

Africa General Service Medal with 'Kenya' Clasp 21st October 1952 – 17th November 1956

Qualifying Period – 91 days or more service within the Kenyan designated operational areas: Central and Southern Provinces of Kenya and Naivasha, Nakuru and Laikipia Districts, Rift Valley Province, Nairobi extra Provincial District and the part of Isiola Township & Leasehold area in the Northern Province.

Mau Mau Uprising

The Mau Mau Uprising, also known as the Mau Mau Revolt, Mau Mau Rebellion or Kenya Emergency, was a military conflict that took place in Kenya between 1952 and 1960. It involved Kikuyu-dominated groups summarily called *Mau Mau* and elements of the British Army, the local Kenya Regiment mostly consisting of the British, auxiliaries and anti-Mau Mau Kikuyu. The capture of rebel leader Dedan Kimathi on 21 October 1956 signalled the ultimate defeat of Mau Mau, and essentially ended the British military campaign.

Mau Mau failed to capture widespread public support, partly due to the British policy of divide and rule, and the movement remained internally divided, despite attempts to unify its various strands. The British, meanwhile, could draw upon their ongoing efforts to put down another rebellion in Malaya.

The uprising created a rift between the European colonial community in Kenya and the metropole, but also resulted in violent divisions within the Kikuyu community. The financial cost of the uprising to the former colony amounted to £55 million.

The origin of the term *Mau Mau* is quite uncertain. According to some members of Mau Mau, they never referred to themselves as such, instead preferring the military title Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA). Some publications, such as Fred Majdalany's *State of Emergency: The Full Story of Mau Mau*, claim that it was an anagram of *Uma Uma* (which means "get out get out") and was a military codeword based on a secret language-game Kikuyu boys used to play at the time of their circumcision. Majdalany goes on to state that the British simply used the name as a label for the Kikuyu ethnic community without assigning any specific definition.

As the movement progressed, a Swahili backronym was adopted: "Mzungu Aende Ulaya, Mwafrika Apate Uhuru" meaning "Let the foreigner go back abroad, let the African regain independence".^[15] J.M. Kariuki, a member of Mau Mau who was detained during the conflict, postulates that the British preferred to use the term *Mau Mau* instead of *KLFA* in an attempt to deny the Mau Mau rebellion international legitimacy. Kariuki also wrote that the term *Mau Mau* was adopted by the rebellion in order to counter what they regarded as colonial propaganda.

Kenya before the Emergency

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

Deputy Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 19 March 1945

The primary British interest in Kenya was land, which, observed the British East Africa Commission of 1925, constituted "some of the richest agricultural soils in the world, mostly in districts where the elevation and climate make it possible for Europeans to reside permanently." Though declared a colony in 1920, the formal British colonial presence in Kenya began with a proclamation on 1 July 1895, in which Kenya was claimed as a British protectorate. Even before 1895, however, Britain's presence in Kenya was marked by dispossession and violence. In 1894, British MP Charles Dilke had observed in the House of Commons: "The only person who has up to the present time benefited from our enterprise in the heart of Africa has been Mr. Hiram Maxim". During the period in which

Kenya's interior was being forcibly opened up for British settlement, there was plenty of conflict and British troops did on occasion carry out atrocities against the native population.

The one sided nature of fighting in Kenya led Churchill, in 1948, to express concern about how it would look if word got out:

160 [Gusii] have now been killed outright *without any further casualties on our side*. . . . It looks like a butchery. If the H. of C. gets hold of it, all our plans in E.A.P. will be under a cloud. Surely it cannot be necessary to go on killing these defenceless people on such an enormous scale.

Kenyan opposition to British imperialism was there from the start—for example, the Kikuyu opposition of 1880–1900—though it bears emphasis that, in military terms, armed uprisings during the opening scenes of British colonialism in Kenya were never successful.

As mentioned, opposition to British colonialism in Kenya continued post-1895: the Nandi Revolt of 1895–1905; the Giriama Uprising of 1913–1914; the women's revolt against forced labour in Murang'a in 1947; and the Kalloa Affray of 1950. Nor did Kenyan protest end with Mau Mau; in the years that followed, a series of successful non-violent boycotts were carried out.

The Mau Mau rebellion can be regarded as a militant culmination of years of oppressive colonial rule and resistance to it, with its specific roots found in three episodes of Kikuyu history between 1920 and 1940. All of this is not, of course, to say that Kikuyu society was stable and harmonious before the British arrived. The Kikuyu in the nineteenth century were expanding and colonising new territory and already internally divided between wealthy land-owning families and landless ones, the latter dependent on the former in a variety of ways.

Economic deprivation of the Kikuyu

“You may travel through the length and breadth of Kitui Reserve and you will fail to find in it any enterprise, building, or structure of any sort which Government has provided at the cost of more than a few sovereigns for the direct benefit of the natives. The place was little better than a wilderness when I first knew it 25 years ago, and it remains a wilderness to-day as far as our efforts are concerned. If we left that district to-morrow the only permanent evidence of our occupation would be the buildings we have erected for the use of our tax-collecting staff”.

Chief Native Commissioner of Kenya, 1925

A feature of all settler societies during the colonial period was the ability of European settlers to obtain for themselves a disproportionate share in land ownership. Kenya was thus no exception, with the first white settlers arriving in 1902 as part of Governor Charles Eliot's plan to have a settler economy pay for the recently completed Uganda Railway. The success of this settler economy would depend heavily on the availability of land, labour and capital, and so, over the next three decades, the colonial government and settlers consolidated their control over Kenyan land, and 'encouraged' Africans to become wage labourers.

