its back more and more on the interior and the real facts of its underdeveloped country, and tends to look towards the former mother country and the foreign capitalists who count on its obliging compliance. As it does not share its profits with the people, and in no way allows them to enjoy any of the dues that are paid to it by the big foreign companies, it will discover the need for a popular leader to whom will fall the dual role of stabilizing the regime and of perpetuating the domination of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois dictatorship of underdeveloped countries draws its strength from the existence of a leader. We know that in the well developed countries the bourgeois dictatorship is the result of economic power of the bourgeoisie. In the underdeveloped countries on the contrary: the leader stands for moral power, in whose shelter the thin and poverty-stricken bourgeoisie of

the young nation decides to get rich...Before independence, the leader generally embodies the aspiration of the people for independence, political liberty and national dignity. But as soon as independence is declared, far from embodying in concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land and restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people, the leader will reveal his inner purpose: to become the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns which constitutes the national bourgeoisie."<sup>80</sup>

These developments - political, judicial, ideological and administrative - since 1965 have cleared the stage for the emergence of the national bourgeoisie in Kenya. It remains now to examine the economic development of this class in order to readjust the thesis posed at the beginning of the chapter which holds that an independent national bourgeoisie cannot emerge in a neo-colonial state. To what extent can it be claimed that a national bourgeoisie exists in the country?

### III

At many points in this thesis, the term national bourgeoisie has been used in a general way; the term needs a precise definition at this juncture in order to show the intra-class conflict inherent in Kenyan politics which is essential to understanding the basis of class alliance at the national level. Here Iskendorov's definition fits well with the foregoing account of national or indigenous bourgeoisie. He defines it thus:

"The national bourgeoisie is that part of the local bourgeoisie that stands for the country's independence, economic and political development, is interested in expanding the domestic market and in creating and developing national forces, and strives to be independent of imperialism both within the country and in the international arena."<sup>81</sup>

The struggle for independence had split the Kenyan national bourgeoisie between the two nationalist parties even though the split was non-ideological: the conflict between KANU and KADU was about the degree of independence of the national bourgeoisie vis-a-vis the

international bourgeoisie. KADU sought minimum and KANU maximum independence. But the most serious ideological conflict was in KANU itself. In the latter, the split was submerged in the name of nationalism in order to defeat KADU and its British allies. Yet, this intra-KANU ideological conflict was bound to surface sooner or later. It came to the fore after the KANU-KADU merger in 1965 because the right-wing KADU members of parliament reinforced its counterpart in KANU. Now, the indigenous bourgeoisie could and did defeat the socialist KANU faction. Nevertheless, the KANU-KADU merger, even though it created a defacto one-party state, did not eliminate conflict and competition between various bourgeois groupings. Consequently, the subsequent struggle divided the bourgeois class along comprador-national bourgeois lines. And since these sections of the bourgeoisie share the same ideological outlook, it is imperative to trace the historical basis of this cleavage in order to see how it is bound to affect the economic development of the country.

In this undertaking, Poulantzas' concept of a fraction within a class will be adopted.<sup>82</sup> He points out that in dealing with the national bourgeoisie, it is imperative to identify various factions in it by referring to the economic base of each faction at the economic level, i.e. factions occur at the "economic level of the constitution and reproduction of capital:"<sup>83</sup> industrial, commercial and financial capital and so on. Therefore, the diversity inherent in capital explains the emergence of factions in one and the same class. It helps to explain the basis of bourgeois alliances. Therefore, in order to understand this alliance, one has to go even further to ascertain which faction commands political hegemony. This is particularly important in Kenyan politics where ethnic alliances are elevated to unwarranted importance minimizing class alliances whether under the guise of ethnic or multi-racial alliances, whereas it is the

class alliances which are basic in internal as well as international politics. The latter development has polarized the indigenous bourgeoisie in the country along comprador-national bourgeois lines and the cleavage is not only founded on capital, but it is also based on colonial socialization.

The Kenyan comprador class was recruited from the peasantry prior to independence, from the loyalists, especially during and immediately after the Emergency. Its members were educated from mission schools. In this regard, Odinga asserts that:

"...When the doors of the prisons and the camps were opened seven, eight, and nine years after the imposition of Emergency rule, men who had once owned land and been prosperous farmers were destitute. Freedom fighters had lost their land to collaborators and 'good boys.' The acute division running through the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu tribes was thus carried through to the time of peace. Reprisals did not end with the men and women in the camps, but their children suffered too. It was the children of detainees or dead freedom fighters who could not pay school fees and were excluded from the classrooms; it was the sons of the loyalists not the freedom fighters who got employment, or were taken into the administration, the army or the police force, and had opportunities for higher education. The two sides of the Emergency persisted into later years; freedom fighters were unemployed and landless; and the loyalists had entrenched themselves and had become the dependable middle group that government had aimed to create...Political divisions had been given concrete economic shape, and so would persist into the post-Emergency period..."<sup>84</sup>

Hence, at independence, these recruits who were inculcated in Western values were quickly promoted to managerial positions in private enterprises; others were promoted in the bureaucracy, i.e. in the civil service, army, police and in academia. The comprador ideological outlook was similar to that of the Africanized or retiring colonizer. Even worse, most of its members had interiorized inferiority complexes cultivated under the colonial colour-bar, resulting in the so-called 'dependent complex.' Only political gradualism made any sense: members of the comprador factions were "completely bound politically and

economically to foreign capital."<sup>85</sup> This class could not conceive of an alternative mode of development. In its dependent condition, it sought to win the majority of the people including the peasantry who constituted 80 percent of the population by appealing to the past utopia of African communalism or socialism and simultaneously won their Western allies aid by committing itself to the defense of capitalism. To stabilize the situation, Western allies promised more investment to generate more jobs for the comprador class and the growing African working class. This was the basis of the Tripartite Agreement of 1964 between the Kenyan government, the Kenya Employer Federation and the Kenya Federation of Labour under which an industrial truce was agreed to in order to allow a greater inflow of foreign capital. The new investment coupled with industrial peace was expected to create 40,000 jobs and cut unemployment by half.<sup>86</sup> The agreement formed the basis of the class alliance at independence under the hegemonic leadership of the comprador bourgeoisie, at least until 1972.