Through a series of expropriations, the colony's government seized about 7,000,000 acres (28,000 km²; 11,000 sq mi) of land, some of it in the especially fertile hilly regions of Central and Rift Valley Provinces, areas later known as the White Highlands due to the exclusively European farmland which existed there. "In particular," the British government's 1925 East Africa Commission noted, "the treatment of the Giriama tribe [from the coastal regions] was very bad. This tribe was moved backwards and forwards so as to secure for the Crown areas which could be granted to Europeans."

Coupled with an increasing African population, the land expropriation became an increasingly bitter point of contention. The Kikuyu, who lived in the Kiambu, Nyeri and Murang'a districts of Central Province, were the ethnic group most affected by the colonial government's land expropriation and

European settlement; by 1933, they had had over 109.5 square miles (284 km²) of their potentially highly valuable land alienated. Strictly in terms of lost acreage, the Masai and Nandi were the biggest losers. The Kikuyu did mount a legal challenge to the expropriation of their land, but a Kenya High Court decision of 1921 cemented its legality.^[47]

As mentioned, the colonial government and White farmers also wanted cheap labour which, for a period, the government acquired from Africans through force. Confiscating land from Africans itself helped to create a pool of wage labourers, but the colony introduced measures that forced more Africans to submit to wage labour: the introduction of the Hut and Poll Taxes (1901 and 1910 respectively); the establishment of reserves for each ethnic group, serving to isolate each ethnic group and exacerbate overcrowding; the discouragement of Africans' growing cash crops; the Masters and Servants Ordinance (1906) and an identification pass known as the *kipande* (1918) to control the movement of labour and to curb desertion; and the exemption of wage labourers from forced labour and other compulsory, detested tasks such as conscription.

African Labourer Categories

African labourers were in one of three categories: *squatter*, *contract*, or *casual*. By the end of WWI, squatters had become well established on European farms and plantations in Kenya, with Kikuyu squatters comprising the majority of agricultural workers on settler plantations. An unintended consequence of colonial rule, the squatters were targeted from 1918 onwards by a series of Resident Native Labourers Ordinances—criticised by at least some MPs—which progressively curtailed squatter rights and subordinated African farming to that of the settlers. The Ordinance of 1939 finally eliminated squatters' remaining tenancy rights, and permitted settlers to demand 270 days' labour from any squatters on their land. and, after WWII, the situation for squatters deteriorated rapidly, a situation the squatters resisted fiercely.

In the early 1920s, though, despite the presence of 100,000 squatters and tens of thousands more wage labourers, there was still not enough African labour available to satisfy the settlers' needs. The colonial government duly tightened the measures to force more Kenyans to become low-paid wage-labourers on settler farms.

The colonial government used the measures brought in as part of its land expropriation and labour 'encouragement' efforts to craft the third plank of its growth strategy for its settler economy: subordinating African farming to that of the Europeans.^[45] Nairobi also assisted the settlers with rail and road networks, subsidies on freight charges, agricultural and veterinary services, and credit and loan facilities. The near-total neglect of African farming during the first two decades of European settlement was noted by the East Africa Commission.

The resentment of colonial rule would not have been decreased by the wanting provision of medical services for Africans, nor by the fact that in 1923, for example, "the maximum amount that could be considered to have been spent on services provided exclusively for the benefit of the native population was slightly over one-quarter of the taxes paid by them". The tax burden on Europeans in the early 1920s, meanwhile, was very light. Interwar infrastructure-development was also largely paid for by the indigenous population.

Kenyan employees were often poorly treated by their European employers—sometimes even beaten to death by them—with some settlers arguing that Africans "were as children and should be treated as such". It was widely acknowledged that few settlers hesitated to flog their servants for petty offences. To make matters even worse, African workers were poorly served by colonial labour-legislation and a prejudiced legal-system. The vast majority of Kenyan employees' violations of labour legislation were settled with "rough justice" meted out by their employers. Most colonial magistrates appear to have been unconcerned by the illegal practice of settler-administered flogging; indeed, during the 1920s, flogging was the magisterial punishment-of-choice for African convicts. The

principle of punitive sanctions against workers was not removed from the Kenyan labour statutes until the 1950s.

“The greater part of the wealth of the country is at present in our hands. . . . This land we have made is our land by right—by right of achievement.”

Speech by Deputy Colonial Governor 30 November 1946

Until the mid-1930s, the two primary complaints were low African wages and the *kipande*. From the early 1930s, however, two others began to come to prominence: effective and elected African-political-representation, and land. The British response to this clamour for agrarian reform came in the early 1930s when they set up the Carter Land Commission. The Commission reported in 1934, but its conclusions, recommendations and concessions to Kenyans were so conservative that any chance of a peaceful resolution to African land-hunger was ended.

In Nyanza, for example, the Commission restricted 1,029,422 Africans to 7,114 square miles (18,430 km²), while granting 16,700 square miles (43,000 km²) to 17,000 Europeans. By the 1930s, and for the Kikuyu in particular, land had become the number one grievance concerning colonial rule, the situation so acute by 1948 that 1,250,000 Kikuyu had ownership of 2,000 square miles (5,200 km²), while 30,000 British settlers owned 12,000 square miles (31,000 km²).

As a result of the situation in the highlands, thousands of Kikuyu migrated into cities in search of work, contributing to the doubling of Nairobi's population between 1938 and 1952. At the same time, there was a small, but growing, class of Kikuyu landowners who consolidated Kikuyu lands and forged strong ties with the colonial administration, leading to an economic rift within the Kikuyu.

Around 1943, residents of Olenguruone radicalised the traditional Kikuyu practice of oathing, and extended oathing to women and children. By the mid-1950s, 90% of Kikuyu, Embu and Meru were oathed.

African Politics

The first attempt to form a countrywide political party occurred on 1 October 1944. This fledgling organization was called the Kenya African Study Union (so named to mask its anti-colonial politics); its inaugural chairman was Harry Thuku, who soon resigned his chairmanship. There is dispute over Thuku's reason for leaving KASU: Bethwell Ogot states that Thuku "found the responsibility too heavy"; David Anderson states that "he walked out in disgust" as the militant section of KASU took the initiative. KASU changed its name to the Kenya African Union (KAU) in 1946.

By the late 1940s the Kikuyu were a deeply divided people, increasingly in conflict among themselves as well as with the colonial political and economic order. The failure of the KAU to attain any significant reforms or redress of grievances from the colonial authorities shifted the political initiative to younger and more militant figures within the African trade union movement, among the squatters on the settler estates in the Rift Valley and in KAU branches in Nairobi and the Kikuyu districts of central province.

Nature of the Rebellion

The contemporary, colonial view saw Mau Mau as a savage, violent, and depraved tribal cult, an expression of unrestrained emotion rather than reason. Mau Mau was "perverted tribalism" that sought to take the Kikuyu people back to "the bad old days" before British rule. Some think this characterisation reflected the British refusal to attend to those social and economic grievances of the Kikuyu that stemmed from colonial rule.

The official British explanation of the revolt did not include the insights of agrarian and agricultural experts, of economists and historians, or even of Europeans who had spent a long period living amongst the Kikuyu such as Louis Leakey. Not for the first time, the British instead relied on the purported insights of the ethnopsychiatrist; with Mau Mau, it would fall to Dr. John Colin Carothers to perform the desired analysis. This ethnopsychiatric explanation would infect everything, from British psychological warfare, which painted Mau Mau as "an irrational force of evil, dominated by bestial impulses and influenced by world communism", to the later official study of the uprising, the Corfield Report.

The psychological war became of critical importance to military and civilian leaders, who waged it in the time-honoured colonial fashion of divide and rule, always trying to "emphasise that there was in effect a civil war, and that the struggle was not black versus white", attempting to isolate Mau Mau from the Kikuyu, and the Kikuyu from the rest of the colony's population and the world outside. In driving a wedge between Mau Mau and the Kikuyu generally, these propaganda efforts essentially played no role, though they could apparently claim an important contribution to the isolation of Mau Mau from the non-Kikuyu sections of the population.

By the mid-1960s, the view of Mau Mau as simply irrational atavists was being challenged by memoirs of former members and leaders that portrayed Mau Mau as an essential, if radical, component of African nationalism in Kenya, and by academic studies that analysed the movement as a modern and nationalist response to the unfairness and oppression of colonial domination (though such studies downplayed the specifically Kikuyu nature of the movement).

There continues to be vigorous debate within Kenyan society and among the academic community within and without Kenya regarding the nature of Mau Mau and its aims, as well as the response to and effects of the uprising. Nevertheless, as many Kikuyu fought against Mau Mau on the side of the colonial government as joined them in rebellion and, partly because of this, the conflict is now often regarded in academic circles as an intra-Kikuyu civil war, a characterisation that remains extremely unpopular in Kenya. Kenyatta described the conflict in his memoirs as a civil war rather than a rebellion. The reason that the revolt was essentially limited to the Kikuyu people was, in part, that they were had suffered the most as result of the negative aspects of British colonialism.

Wunyabari O. Maloba regards the rise of the Mau Mau movement as "without doubt, one of the most important events in recent African history." David Anderson, however, considers Maloba's and similar work to be the product of "swallowing too readily the propaganda of the Mau Mau war", noting the similarity between such analysis and the "simplistic" earlier studies of Mau Mau. This earlier work cast the Mau Mau war in strictly bipolar terms, "as conflicts between anti-colonial nationalists and colonial collaborators". Caroline Elkins' 2005 study has met similar criticism, as well as being criticised for sensationalism.

"It is often assumed that in a conflict there are two sides in opposition to one another, and that a person who is not actively committed to one side must be supporting the other. During the course of a conflict, leaders on both sides will use this argument to gain active support from the "crowd". In reality, conflicts involving more than two persons usually have more than two sides, and if a resistance movement is to be successful, propaganda and politicization are essential".

Louise Pirouet

Broadly speaking, throughout Kikuyu history, there have been two traditions: *moderate-conservative* and *radical*. Despite the differences between them, there has been a continuous debate and dialogue between these traditions, leading to a great political awareness among the Kikuyu. By 1950, these differences, and the impact of colonial rule, had given rise to three African political blocks: *conservative*, *moderate nationalist* and *militant nationalist*. It has also been argued that Mau Mau was not explicitly national, either intellectually or operationally; Bruce Berman argues that, "While Mau Mau was clearly not a tribal atavism seeking a return to the past, the answer to the question of 'was it

nationalism?' must be yes and no." As the Mau Mau rebellion wore on, the violence forced the spectrum of opinion within the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru to polarise and harden into the two distinct camps of loyalist and Mau Mau. This neat division between loyalists and Mau Mau was a product of the conflict, rather than a cause or catalyst of it, with the violence becoming less ambiguous over time, in a similar manner to other situations.

Mau Mau Warfare

Contrary to British propaganda and western perceptions of the time, the Mau Mau attacks were mostly well organised and planned.

"...the insurgents' lack of heavy weaponry and the heavily entrenched police and Home Guard positions meant that Mau Mau attacks were restricted to nighttime and where loyalist positions were weak. When attacks did commence they were fast and brutal, as insurgents were easily able to identify loyalists because they were often local to those communities themselves. The Lari massacre was by comparison rather outstanding and in contrast to regular Mau Mau strikes which more often than not targeted only loyalists without such massive civilian casualties. "Even the attack upon Lari, in the view of the rebel commanders was strategic and specific."