Unlike the comprador bourgeoisie, the Kenyan national bourgeoisie was not so much subjected to colonial racism and its humiliations because it was not as dependent on the colonial system as the former for its accumulation. The latter had its own independent sources of accumulation in land and agriculture because most of its members had not lost their land during colonial land alienation and others had enlarged their land holdings as was pointed out earlier. This class emerged in the 1920s and 1930s due to colonial encouragement of commodity production in agriculture. However, its development was curbed by the settlers who refused Africans, especially those in this group, permission to grow or extend their cash crops. When this ban was lifted in the 1950s with the aim of extending capitalism throughout the land, the national bourgeoisie seized the opportunity to



consolidate its position in the national economy. The development of this class is well summarized by Kipkorir. He observes that:

"The genesis of this class is among the 'primitive accumulators' within the non-capitalist mode of production. They unsuccessfully competed with estate capital, were suppressed but not extinguished. They were the most dominant social force behind the Mau Mau uprising against the colonial system. The historical experience of colonialism brought them politically closer to the dominated classes. Today, the national bourgeoisie is comprised of large estates and plantation owners, big wholesalers and produce merchants, successful industrialists, transporters, and large operators in the tourist industry."<sup>87</sup>

Kipkorir's observation that this class was suppressed is correct; it is this suppression that explains the nationalist politics of this class. However, his remark that this class constituted a dominant force behind Mau Mau is incorrect as the previous account has shown. In any case, the national bourgeoisie has continued to strive for independence. It is not prepared to accept junior partnership with foreign capital in the development of the national economy. It is prepared to accept equality and, wherever possible, go it alone; its "interests are linked to the nation's economic development and [it is for this reason that it] comes into relative contradiction with the interests of big foreign capital."<sup>88</sup> In short, this faction constituted by the national bourgeoisie is highly nationalistic toward foreign capital which is dominant in the economy. Consequently, it is committed to selective nationalization, entailing partial or complete take-over of the enterprises viewed as essential to its independence and rapid accumulation. It is also militant toward the comprador class which is identified with remnants of colonialism or backwardness.

The national bourgeoisie uses populism to win over the classes alienated by the regime of the comprador bourgeoisie.<sup>89</sup> Nationalization of foreign-owned industries or subsidiaries of multinational corporations such as banks will provide capital and technology and,

in some cases, personnel, for speedy national industrialization. The capitalist nature of this nationalization policy is reflected in the fact that neither the international bourgeoisie nor its local counterpart oppose it. They do not oppose it because it expropriates neither; both benefit by it. For the indigenous bourgeoisie, as President Kenyatta points out, obtain the needed capital through this so-called nationalization. In a public speech in December 1977 he declared that the policy of his government toward foreign capital was "partnership leading to ownership instead of nationalization. This reassurance referred to the inclusion of local Kenyan businessmen in both the commercial and industrial sectors."<sup>90</sup> And, while on the one hand the policy has benefited the national bourgeoisie<sup>91</sup> on the other hand, it has also benefited international bourgeoisie for the latter get access to local capital and political security. Cliffe remarks on this mutually beneficial partnership in this way:

"The actual take-over of shares can also be looked at as a device for ensuring greater government responsiveness to foreign capital, a means whereby the international corporations not only obtain guarantees of goodwill but find some of their own collateral replaced by public funds and thus liberated for new investments."<sup>92</sup>

The Barclays Bank International illustrates this partnership. According to the Weekly Review (Kenya) of 28th July 1978, in the Central Provinces, GEMA (Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association) the most representative association of the national bourgeoisie in the country, wanted to take over the Barclays Bank of Kenya Limited. The periodical points out that:

"...the crux of the matter evolved (read revolved) around the rumour that Gema and members of the Kikuyu tribe from Kiambu District were planning to buy the bank once it was locally incorporated. The bill sought (read sought) parliamentary approval to make provision for the transfer of the assets and liabilities relating to the business of Barclays Bank International Limited carried on in Kenya to the new

bank.

Though the government led its support for the bill skillfully, noting that the change of the bank was purely a localization exercise meant to benefit the country...Barclays is poised to be the third locally incorporated commercial bank after the Kenya Commercial Bank and the National Bank of Kenya and will in due time be the first overseas bank to go public by selling shares."<sup>93</sup>

Although the take-over bid by Gema did not go through at the time, it compelled the bank to go public. This trend toward joint ventures between international and national bourgeoisie, between the former and the government is expected to increase rather than to diminish. In the meanwhile, the workers in these enterprises and industries are to be disciplined under nationalist and economistic rhetoric because economic growth must be given priority, if this rhetoric fails, then force can be expected to prevail as Cliffe observes:

"Here the continued strength and centrality of the provincial administration is a vital tool. This body of professional administrators with their social science degrees and their pith helmets play a dominating role throughout the provinces and districts. Their functions have extended beyond those of their colonial predecessors: they now chair district development committees, agricultural boards and land committees and promote self-help activities...But the role of the administration remains essentially one of maintaining law and order in the face of growing inequality and the desperation of landless and unemployed school leavers. The administration is not, then, developmental, and as such its continued dominance of politics at the local level seems a necessary component of the present policies."<sup>94</sup>

It is clear at this juncture that the national bourgeoisie is not content to develop underdevelopment: it is interested in developing itself materially into a genuine bourgeoisie independent of its metropolitan counterpart. Hence, its commitment to industrialization. This policy of economic independence brings the national bourgeoisie into conflict with multi-national companies (MNC) which seek to subordinate the former under their economic hegemony. Real industrial-

ization means integrated development in which all the sectors of the economy - capital, technology and labour - develop in a balanced way toward solving the most pressing problem, the "national obsession,"<sup>95</sup> with unemployment. However, as was pointed out earlier in discussion of transnationalization, multi-nationals are not interested in balanced development nor are they obsessed with unemployment. On the contrary, they promote lopsided development by the use of inappropriate technology whose capital-intensive nature increases unemployment, and, on the other, repatriate profits which exacerbates the scarcity of local capital. In its drive against this vicious cycle, the national bourgeoisie relies on the state and its institutions, particularly parastatals. The latter were established by the colonial regime to help settlers accumulate capital during the depression in the 1930s and during the Second World War to assist the war effort. Parastatals were expanded after independence in order to help under-capitalized African farmers, traders and industrialists to gain a foothold in the national economy which was controlled by migrant classes. And, by so doing, it unleashed developmental forces in the country. Dr. Zwanenberg reveals the developmental commitment of the national bourgeoisie in these words:

"The parastatals include regulatory boards which control entry to various forms of economic activity through licensing: the Transport and the Betting Licensing boards are two such organizations. The colonial marketing parastatals have been maintained, expanded and nationalized. Marketing apparatus now covers both domestic and export products, and include the Kenya Meat Commission, the Maize and Produce Boards and the National Trading Corporation among others. A third group are the financial parastatals like the agricultural finance, the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation and the Development Finance Corporation of Kenya. These government banking institutions are concerned to provide specialized credit services to Africans, and to support African ownership of land, commerce and industry. The two latter parastatals have been concerned to establish partnership with international capitalist firms in order to provide the security which many foreign

firms demand before they invest in Kenya. Finally, there are the Public Service Commission and the Teacher Service Commission and other similar boards concerned with Kenyanizing the multitude of intermediary posts."<sup>96</sup>