The Mau Mau command, contrary to the Home Guard who were stigmatized as "the running dogs of British Imperialism", were relatively well educated. General Gatunga had previously been a respected and well read Christian teacher in his local Kikuyu community. He was known to meticulously record his attacks in a series of five notebooks, which when executed were often swift and strategic, targeting loyalist community leaders he had previously known as a teacher.

British reaction to the uprising[edit]

"Between 1952 and 1956, when the fighting was at its worst, the Kikuyu districts of Kenya became a police state in the very fullest sense of that term."

David Anderson

Philip Mitchell retired as Kenya's governor in summer 1952, having turned a blind eye to Mau Mau's increasing activity. Through the summer of 1952, however, Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttelton in London received a steady flow of reports from Acting Governor Henry Potter about the escalating seriousness of Mau Mau violence, but it was not until the later part of 1953 that British politicians began to accept that the rebellion was going to take some time to deal with. At first, the British discounted the Mau Mau rebellion because of their own technical and military superiority, which encouraged hopes for a quick victory.

The British army accepted the gravity of the uprising months before the politicians, but the army's appeals to London and Nairobi initially fell on deaf ears. On 30 September 1952, Evelyn Baring arrived in Kenya to permanently take over from Potter; Baring was given no warning by Mitchell or the Colonial Office about the gathering maelstrom into which he was stepping.

First European Victim

On 3 October 1952, Mau Mau probably claimed their first European victim when they stabbed a woman to death near her home in Thika. Days later, on 9 October, Senior Chief Waruhiu was shot to death in broad daylight in his car, which was an important blow against the colonial government. Waruhiu had been one of the strongest supporters of the British presence in Kenya. His assassination gave Baring the final impetus to request permission from the Colonial Office to declare a State of Emergency (see below).

Aside from military operations against Mau Mau fighters in the forests, the British attempt to defeat the movement broadly came in two stages: the first, relatively limited in scope, came during the period in which they had still failed to accept the seriousness of the revolt; the second came afterwards. During the first stage, the British tried to decapitate the movement by declaring a State of

Emergency before arresting 180 alleged Mau Mau leaders (see *Operation Jock Scott* below) and subjecting six of them to a show trial (the Kapenguria Six); the second stage began in earnest in 1954, when they undertook a series of major economic, military and penal initiatives.

The second stage had three main planks: a large military-sweep of Nairobi leading to the internment of tens of thousands of the city's suspected Mau Mau members and sympathisers (see *Operation Anvil* below); the enactment of major agrarian reform (the Swynnerton Plan); and the institution of a vast villagisation programme for more than a million rural Kikuyu (see below). In 2012, the UK government admitted for the first time it accepted that prisoners had suffered "torture and ill-treatment at the hands of the colonial administration".^[106]

The harshness of the British response was inflated by two factors. First, the settler government in Kenya was, even before the insurgency, probably the most openly racist one in the British empire, with the settlers' violent prejudice attended by an uncompromising determination to retain their grip on power and half-submerged fears that, as a tiny minority, they could be overwhelmed by the indigenous population. Some settlers felt that "[a] good sound system of compulsory labour would do more to raise the nigger in five years than all the millions that have been sunk in missionary efforts for the last fifty", and its representatives were so keen on aggressive action that George Erskine referred to them as "the White Mau Mau". Second, the brutality of Mau Mau attacks on civilians made it easy for the movement's opponents—even for African and loyalist security forces—to adopt a totally dehumanised view of Mau Mau adherents.

A variety of persuasive techniques were initiated by the colonial authorities to punish and break Mau Mau's support: Baring ordered punitive communal-labour, collective fines and other collective punishments, and further confiscation of land and property. By early 1954, tens of thousands of head of livestock had been taken, and were allegedly never returned. Detailed accounts of the policy of seizing livestock from Kenyans suspected of supporting Mau Mau rebels were finally released in April 2012.

State of Emergency Declared - October 1952

On 20 October 1952, Governor Baring signed an order declaring a State of Emergency. Early the next morning, Operation Jock Scott was launched: the British carried out a mass-arrest of Jomo Kenyatta and 180 other alleged Mau Mau leaders within Nairobi. Jock Scott did not decapitate the movement's leadership as hoped, since news of the impending operation was leaked. Thus, while the moderates on the wanted list awaited capture, the real militants, such as Dedan Kimathi and Stanley Mathenge (both later principal leaders of Mau Mau's forest armies), fled to the forests.

The day after the round up, another prominent loyalist chief, Nderi, was hacked to pieces, and a series of gruesome murders against settlers were committed throughout the months that followed. The violent and random nature of British tactics during the months after Jock Scott served merely to alienate ordinary Kikuyu and drive many of the wavering majority into Mau Mau's arms.

Three battalions of the King's African Rifles were recalled from Uganda, Tanganyika and Mauritius, giving the regiment five battalions in all in Kenya, a total of 3,000 African troops. To placate settler opinion, one battalion of British troops, from the Lancashire Fusiliers, was also flown in from Egypt to Nairobi on the first day of Operation Jock Scott.

In November 1952, Baring requested assistance from the Security Service. For the next year, the Service's A.M. MacDonald would reorganise the Special Branch of the Kenya Police, promote collaboration with Special Branches in adjacent territories, and oversee coordination of all intelligence activity "to secure the intelligence Government requires".

“Our sources have produced nothing to indicate that Kenyatta, or his associates in the UK, are directly involved in Mau Mau activities, or that Kenyatta is essential to Mau Mau as a leader, or that he is in a position to direct its activities.”

Percy Sillitoe, Director General of MI5 Letter to Evelyn Baring, 9 January 1953

In January 1953, six of the most prominent detainees from Jock Scott, including Kenyatta, were put on trial, primarily to justify the declaration of the Emergency to critics in London. The trial itself was claimed to have featured a suborned lead defence-witness, a bribed judge, and other serious violations of the right to a fair trial. African political activity was permitted to resume at the end of the military phase of the Emergency.