The success of these parastatals is remarkable. For example, the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC) which was started by the government in 1967 for the express purpose of Africanizing trade and industry, had emerged as a parastatal conglomerate by 1978. In 1969, its investment was under £900,000; in 1978 it is £4 million. Today ICDC has issued Shs.500 million in loans to more than 10,000 African businessmen ranging from petty-bourgeois small shop-keepers to budding African industrialists. These loans were channelled to its clients through ICDC subsidiary, Kenya Industrial Estates Limited.<sup>97</sup>

In that same year, the Trade Licensing Act of 1967 was passed. This Act granted virtual monopoly to African traders on certain goods by excluding non-citizens from handling such products. The specific goods in question included maize, rice, sugar and such-like. The Trade Licensing Act of 1968 shifted from assisting African traders to protecting them, or rather, their monopoly by enlarging the list of the specified goods and by excluding non-citizens from trading in rural areas and from non-central areas of the towns. Initially, the Kenya National Trading Corporation (KNTC) was set up in 1965 in order to phase out non-citizens and foreign firms involved in the export-import business. Consequently, KNTC was charged with the responsibility of allocating specified goods to African businessmen. In this capacity the parastatal has become an instrument of the commercial bourgeoisie in its rush to accumulate capital. Swainson summarizes this process as follows:

"From 1967, therefore, the KNTC was used as an instrument by the emerging bourgeoisie to penetrate the wholesale-retail sectors, which had formerly been the exclusive preserve of non-citizens. This system has been used by the dominant faction of the indigenous bourgeoisie to procure the most lucrative distributorship of goods."

Since 1975 an amendment to the 1967-1968 Trade Licensing Acts has made it mandatory that the distribution of all goods manufactured in the country by foreign companies should be distributed by African agents with KNTC as an intermediary. This amendment not only reduced the number of the foreign firms involved in distribution, but also reduced their margin of profit whereas their African counterpart experienced growth in number and profitability.

Land concentration in Kenya began long before independence, but land accumulation has accelerated since independence. Still there are as many private estates in the country as there were in 1954. At the time there were 3,175 estates; in 1970 there were 3,164. The few white settlers who opted to stay are associated with big African capitalist farmers. To date there are 1,500 estates owned by multi-national corporations (MNC) which are predominantly British. However, African capitalist farmers have sought Africanization of these MNC in various ways. And the struggle between African farmers and MNC is illustrated by the British MNC, Brooke Bond tea company.<sup>99</sup>

Brooke Bond Company started operations in Kenya in the 1930s. The company was joined later by another British firm, James Finlay and Sons, of Scotland. The two firms monopolized tea acreage in the country. However, Brooke Bond was left as the sole monopoly in local markets in East Africa. But this monopoly has been challenged lately. For the last ten years, the Kenyan government, with British aid via the Commonwealth Development Corporation, has been able to increase production of tea by small-holder tea schemes. Nevertheless, Brooke

Bond with other estate companies has continued to serve as the managing agencies for these small-holder tea producers and these companies have constructed sun drying factories to meet needs of these producers. At the same time, these companies have manipulated production conditions to enhance their monopoly in production and marketing to squeeze out small producers or to reduce their profits. This is illustrated by the MNC move to eliminate sun drying outside company drying facilities. To counter this development, the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) was established by the government to serve the interests of tea farmers. And tea farmers, especially the big ones, have made full use of this parastatal:

"This parastatal has effectively become a tool of the capitalist farmers who while encouraging household production, have been restricting the expansion and control of Brooke Bond Tea and other companies. KTDA has built 22 new factories, invested in 15 more and set up training facilities to provide management and labour to run the factories." 100

It is clear that this strategy is aimed at replacing multi-nationals with African capitalist farmers or companies in the foreseeable future. This observation is supported by the fact that this trend is not limited to the tea industry alone: it is also happening in the other agricultural industries such as coffee, sugar, sisal, pyrethrum and such-like. And this trend is bound to gain momentum as African capitalist farmers get better organized.

In the industrial sector, the same phenomenon is happening, albeit at a slower pace. Consequently, this has given rise to three trends: active state intervention, individual venture and group undertakings. In the first case, the state has intervened in various ways. On the one hand, it has used the treasury or parastatals to acquire major or minor equity in foreign-owned enterprises. For instance, the government, through the treasury, bought 40 percent

equity in a leading company, Portland Cement Company, which supplies 80 percent of the country's cement needs. In other cases, the government resorts to administrative or political pressures to compel foreign companies to conform. For example, the manager of the Esso company was expelled from the country in 1975. Such incidents serve as lessons to other companies too. Still in other cases, the government engages in joint ventures. This is illustrated by the construction of a dry dock at Mombasa in which the government and a British firm, Inschope, are partners. These examples could be multiplied; however, what is important in these instances is the government policy: it undertakes those ventures which are beyond the capability of local entrepreneurs and which are too important to be left to foreign firms.

There are two types of individual bourgeoisie who have emerged in Kenya: one category is associated with multi-nationals; the other is home-grown. The first type is well illustrated by Udi Gechaga, the 33-year-old Western educated, chairman of the London based multi-national company, Lonrho, the foremost company in the country.<sup>101</sup> His links with multi-national interests spin an open-ended economic web:

"From a 1974 list of the top directors in Kenya, (he) comes 15th with a total of 31 directorships. Of these 37 companies, 7 are his own and acquired since he became chairman of Lonrho in 1973. The remaining 30 are Lonrho subsidiaries. We are concerned here with his own 7 companies; of these, 2 are investment companies with a wide scope of interest but largely in property and land. Two are sole distributors of manufactured goods, one is a transporting company in which he has an equity share-holding with Lonrho."<sup>102</sup>

What emerges in this interesting alignment is that Udi Gechaga is well connected politically in that he is President Kenyatta's son-in-law. Therefore, Lonrho has invested politically as well by having such a chairman who can and does create a favourable climate for



Lonrho. In return, Gechaga and his like have been able to accumulate enough capital to launch their own ventures or to compete with their international counterparts.

The home-grown African bourgeoisie are represented by Njenga Karume. Njenga has little formal education yet this has proved to be no handicap at all. He has created his own business empire. He is the sole distributor in Kiambu of East Africa Breweries' beers, and liquor-related drinks. Besides, he holds 36 directorships in various companies; in 33 of them he has direct interest. Here the focus will neither fall on his firms nor on those he directs, but on the conflict between him and his company on one side and, on the other, on foreign multi-national company, Bata Shoe Company, in his drive for industrial expansion. The interest in this antagonism is generated by the fact that it shows the future political course which the Kenyan industrial bourgeoisie must take in order to further neutralize foreign multi-nationals: it has to command political power.<sup>103</sup>

In 1972 Karume moved against the Bata Company, which had previously monopolized shoe production in the country, by setting up his own company. In this new company, Njenga with another lawyer-M.P. in Nairobi, held 70 percent equity whereas the remaining 30 percent was held by five directors of the company.<sup>104</sup> Bata did not like this competition and moved quickly to undermine its rival: it contacted European suppliers of raw materials to the new company with a view to getting them to boycott it. The dispute was serious enough to reach the President. The latter intervened on the side of the local entrepreneurs and saved the company. It is likely that with this type of political backing, Karume's next move could be the absorption of the only foreign owned tannery in the country in order to rationalize

his shoe production process and possibly do to the Bata Company what it had tried to do to his company. Whatever happens in the future, one thing is certain: the Kenyan industrial bourgeoisie will seek political power to consolidate its economic interests. Conversely, it can be expected that multi-nationals will utilize their economic power to undermine local companies. For example, the Bata Shoe Company has announced its plan to expand its plant at Limuru near Nairobi and build another at Voi at a cost of shs.40 million. This expansion will raise the present production of 14.4 million pairs of shoes to 20 million by 1982. Besides, the company is planning to set up a technical college at Limuru to train its staff. And when the scheme is finished, the company will achieve a competitive edge over its local rival generating further conflict.<sup>105</sup>

The meteoric rise of Karume in Kenyan politics demonstrates the validity of the above claim. In 1971 he became the leader of GEMA (Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association). Although GEMA is supposed to be apolitical, i.e. merely a cultural-welfare association, in practice it has become as political as other ethnic-based organizations such as the Luo Union or the Akamba Union. GEMA reflects the political and economic interests of the rising faction of the Kenyan bourgeoisie. Of this faction, Swanson writes:

"...(GEMA) is developing into the main political arm of Kenyan industrial capital. The association is not only used to consolidate the political position of this bourgeois class, but more important in its function in spearheading the move of indigenous capital production...it seems that the GEMA 'group' of capitalists will command the move of indigenous capital into industry..."<sup>106</sup>

Just as it is seeking to command indigenous capital, the Kenyan industrial bourgeoisie is complementing that command with political command. The latter is borne out by the fact that Njenga Karume is

not only heading GEMA, a future political base, but he is also a nominated member of parliament.

As mentioned earlier, group investment in industry is also going on. Again GEMA provides an interesting example. A GEMA holding company was set up in 1973 to invest money obtained from its members by the sale of shares, membership dues and the like. In 1975 the company bought the largest brick-works in the country owned by an American multi-national company. Other similar ventures are expected. Therefore, GEMA will in all probability continue to thrive economically and politically under its cultural-ethnic umbrella and this growth should not be allowed to blur the observation made earlier that ethnicity is exploited to obscure class cleavages and conflicts. However, it is doubtful whether this cultural and ethnic nationalism can mystify class antagonism indefinitely.

It is the class struggle which will clear away this cultural-ethnic-cum-race-mystique. This raises the question of future class alliance in the country. The national bourgeoisie will seek national unity under nationalistic rhetoric in its bid to establish its hegemony over the comprador bourgeoisie and its international allies or multi-nationals. Being in control, the comprador class might seek help from the armed forces or may submit to the domination of the national bourgeoisie. The former possibility is real indeed given the recent behaviour of African armed forces in neighbouring countries of Uganda and Somalia, or elsewhere in Africa. After all, Kenyan armed forces rebelled in 1964 and the government put them down with the help of Britain. Since neither the latter nor any other external force can enforce class unity in the country indefinitely, when this class balance forged by the comprador bourgeoisie breaks down, then the armed forces will intervene to reinforce the Bonapartist presidentialism; and, if the latter proves ineffective in maintaining the

requisite production relations, the direct military rule will be the order of the day. If this development materializes and if the past is any guide, it is fair to say that the socialist opposition centered around the defunct KPU will revive in one form or another. But in this development, the repression of workers, poor peasants, the unemployed and the landless will grow forcing the main contradiction in the national struggle between capitalism and socialism to come to the fore.

## FOOTNOTES

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24. Davidson and First, p.109.
25. "Editorial," Review of African Political Economy, No.3 (May-October, 1975), p.1.
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27. Wassermann, pp.135-164.
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29. See the "Statement by the President" in African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya.
30. See African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya, pp.10-11.
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49. Ibid., pp.5-6.
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55. Ibid., p.11.
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73. Attwood, p.257; J.W. Harbeson, "The Kenya Little General Election: A Study in Problems of Urban Political Integration," Institute for Development Studies, University College, Nairobi, Discussion Paper No.52, June 1967 (mimeographed), p.21.
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77. Colin Leys, Underdevelopment in Kenya : The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp.207-212.
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86. Leys, p.217.
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88. Poulantzas, p.39.
89. Kipkorir Aly Azad Rana, p.26.
90. Mary Anne Fitzgerald, "Thriving Industry Looks for New Markets," Commonwealth, (June-July, 1978), p.27.
91. Ibid., p.27: "Indeed, industry is gradually moving into the hands of an oligarchy of shrewd Kikuyu and Kamba businessmen."
92. Lionel Cliffe, "Underdevelopment or Socialism? A Comparative Analysis of Kenya and Tanzania," in The Political Economy of Africa, ed. by Richard Harris (New York: Schenkman Publishing Company Inc., 1975), p.164.
93. --- "Barclays Bank Bill Sails through Storm," The Weekly Review (Kenya) No.180 (July 18, 1978), p.23.
94. Cliffe, p.162.
95. Nellis, p.346.
96. Roger van Zwanenberg, "Neo-Colonialism and the Origin of the National Bourgeoisie in Kenya Between 1940 and 1973," Journal of Eastern Africa Research and Development, Vol. 4, 2 (1974), p.179.
97. --- "KDC Shares Raise Too Much Money," The Weekly Review (Kenya) No.152 (January 16, 1978), p.28.
98. Nicola Swainson, "The Rise of a National Bourgeoisie in Kenya," University of Dar es Salaam, EASE 1974, p.4.
99. Kipkorir Aly Azad Rana, p.51.
100. Ibid., p.51.
101. Udil Gechaga Jr., is a son of a representative of Kenyan bourgeoisie, Bethuel Mareka Gechaga Sr., who rose fairly quickly under the colonial establishment and thereafter to become a bourgeois in his own right. The father was educated at Makerere University College from 1945 to 1947. He became a barrister-at-law at Middle Temple. From there he joined an Executive Firm in Nairobi for two years, from 1946 to 1948. For the next three years, he worked for the colonial government as an Administrative Officer. Between 1957 and 1960, he worked in the Ministry of Legal Affairs. Nowadays, he works as an advocate. He is also the director of the British-America Tobacco (B.A.T.) of Kenya. Besides this, he serves as the chairman of the University Council of the University of Nairobi, and so on. Politically he is well connected. He is President Kenyatta's father-in-law. Without this background it is highly unlikely that Gechaga Jr., would have risen so rapidly in such a multi-national company as Lourho.