Military Operations

Lieutenant General Sir George Erskine, Commander-in-Chief, East Africa (centre), observing operations against the Mau Mau. The onset of the Emergency led hundreds, and eventually thousands, of Mau Mau adherents to flee to the forests, where a decentralised leadership had already begun setting up platoons. The primary zones of Mau Mau military strength were the Aberdares and the forests around Mount Kenya, whilst a passive support-wing was fostered outside these areas. Militarily, the British defeated Mau Mau in four years (1952–56) using a more expansive version of "coercion through exemplary force". In May 1953, the decision was made to send General George Erskine to oversee the restoration of order in the colony.

By September 1953, the British knew the leading personalities in Mau Mau, the capture of General China in January the following year provided a massive intelligence boost on the forest fighters. Erskine's arrival did not immediately herald a fundamental change in strategy, thus the continual pressure on the gangs remained, but he created more mobile formations that delivered what he termed "special treatment" to an area. After "special treatment"—once gangs had been driven out and eliminated—loyalist forces and police were then to take over the area, with military support brought in thereafter only to conduct any required pacification operations. After their successful dispersion and containment, Erskine went after the forest fighters' source of supplies, money and recruits, i.e. the African population of Nairobi. This took the form of Operation Anvil, which commenced on 24 April 1954.

Operation Anvil

By 1954, Nairobi was regarded as the nerve centre of Mau Mau operations. Anvil was the ambitious attempt to eliminate Mau Mau's presence within Nairobi in one fell swoop. 25,000 members of British security forces under the control of General George Erskine were deployed as Nairobi was sealed off and underwent a sector-by-sector purge. All Africans were taken to temporary barbed-wire enclosures, whereafter those who were not Kikuyu, Embu or Meru were released; those who were remained in detention for screening.

British Army patrol crossing a stream carrying L1A1 rifle (1st and 2nd soldiers from right); Sten Mk5 (3rd soldier); and the Lee Enfield No. 5 (4th and 5th soldiers). Whilst the operation itself was conducted by Europeans, most suspected members of Mau Mau were picked out of groups of the Kikuyu-Embu-Meru detainees by an African informer. Male suspects were then taken off for further screening, primarily at Langata Screening Camp, whilst women and children were readied for 'repatriation' to the reserves (many of those slated for deportation had never set foot in the reserves before). Anvil lasted for two weeks, after which the capital had been cleared of all but certifiably loyal Kikuyu; 20,000 Mau Mau suspects had been taken to Langata, and 30,000 more had been deported to the reserves.

Air Power

For an extended period of time, the chief British weapon against the forest fighters was air power. Between June 1953 and October 1955, the RAF provided a significant contribution to the conflict—and, indeed, had to, for the army was preoccupied with providing security in the reserves until January 1955, and it was the only service capable of both psychologically influencing and inflicting considerable casualties on the Mau Mau fighters operating in the dense forests. Lack of timely and accurate intelligence meant bombing was rather haphazard, but almost 900 insurgents had been killed or wounded by air attack by June 1954, and it did cause forest gangs to disband, lower their morale, and induce their pronounced relocation from the forests to the reserves.

Contrary to that which is sometimes claimed, Lancaster bombers were not used during the Emergency, though Lincolns were. The latter flew their first mission on 18 November 1953 and remained in Kenya until 28 July 1955, dropping nearly 6 million bombs. They and other aircraft were also deployed for reconnaissance, as well as in the propaganda war, conducting large-scale leaflet-drops.

After the Lari massacre, for example, British planes dropped leaflets showing graphic pictures of the Kikuyu women and children who had been hacked to death. Unlike the rather indiscriminate activities of British ground forces, the use of air power was more restrained (though there is disagreement on this point), and air attacks were initially permitted only in the forests. Operation Mushroom extended bombing beyond the forest limits in May 1954, and Churchill consented to its continuation in January 1955.

Swynnerton Plan

Baring knew the massive deportations to the already-overcrowded reserves could only make things worse. Refusing to give more land to the Kikuyu in the reserves, which could have been seen as a concession to Mau Mau, Baring turned instead in 1953 to Roger Swynnerton, Kenya's assistant director of agriculture. The primary goal of the Swynnerton Plan was the creation of family holdings large enough to keep families self-sufficient in food and to enable them to practice alternate husbandry, which would generate a cash income.

The projected costs of the Swynnerton Plan were too high for the cash-strapped colonial government, so Baring tweaked repatriation and augmented the Swynnerton Plan with plans for a massive expansion of the Pipeline coupled with a system of work camps to make use of detainee labour. All Kikuyu employed for public works projects would now be employed on Swynnerton's poor-relief programmes, as would many detainees in the work camps.

Detention Programme

"It would be difficult to argue that the colonial government envisioned its own version of a gulag when the Emergency first started. Colonial officials in Kenya and Britain all believed that Mau Mau would be over in less than three months".

Caroline Elkins

When the mass deportations of Kikuyu to the reserves began in 1953, Baring and Erskine ordered all Mau Mau suspects to be screened. Of the scores of screening camps which sprang up, only fifteen were officially sanctioned by the colonial government. Larger detention camps were divided into compounds. The screening centres were staffed by settlers who had been appointed temporary district-officers by Baring.

Thomas Askwith, the official tasked with designing the British 'detention and rehabilitation' programme during the summer and autumn of 1953, termed his system the *Pipeline*. The British did not initially conceive of rehabilitating Mau Mau suspects through brute force and other ill-treatment—Askwith's final plan, submitted to Baring in October 1953, was intended as "a complete blueprint for winning the war against Mau Mau using socioeconomic and civic reform." What developed, however, has been described as a British gulag.