102. Kipkorir Aly Azad Rana, p.52: quoted from Nicola Swainson, "Against the Notion of a 'comprador class' - Two Kenyan Case Studies." Paper presented at the Second Bi-Annual conference of the African Association of Political Science (April 4-8, 1976) Lagos, Nigeria, p.12.
103. Swainson, The Rise of a National Bourgeoisie in Kenya, p.16.
104. Ibid., p.15.
105. --- "Shoe: Bata Expands," The Weekly Review (Kenya), (April 7, 1978), p.22.
106. Swainson, p.16.
107. Kipkorir Aly Azad Rana, p.61.

## CONCLUSION

Kenya is presented as a success story by bourgeois scholars and politicians, a sort of economic miracle to be emulated by others. A recent and graphic example of the latter is provided by the former United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, on his successive round of shuttle diplomacy in Southern Africa in which he advised white settler minority governments to follow the Kenyan example. This political and diplomatic idealization of Kenya by Western politicians finds parallel expression in bourgeois scholarship. This scholarship interprets Kenya's political development in terms of tribal or individual conflict rather than class conflicts because classes are either too small or too tradition-ridden to warrant describing the resultant conflicts as class conflict. This is justified by the fact that class consciousness is either absent or retarded by patron-client, extended family and other communalist relations. Some writers go a step further to portray these classes as functional. Consequently, these writers use dualistic analytical models such as traditionalist-modernist "nations" or sectors, elite-mass groups and the like in analyzing the political development in the country. These models lead into errors in the course of analysis. By way of conclusion, it is fair to examine some of these models here in order to show their inadequacy and the relevance of class analysis.

An example of a two-nation hierarchical model of a minority "nation" of modernists modernizing a nation with a traditionalist majority is provided by a noted British economist, Arthur Hazlewood, when he writes:

"When Disraeli wrote of England in *Sybil* (London, 1845) his sub-title was 'Or the Two Nations.' This is a useful characteristic of the developing countries of today, including Kenya, even though the borderline between the nations is blurred and many individuals

stand with a foot on each side. If the terms can be used without misunderstanding and as convenient labels, one might refer to the 'traditional nation' and the modern nation. It is fairly safe to assume that there is a welfare gain for those who move from the former to the latter, but the change is nothing like as great as the increase in income required to sustain the new way of life, and the strictures on the international comparison of average income per head apply equally to that between members of the two nations within a single state."<sup>1</sup>

Hazlewood goes on to point out that inequalities between the two "nations" "exist and perhaps increasing in Kenya especially within the countryside."<sup>2</sup> Maybe this is the price the majority comprising the traditional "nation" has to pay for becoming a modernized "nation." Yet, Hazlewood does not tell his readers what price the modern "nation" paid for gaining that modern status. Where did this modern "nation" come from? Where is it going? What will happen when the under-privileged "nation" rejects the status quo? He is not clear on either of these pressing issues. Nevertheless, this ambiguity is not a monopoly of British writers.

Like their British counterparts, the American writers on Kenya see a similar dichotomy with different categories of elites and masses. According to Rothchild, for example, the modernizing elites in Kenya fall into a pluralistic spectrum with each group competing with others in their respective developmental division of labour.<sup>3</sup> Seidman generalizes this elite pluralism for sub-Saharan Africa in the following manner:

"Given the severe resource constraints embedded in the [foreign-dominated export enclaves] the ensuing competition among the elites for the limited opportunities that existed in the political arena became the source of mounting conflict they quarreled among themselves as to who 'deserved' the 'fruits' of independence. Many perceived 'their' ethnic group a natural base for mass support in this context; so the competitive struggle for their own advance tended increasingly to be pictured as a broad-based ethnic competition."<sup>4</sup>

According to these writers, in Kenya one is bound to find such elite

groups as political elites, cultural elites, intelligentsia, economic elites and suchlike. Bienen is a good example of American writers who hold this view. He describes Kenyan elites in this manner:

"The political and Civil Service elite, skims the cream off the top in Kenya. Nonetheless, the mode of local political machines, patron-client networks, and personal decision-making at the top with decision through the Civil Service corresponds to reality. That 'reality' includes strong ethnic identification, the maintenance of rural-urban ties among migrants, and weak class consciousness where the relatively underprivileged hope to ascend in the social and economic hierarchy through individual and ethnic<sub>5</sub> movements rather than through class action."

Whether class consciousness is high or low in the country, the dominant consciousness is ethnic or racial depending on the issues at stake. According to Bienen, ethnic consciousness, i.e. tribalism, is dominant in the country. He asserts that

"Kenya is not a society free from severe ethnic and economic tensions. Kenya's ruling institutions do not operate smoothly to deal with the country's problem. Nonetheless, despite the extreme ethnic tensions, despite a faction-ridden political system, the Kenya regime has maintained a strong base support."<sub>6</sub>

Like Hazlewood's traditionalist "nation," Bienen's masses support the ruling elites. Like Hazlewood's two-"nation" analysis of Kenyan society which fails to relate these so-called "nations" to the present two dominant classes in British society, bourgeoisie and proletariat, Bienen's analysis fails to explain the emerging classes in Kenya and political development in the country is to be measured in two directions: the rate of mass participation in politics and the rate in which these masses share in the GNP. Therefore, the latter becomes the basic input: the greater the GNP, the greater will be the sharing of it by the masses and this in turn will lead to political stability. Yet, the growth of the GNP does not lead into automatic sharing between the elite and the masses as the growing gap between Hazlewood's

two nations demonstrates. Consequently, it is imperative to police the masses. This is what necessitates bourgeois dictatorship under a one-party system. It is this contradiction which elitist explanation of Kenya politics seems to obscure.