The Pipeline operated a white-grey-black classification system: 'whites' were cooperative detainees, and were repatriated back to the reserves; 'greys' had been oathed but were reasonably compliant, and were moved down the Pipeline to works camps in their local districts before release; and 'blacks' were the so-called 'hard core' of Mau Mau. These were moved up the Pipeline to special detention camps. Thus a detainee's position in Pipeline was a straightforward reflection of how cooperative the Pipeline personnel deemed her or him to be. Cooperation was itself defined in terms of a detainee's readiness to confess their Mau Mau oath. Detainees were screened and re-screened for confessions and intelligence, then re-classified accordingly.

"There is something peculiarly chilling about the way colonial officials behaved, most notoriously but not only in Kenya, within a decade of the liberation of the [Nazi] concentration camps and the return of thousands of emaciated British prisoners of war from the Pacific. One courageous judge in Nairobi explicitly drew the parallel: Kenya's Belsen, he called one camp.

A detainee's journey between two locations along the Pipeline could sometimes last days. During transit, there was frequently little or no food and water provided, and seldom any sanitation. Once in camp, talking was forbidden outside the detainees' accommodation huts, though improvised communication was rife. Such communication included propaganda and disinformation, which went by such names as the *Kinongo Times*, designed to encourage fellow detainees not to give up hope and so to minimise the number of those who confessed their oath and cooperated with camp authorities. Forced labour was performed by detainees on projects like the thirty-seven-mile-long South Yatta irrigation furrow. Family outside and other considerations led many detainees to confess.

During the first year after Operation Anvil, colonial authorities had little success in forcing detainees to cooperate. Camps and compounds were overcrowded, forced-labour systems were not yet perfected, screening teams were not fully coordinated, and the use of torture was not yet systematised. This failure was partly due to the lack of manpower and resources, as well as the vast numbers of detainees. Officials could scarcely process them all, let alone get them to confess their oaths. Assessing the situation in the summer of 1955, Alan Lennox-Boyd wrote of his "fear that the net figure of detainees may still be rising. If so the outlook is grim." Black markets flourished during this period, with the African guards helping to facilitate trading. It was possible for detainees to bribe guards in order to obtain items or stay punishment.

"The horror of some of the so-called Screening Camps now present a state of affairs so deplorable that they should be investigated without delay, so that the ever increasing allegations of inhumanity and disregard of the rights of the African citizen are dealt with and so that the Government will have no reason to be ashamed of the acts which are done in its own name by its own servants.!"
Letter from Police Commissioner Arthur Young to Governor Evelyn Baring, 22 November 1954

Interrogations and Confessions

By late 1955, however, the Pipeline had become a fully operational, well-organised system. Guards were regularly shifted around the Pipeline too in order to prevent relationships developing with detainees and so undercut the black markets, and inducements and punishments became better at discouraging fraternising with the enemy. The grinding nature of the improved detention and interrogation regimen began to produce results. Most detainees confessed, and the system produced ever greater numbers of spies and informers within the camps, while others switched sides in a more open, official fashion, leaving detention behind to take an active role in interrogations, even sometimes administering beatings.

The most famous example of side-switching was Peter Muigai Kenyatta—Jomo Kenyatta's son—who, after confessing, joined screeners at Athi River Camp, later travelling throughout the Pipeline to assist in interrogations. Suspected informers and spies within a camp were treated in the time-honoured Mau Mau fashion: the preferred method of execution was strangulation then mutilation: "It was just like in the days before our detention", explained one Mau Mau member later. "We did not have our own jails to hold an informant in, so we would strangle him and then cut his tongue out." The end of 1955 also saw screeners being given a freer hand in interrogation, and harsher conditions than straightforward confession were imposed on detainees before they were deemed 'cooperative' and eligible for final release.

"In a half-circle against the reed walls of the enclosure stand eight young, African women. There's neither hate nor apprehension in their gaze. It's like a talk in the headmistress's study; a headmistress who is firm but kindly".

A contemporary BBC-description of screening

While oathing, for practical reasons, within the Pipeline was reduced to an absolute minimum, as many new initiates as possible were oathed. A newcomer who refused to take the oath often faced the same fate as a recalcitrant outside the camps: they were murdered. "The detainees would strangle them with their blankets or, using blades fashioned from the corrugated-iron roofs of some of the barracks, would slit their throats", writes Elkins. The camp authorities' preferred method of capital punishment was public hanging. Commandants were told to clamp down hard on intra-camp oathing, with several commandants hanging anyone suspected of administering oaths.

Even as the Pipeline became more sophisticated, detainees still organised themselves within it, setting up committees and selecting leaders for their camps, as well as deciding on their own "rules to live by". Perhaps the most famous compound leader was Josiah Mwangi Kariuki. Punishments for violating the "rules to live by" could be severe.

European missionaries and African Christians played their part by visiting camps to evangelise and encourage compliance with the colonial authorities, providing intelligence, and sometimes even assisting in interrogation. Detainees regarded such preachers with nothing but contempt.

"The number of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis which is being disclosed in Prison and Detention Camps is causing some embarrassment"

Memorandum to Commissioner of Prisons John 'Taxi' Lewis from Kenya's Director of Medical Services, 18 May 1954

The lack of decent sanitation in the camps meant that epidemics of diseases such as typhoid swept through them. Official medical reports detailing the shortcomings of the camps and their recommendations were ignored, and the conditions being endured by detainees were lied about and denied. A British rehabilitation officer found in 1954 that detainees from Manyani were in "shocking health", many of them suffering from malnutrition, while Langata and GilGil were eventually closed in April 1955 because, as the colonial government put it, "they were unfit to hold Kikuyu . . . for medical epidemiological reasons".