This obscurity is reinforced by the ideology of tribalism. This ideology develops as each elite group with its ethnic supporters competes with other ethnic groups under their respective elite leadership for scarce national resources. And in such a competition, there are winners and losers: the losers blame their loss on the tribalistic outlook of the winners, rather than the system. But tribalism is rather a weak ideological rationalization whose aim is to devalue class struggle and by so doing stunt class consciousness. This contention is borne out by the fact that the basic conflict is not tribal, but ideological between the adherents of capitalism and socialism whether from the same ethnic group or not. For example, this was the basic conflict between Mboya and Odinga, both of whom are Luo, between Kenyatta and Kaggia, the leading Kikuyu politicians and so on. Whether these Western scholars are aware or not, their writings incline toward the defense of the status quo for their analysis portrays the African masses striving to catch up with the elites and the latter racing to catch up with their metropolitan counterpart and the accent in this race is on national economic growth. And as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa points out, Africans have already lost the race even before it is started:

"[According to] Black Africa's present rhythm of development it will take 270-350 years to catch up with the current level of the Europeans. It is illusory to think that these will be able to wait so long..."

Who is the winner then? From this angle of stabilizing international capitalism, the preoccupation with the GNP in these writings is clear:

the growth of Kenyan GNP means more foreign inputs such as foreign investment, aid and the like, which will enhance the security of the elite; the latter in return has to provide an "open door policy" and a favourable investment climate for foreign capital. In short, these groups of writers on Kenya and on other Third World countries, advocate the further integration of these countries into the imperialist global system. But still this integration does not guarantee stability as the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa points out. It is this implicit defense of the status quo that leads Cervenka to condemn these writers in very appropriate terms:

"Shortly after the U.N. General Assembly on December 19, 1961, dedicated the 1960s as the 'United Nations Development Decade' development research in the Western countries turned into a powerful multi-national intelligence industry. It imported 'raw material' from Africa and other parts of the Third World in the form of students who were processed and transformed into the intellectual messengers of the same political and economic doctrine designed to perpetuate the dominance of Africa by the power centres in Europe and the U.S.A. Like all other communities the academic community of development researchers has its own rules and social hierarchy offering its members profitable careers and opportunities to climb the ladders of academic eminence. To some, development research has become a kind of a religion with its own high priests - the theoreticians who have elevated it to a kind of advanced and sophisticated intellectual process whereby solutions to so-called 'development problems' are produced by a magical touch."

The magical touch is none other than the GNP panacea which is "the ultimate measure of success or failure of individual states."<sup>9</sup> In Kenya this panacea has been over-rated as the editorial in the Democratic World points out.

"Kenya has, however, not been as successful as is generally made out by a sympathetic press in the friendly West either in socio-economic attainments or on the conduct of foreign relations in its neighbourhood. Even the spell of domestic political stability has been paid for by the lives of promising political figures - e.g., Tom Mboya assassinated in 1969, J.M. Kariuki murdered in 1975, Oginga Odinga ostracized for long - and by liberties of an unknown

number. Economically, for all its capitalistic growth nourished by foreign investment and tourist trade, it is still among the low income countries. The benefits that were promised to come with Uhuru haven't. The growth rate in the 70s has been lower than planned at an average of 4.8 per cent, that of agriculture only 1.6 per cent. Population has been rising at 3.5 per cent a year, inflation at an average 11 per cent. Only a small fraction of the employable have jobs and the per capita GNP of U.S.\$240 (1976) conceals an indefensible disparity of incomes and wealth. Add to this the dominance of the Kikuyu, at the cost of the Luo and other tribes, in administration and business becomes a basic factor of possible future instability."<sup>10</sup>

The latter assessment is in accord with the account given in my thesis. It shows the limitation placed on both the comprador bourgeoisie which is dependent on foreign capital and aid, and to some extent, on the national bourgeoisie which equally seeks foreign capital goods, loans and research (consultants, advisors, planners, etc.). The international bourgeoisie is in a strategic position to undermine, limit, distort and sabotage the national economy of Kenya by manipulating these vantage positions.<sup>11</sup> Neither of these tactics is conducive to the balanced economic development necessary for the solving of underdevelopment in the country and will contribute in the long run to the destabilization of the system as the editorial referred to earlier in the Democratic World indicates:

"[The class struggle in Kenya] will not be fought purely on the basis of tribal loyalties. Ideology will play a major part, for Kenyatta's ambivalence has outlived its dubious initial utility. The best that can be hoped for in Kenya is that the contestants may respect still wobbly rules of the parliamentary game. But then it can no longer remain a one-party show as before, in the absence of the fearsome patriarch. The transition is likely to be either to multi-party democracy or naked autocracy."<sup>12</sup>

If a party articulates class interests and it does as KANU and KPU have shown, then the multiplicity of parties can only reflect the organization of the alienated classes into their respective parties in order to resist the ruling class and the growth of autocracy can only mean one thing: suppression of these classes and their parties



all of which indicate the intensifying class struggle. This is confirmed by the Bulletin of the Africa Institute of South Africa in these words:

"Kenya has been a de facto one-party state since the banning of Oginga Odinga's Kenya People's Union (KPU) in 1969 and Kenyatta has made it clear that there is no place for a second party in present day Kenyan politics. Only a well organized KANU party in which all tribes are adequately represented, is seen as a guarantee for continued stability and an orderly transition to the post-Kenyatta era."<sup>13</sup>

Yet, this alleged representation of all tribes in KANU is misleading because the division in Kenyan society is not so much tribal as class division and the intended unity can only mean unity of the ruling class in the country. The Bulletin referred to above summarizes these class divisions thus:

"...The divisions among the Kenyans are not so much tribal as social. The largest group is made up of the many dissatisfied peasants who have not benefited much from independence because of the rather slow development of the agricultural sector. The second and perhaps most important group of dissent is composed of many urban educated persons and businessmen, who regard the powerful grip of the ruling elite as detrimental to their economic and social progress. Furthermore, there are the already mentioned divisions among the Kikuyu themselves, which not only originate in age-old tribal animosities, but rather on class distinctions based on newly gained financial status."<sup>14</sup>

The Kikuyu constitute one ethnic group and as far as the present writer is aware, there have never been "age-old tribal animosities" within Kikuyu community. However, since colonization and more so since the Emergency, the conflict in Kikuyu society has crystallized along class lines as the previous analysis of the Mau Mau movement shows; this class division and conflict is growing and so is class antagonism or animosity. And as I have pointed out earlier, whether it is intra- or inter-ethnic conflict, the basic conflict in the country is class conflict with the alienated classes constituting the masses. These masses are comprised of the workers, peasants, poor peasants, the landless and the unemployed. These classes are on

the increase and their growth is likely to be exacerbated by the population growth of 3.5 percent per year. The intensifying class struggle is likely in future to be characterized by division and combination. For example, the ruling party, KANU, is likely to split once again along ideological lines as in 1966:

"For years, the often long and hard hitting tirades of outspoken MP's against the government have reverberated throughout the country. Shikuku and Mwithaga, Seroney and others have on various occasions used parliamentary select committees to investigate ills which have befallen the nation and never lost an opportunity to snipe at high-ranking administrators or cabinet ministers, although they went to great pains to avoid a direct criticism of the President. Thus something resembling an opposition party within the ruling KANU began to make itself heard very much to the dislike of the Kenyatta Government."<sup>15</sup>

Since these words were written, all the MP's mentioned above have been detained. Yet, this does not invalidate the contention that the split or formation of an opposition party is likely to emerge behind which the alienated class will rally. The same process is likely to happen in the labour movement: like KANU, the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU) is divided between the pro-establishment unions and pro-socialist unions and this development is likely to take the same course as the Mauritanian proletarian struggle in that the split will lead to the emergence of a genuinely socialist labour organization. And if the past is any guide, this organization is likely to align with the political party or parties with similar outlook; the same prospect holds for the landless and poor peasants: they will in all probability rediscover their strength in party organization as they did in 1960 when they formed Kiama Kia Muingi (KKM) and the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA). Once such organizations emerge they will eventually join with others of similar outlook. This is likely to be accelerated by "naked autocracy." Although no one can say with certainty how and when these political and labour organizations will

form and combine, one thing is certain: class struggle will intensify and ideologies will crystallize in the thick of the struggle.<sup>16</sup> This struggle will certainly be affected by the continental class struggle which is also intensifying. This relationship between the continental and Kenyan struggles is what is intended to be conveyed by the first part of the title of this study.

Whether in the title or in the thesis, there is implied a deductive logic that what applies to the whole continent in terms of class formation and class struggle also applies to the constituent parts or states such as Kenya and vice versa. But this is not just a matter of deductive logic, but of facing up to the reality of imperialism in Africa for the regional and continental class struggle whether directed against imperialism or local ruling classes affects Kenyan politics positively or negatively depending on the issues involved, confirming the above relationship between the whole and its parts. Given this relationship, the following question arises, which in turn reinforces the foregoing conclusion: is the socialist solution for the underdevelopment problems in Kenya also applicable to the whole continent? To answer this question, as in the case of Kenya, we have to turn to the continental classes for the answer. In regard to class struggle in Africa, the continental class struggle started intensifying immediately after the Second World War. The outcome of this struggle became clear in the 1960s. On the one hand, colonial wars were fought out, their outcome greatly depending on the African class leading the struggle in question. The Mau Mau war, the first armed struggle on the continent, was lost as the previous account has shown. Other successful wars of liberation followed. Among them should be mentioned the Algerian and Guinean struggles: the former won her independence through armed struggle; the latter won hers against a destabilizing campaign waged against her by France since 1958. Since then the rest

of the African states have won political independence through negotiations legitimizing a transition to neo-colonialism. Neo-colonial independence did not stop the liberation struggle; if anything it changed its form: instead of an external foe who was no longer as conspicuous as before, the struggle was directed against internal ruling classes or rather the local agents of metropolitan bourgeoisie. For example, in Rwanda, the Hutu serfs overthrew the ruling Tutsi feudal lords who had replaced the Belgians:

"The 1959-1961 Rwandan revolution in which the majority of Hutu seized power from the traditionalist Tutsi...the revolution involved a shift of power away from that local political group which had formulated demands for immediate independence - Tutsi traditionalists."<sup>17</sup>

A similar revolution in Burundi failed and the country has remained in a state of civil war ever since. A civil war broke out in Nigeria at the beginning of 1966 when the northern Muslim feudal oligarchy and its allies overthrew the preponderant Ibo capitalist class from the south who usurped power in January of that year in a military coup d'etat. This class antagonism has a long history as First points out:

"This major divide between south and north - the first, commercially competitive and beginning to industrialize; the second, under the control of an agrarian oligarchy - looked like possessing the potential of an American civil war. But the ultimate contradiction implicit in economic cleavage did not become determinant in Nigerian politics. The north-south antagonism glimmered and flared, subsided and flamed again from time to time; but the polarities did not remain constant. East, West and North threw up fresh combinations and conflicts. When the political system broke down over the sharing of spoils, and when civil war finally came, it was not between North and South, but followed a different line-up of forces. This line-up may well have looked unlikely from the pre-independence viewpoint, but it developed with cruel logic across six years, in which the political classes of the three regions ground the faces of their competitors in order to get control of the Federation."<sup>18</sup>

The Nigerian civil war lasted for three years. The latest example of class conflict occurred in Ethiopia in 1974 when Emperor Haile Selassie, the ruling feudal monarch, was overthrown. The new Ethiopian leaders have started reconstructing the country on a socialist basis. However, the most thoroughgoing socialist revolution in Africa is being carried out in the former Portuguese colonies where liberation movements overthrew Portuguese rule in the latter part of 1974 - the African Party for Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) - assumed power at that time and are now rebuilding their respective countries on a socialist basis. Other examples could be cited to demonstrate how class struggle in Africa is being waged. Here the emphasis is on war whether directed against the metropolitan bourgeoisie in a colonial war or against local ruling classes in the form of civil wars or military coups (i.e. revolution from above) because such wars are the ultimate ways and means of resolving colonial and post-colonial class contradictions which in Africa are commonly confused with tribal wars or racial wars especially in Southern Africa. Be they active or passive, these class conflicts have affected regional organizations such as the defunct East African Community or such continental organizations as the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In fact, the latter has been plagued by these contradictions both continental and external since its inception as the OAU's division between the radical Casablanca group and the conservative Monrovia group shows. In this regard Nkrumah asserts that:

"Imperialist diplomacy appeared to have achieved its purpose admirably, in splitting up the independent states of Africa into separate and conflicting groups. The efforts of the militant Casablanca group were checked by a pro-imperialist bloc (Monrovia group) which was in its turn subdivided into pro-French and pro-English branches."<sup>19</sup>

In other words, various African ruling classes aligned themselves with the international bourgeoisie in general and their respective metropolitan bourgeoisies in particular and in turn this alliance had repercussions on the continent as much as on individual states. This conflict came to the fore in 1975 over recognition of the Republic of Angola under the leadership of socialist MPLA. The OAU was divided evenly between the two ideological camps. In the end, the radical group won. This was no mean victory. In any case, the key to this division within the continent and in African countries is to be found in the economic development strategy chosen by the ruling classes: the radical states favour a socialist strategy as the only way of overcoming colonial underdevelopment; the conservative states adhere to the capitalist mode of development bequeathed to them by colonialism. The economic conflict translates itself into an ideological conflict and each side is not lacking in international allies. Despite this international support for either side, these conflicts will be resolved on the continent and by collective action which was the initial aim of OAU as its commitment to total liberation of the African continent implies. This continental ideological conflict is well summarized by Shaw:

"Inequality and conflict tend to be related in Africa as elsewhere. Because of uneven development, African states are becoming more unequal both among and within themselves; the gap between rich and poor is growing both internationally and domestically. And because of the new characteristics of conflict between 'radical' and 'conservative' states is leading to common coalitions, whether the issue is Angola or Shaba, the Horn of Africa or the Western Sahara. Moreover, inequality and conflict cannot be separated in Africa from the structure and nature of broader world politics; the great and middle powers outside the continent have a profound impact on Africa's economics and tensions, as do corporations and churches, the external media and diverse interest groups. Nevertheless, the growing complexity of international politics in Africa itself cannot conceal the underlying trend towards inequality and conflict on that continent."<sup>20</sup>

And these class contradictions of inequality and conflict compel the African ruling classes to turn to repression to maintain the status quo:

"Authoritarian rule, which discourages participation, has served to control or suppress ethnic, racial, religious and regional differences inside many African states, as well as to contain the results of social stratification and ideological factionalism. Political order may be a prerequisite for, but is no guarantee of, economic and social justice; stability has sometimes been achieved at the expense of some individual freedoms, in Africa as elsewhere."<sup>21</sup>

The oppressed in Africa as elsewhere, schooled by their deteriorating economic and cultural conditions, fight back relentlessly threatening the very existence of the neo-colonial political economy as the latest example in Mauritania illustrates. In regard to the current class struggle in Mauritania, Bennoune writes:

"When the emergent Mauritanian proletariat and its allies began to question the neo-colonial framework, they quickly concluded that in order to contest effectively the asymmetrical power relations imposed upon the Mauritania people by French imperialism and its local agents, class struggle is the only method; for class struggle transcends the anachronistic and archaic antagonism which stifle the development of a radical movement of national liberation during the colonial period. (Own emphasis). The internationalization of exploitation during the neo-colonial phase ushered in a contradictory two-fold process, involving the nationalization of political and class consciousness simultaneously. From the outset the workers who were 'fortunate' enough to find employment, and whose rural communal modes of life had been 'torn asunder' by the emergence of peripheral capitalism, endeavoured not only to resist proletarianization, but also to extricate Mauritania from the structure of dependency. (Own emphasis). The wages (20,000 francs per month) condemned the deracinated proletarians and their dependents to a miserable life much worse than the one they had known in the 'traditional sector.' They were housed in overcrowded and unhygienic slums without running water and electricity on the outskirts of mining districts. Having been reduced to a common condition, the workers whose local and ethnic origins had initially hindered their unity along a national class line, eventually through struggle became aware of their common interests. This culminated in the first strike organized by the Mauritanian miners in Zouerate in 1968. The management of MIFERMA (the

Societe Aronyme des Mines de Fer de Mauritanie) called in the army; several workers were killed, and many were wounded.

This event led to the emergence of a more revolutionary group within the government dominated Mauritanian Workers' Union (UTM)..."<sup>22</sup>

These types of proletarian struggles are bound to influence other workers elsewhere in the continent, through regional or Pan-African organizations such as the All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF). And in the long term, the class struggle which is being waged now by the Mauritanian masses and by the African masses including those of Kenya, will continue to grow and intensify until the African producing classes break with imperialism. In this respect, Bonnoure's concluding remark about the Mauritanian class struggle is valid for the whole continent. He observes:

"[The] alternative is for the northwestern African peoples to extricate themselves from the world capitalist system, and its local comprador bourgeois allies. They must find a way to disestablish the neo-colonial, inviable statelets and replace them with a confederation of socialist republics devoted to the elimination of exploitation and<sup>23</sup> the construction of authentic national cultures."

The choice is between underdevelopment under neo-colonial capitalism or development under socialism. The choice is being decided in Africa in actual struggle. In this struggle, one thing is clear: the struggle is going to be hard and protracted to the end.



FOOTNOTES

1. A. Hazlewood, "Kenya : Income Distribution and Poverty - An Unfashionable View," Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.16, 1 (March, 1978), p.88.
2. Ibid., p.95.
3. D. Rothchild, "Ethnic Inequalities in Kenya," Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.7, 4 (1969), pp.689-691.
4. A. Seidman, Planning for Development in Sub-Sahara Africa (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p.70.
5. H. Bienen, Kenya : The Politics of Participation and Control (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.193.
6. Ibid., p.183.
7. ----- "The ECC and Africa," African Currents, No.2 (Summer, 1975), p.10.
8. Zdenek Cervenka, "Development Research at the Crossroad," Africa, No.77 (January, 1978), p.62.
9. Ibid., p.62.
10. ----- "One Leader or Many," Democratic World (August,27, 1978) p.4.
11. For an example of economic sabotage, see "Halal, Ken-Ren; Now its Horticulture," The Weekly Review (Kenya) (August 11, 1978), pp.22-23.
12. See Democratic World quoted in footnote 10, p.4.
13. ----- "Aftermath of the Kariuki Affair," Bulletin of the Africa Institute of South Africa, Nos.9 and 10 (1975), p.334
14. Ibid., p.334.
15. Ibid., p.336.
16. This ideological refinement is reflected in various writings in Kenya. The following remark illustrates this refinement: "A quiet but effective cultural revolution is taking place in East Africa and the man behind it is none other than Ngugi wa Thuong'o, the renowned author and playwright... According to its directors the play (Ngaahika Ndenda in Kikuyu meaning 'I will marry at my will') which ran well over a month before renewal of licence was refused by the district government's office, had of necessity been staged in a local open theatre designed to fit with the local people's culture and built through their own efforts. This way, the people felt fully involved spiritually and emotionally in everything that goes on there 'directly relevant to the cultural and historical background,' the directors explained...

Scenes covered range from colonialism, neo-colonialism, domestic colonialism, to prostitution, nepotism, unjustified amassing of wealth and the situation of the poor and peasants. Other issues in the play hit at what it terms as the 'notorious forces' among the capitalists and industrialists which continue 'to milk and suck the blood of workers.' Through the use of flowery Kikuyu proverbs the play succeeds to expose the exploitative nature of society and the growing gap between the 'haves and the have-nots;' taken from "Quiet Revolution in Kenyan Theatre," in Africa No.78 (February, 1978), p.72.

17. J.J. Grot peter and W. Weinstein, The Pattern of African Decolonization : A New Interpretation (New York: Syracuse University, 1973), pp.62-63.
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21. Ibid., p.46.
22. Mahfond Bennoune, "Mauritania : A Neo-colonial Desert," Dialectical Anthropology, Vol.3, 1 (February, 1978), p.60.
23. Ibid., p.64.

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