While the Pipeline was primarily designed for adult males, a few thousand women and young girls were detained at an all-women camp at Kamiti, as well as a number of unaccompanied young children. Dozens of babies were born to women in captivity: "We really do need cloths for the children as it is impossible to keep them clean and tidy while dressed on dirty pieces of sacking and blanket",

wrote one colonial officer. Wamumu Camp was set up solely for all the unaccompanied boys in the Pipeline, though hundreds, maybe thousands, of boys moved around the adult parts of the Pipeline.

Works Camps

Short rations, overwork, brutality, humiliating and disgusting treatment and flogging—all in violation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

One colonial officer's description of British works camps

There were originally two types of works camps envisioned by Baring: the first type were based in Kikuyu districts with the stated purpose of achieving the Swynnerton Plan; the second were punitive camps, designed for the 30,000 Mau Mau suspects who were deemed unfit to return to the reserves. These forced-labour camps provided a much needed source of labour to continue the colony's infrastructure development.

Colonial officers also saw the second sort of works camps as a way of ensuring that any confession was legitimate and as a final opportunity to extract intelligence. Probably the worst works camp to have been sent to was the one run out of Embakasi Prison, for Embakasi was responsible for the Embakasi Airport, the construction of which was demanded to be finished before the Emergency came to an end. The airport was a massive project with an unquenchable thirst for labour, and the time pressures ensured the detainees' forced labour was especially hard.

Villagisation Programme

"At the end of 1953, the Administration were faced with the serious problem of the concealment of terrorists and supply of food to them. This was widespread and, owing to the scattered nature of the homesteads, fear of detection was negligible; so, in the first instance, the inhabitants of those areas were made to build and live in concentrated villages. This first step had to be taken speedily, somewhat to the detriment of usual health measures and was definitely a punitive short-term measure.

District Commissioner of Nyeri

If military operations in the forests and Operation Anvil were the first two phases of Mau Mau's defeat, Erskine expressed the need and his desire for a third and final phase: cut off all the militants' support in the reserves. The means to this terminal end was originally suggested by the man brought in by the colonial government to an ethnopsychiatric 'diagnosis' of the uprising, JC Carothers: he advocated a Kenyan version of the villagisation programmes that the British were already using in places like Malaya.

So it was that in June 1954, the War Council took the decision to undertake a full-scale forced-resettlement programme of Kiambu, Nyeri, Murang'a and Embu Districts to cut off Mau Mau's supply lines. Within eighteen months, 1,050,899 Kikuyu in the reserves were inside 804 villages consisting of some 230,000 huts. The government termed them "protected villages", purportedly to be built along "the same lines as the villages in the North of England", though the term was actually a "euphemism[]" for the fact that hundreds of thousands of civilians were corralled, often against their will, into settlements behind barbed-wire fences and watch towers."

While some of these villages were to protect loyalist Kikuyu, "most were little more than concentration camps to punish Mau Mau sympathizers." The villagisation programme was the *coup de grâce* for Mau Mau. By the end of the following summer, Lieutenant General Lathbury no longer needed Lincoln bombers for raids because of a lack of targets, and, by late 1955, Lathbury felt so sure of final victory that he reduced army forces to almost pre-Mau Mau levels.

He noted, however, that the British should have "no illusions about the future. Mau Mau has not been cured: it has been suppressed. The thousands who have spent a long time in detention must have

been embittered by it. Nationalism is still a very potent force and the African will pursue his aim by other means. Kenya is in for a very tricky political future."

Whilst they [the Kikuyu] could not be expected to take kindly at first to a departure from their traditional way of life, such as living in villages, they need and desire to be told just what to do.
Council of Kenya-Colony's Ministers, July 1954

The government's public relations officer, Granville Roberts, presented villagisation as a good opportunity for rehabilitation, particularly of women and children, but it was, in fact, first and foremost designed to break Mau Mau and protect loyalist Kikuyu, a fact reflected in the extremely limited resources made available to the Rehabilitation and Community Development Department. Refusal to move could be punished with the destruction of property and livestock, and the roofs were usually ripped off of homes whose occupants demonstrated reluctance. Villagisation also solved the practical and financial problems associated with a further, massive expansion of the Pipeline programme, and the removal of people from their land hugely assisted the enactment of Swynnerton Plan.

The villages were surrounded by deep, spike-bottomed trenches and barbed wire, and the villagers themselves were watched over by members of the Home Guard, often neighbours and relatives. In short, rewards or collective punishments such as curfews could be served much more readily after villagisation, and this quickly had an impact on breaking Mau Mau's passive wing. Though there were degrees of difference between the villages, the overall conditions engendered by villagisation meant that, by early 1955, districts began reporting starvation and malnutrition. One provincial commissioner blamed child hunger on parents deliberately withholding food, saying the latter were aware of the "propaganda value of apparent malnutrition".

From the health point of view, I regard villagisation as being exceedingly dangerous and we are already starting to reap the benefits.
Meru's District Commissioner, 6 November 1954, four months after the institution of villagisation

The Red Cross helped mitigate the food shortages, but even they were told to prioritise loyalist areas. The Baring government's medical department issued reports about "the alarming number of deaths occurring amongst children in the 'punitive' villages", and the "political" prioritisation of Red Cross relief.

One of the colony's ministers blamed the "bad spots" in Central Province on the mothers of the children for "not realis[ing] the great importance of proteins", and one former missionary reported that it "was terribly pitiful how many of the children and the older Kikuyu were dying. They were so emaciated and so very susceptible to any kind of disease that came along". Of the 50,000 deaths which John Blacker attributed to the Emergency, half were children under the age of ten.

The lack of food did not just affect the children, of course. The Overseas Branch of the British Red Cross commented on the "women who, from progressive undernourishment, had been unable to carry on with their work".

Disease prevention was not helped by the colony's policy of returning sick detainees to receive treatment in the reserves, though the reserves' medical services were virtually non-existent, as Baring himself noted after a tour of some villages in June 1956.

Political and social Concessions by the British

Kenyans were granted nearly all of the demands made by the KAU in 1951. On 18 January 1955, the Governor-General of Kenya, Evelyn Baring, offered an amnesty to Mau Mau activists. The offer was

that they would not face prosecution for previous offences, but may still be detained. European settlers were appalled at the leniency of the offer. On 10 June 1955 with no response forthcoming, the offer of amnesty to the Mau Mau was revoked. In June 1956, a program of land reform increased the land holdings of the Kikuyu.. This was coupled with a relaxation of the ban on Africans growing coffee, a primary cash crop.

In the cities the colonial authorities decided to dispel tensions by raising urban wages, thereby strengthening the hand of moderate union organisations like the KFRTU. By 1956, the British had granted direct election of African members of the Legislative Assembly, followed shortly thereafter by an increase in the number of African seats to fourteen. A Parliamentary conference in January 1960 indicated that the British would accept "one person—one vote" majority rule.

Deaths

The uprising was, in David Anderson's words, "a story of atrocity and excess on both sides, a dirty war from which no one emerged with much pride, and certainly no glory." Historian Daniel Goldhagen describes the campaign against the Mau Mau as an example of eliminationism, though this verdict has been fiercely criticised.

The total number of deaths attributable to the Emergency has been a source of dispute: Caroline Elkins claims it is "tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands". Elkins numbers have been challenged by the British demographer John Blacker, who demonstrated in detail that her numbers were overestimated, explaining that Elkins' figure of 300,000 deaths "implies that perhaps half of the adult male population would have been wiped out—yet the censuses of 1962 and 1969 show no evidence of this—the age-sex pyramids for the Kikuyu districts do not even show indentations."

His study dealt directly with Elkins' claim that "somewhere between 130,000 and 300,000 Kikuyu are unaccounted for" at the 1962 census, and was read by both David Anderson and John Lonsdale prior to publication. Half of Blacker's own estimate of 50,000 comprises children under the age of ten. David Elstein has noted that leading authorities on Africa have taken issue with parts of Elkins' study, in particular her mortality figures: "The senior British historian of Kenya, John Lonsdale, whom Elkins thanks profusely in her book as 'the most gifted scholar I know', warned her to place no reliance on anecdotal sources, and regards her statistical analysis—for which she cites him as one of three advisors—as 'frankly incredible'."

The British possibly killed in excess of 20,000 Mau Mau militants, but in some ways more notable is the smaller number of Mau Mau suspects dealt with by capital punishment: by the end of the Emergency, the grand total was 1,090. At no other time or place in the British empire was capital punishment dispensed so liberally—the total is more than double the number executed by the French in Algeria.

War Crimes

2Mau Mau fighters, . . . contrary to African customs and values, assaulted old people, women and children. The horrors they practiced included the following: decapitation and general mutilation of civilians, torture before murder, bodies bound up in sacks and dropped in wells, burning the victims alive, gouging out of eyes, splitting open the stomachs of pregnant women. No war can justify such gruesome actions. In man's inhumanity to man, there is no race distinction. The Africans were practicing it on themselves. There was no reason and no restraint on both sides".

Bethwell Ogot

War crimes have been broadly defined by the Nuremberg Principles as "violations of the laws or customs of war," which includes massacres, bombings of civilian targets, terrorism, mutilation,

torture, and murder of detainees and prisoners of war. Additional common crimes include theft, arson, and the destruction of property not warranted by military necessity.

British War Crimes

Chuka Massacre

The Chuka Massacre, which happened in Chuka, Kenya, was perpetrated by members of the King's African Rifles B Company in June 1953 with 20 unarmed people killed during the Mau Mau uprising. Members of the 5th KAR B Company entered the Chuka area on June 13, 1953, to flush out rebels suspected of hiding in the nearby forests. Over the next few days, the regiment had captured and executed 20 people suspected of being Mau Mau fighters for unknown reasons. It is found out that most of the people executed were actually belonged to the Kikuyu Home Guard - a loyalist militia recruited by the British to fight an increasingly powerful and audacious guerrilla enemy. In an atmosphere of atrocity and reprisal, the matter was swept under the carpet and nobody ever stood trial for the massacre.

Human Rights Abuses in British Concentration Camps

In order to fight the Mau Mau insurgency during the conflict, British troops suspended civil liberties in Kenya. In response to the rebellion, many Kikuyu were relocated. Between 320,000-450,000 of them were moved into concentration camps. Most of the remainder - more than a million - were held in "enclosed villages". Although some were Mau Mau guerillas, many were victims of collective punishment that colonial authorities imposed on large areas of the country. Thousands suffered beatings and sexual assaults during "screenings" intended to extract information about the Mau Mau threat. Later, prisoners suffered even worse mistreatment in an attempt to force them to renounce their allegiance to the insurgency and to obey commands. Significant numbers were murdered; official accounts describe some prisoners being roasted alive. Prisoners were questioned with the help of "slicing off ears, boring holes in eardrums, flogging until death, pouring paraffin over suspects who were then set alight, and burning eardrums with lit cigarettes". Castration by British troops and denying access to medical aid to the detainees were also widespread and common. Among the detainees who suffered severe mistreatment was Hussein Onyango Obama, the grandfather of U.S. President Barack Obama. According to his widow, British soldiers forced pins into his fingernails and buttocks and squeezed his testicles between metal rods and two others were castrated.

"We knew the slow method of torture [at the Mau Mau Investigation Center] was worse than anything we could do. Special Branch there had a way of slowly electrocuting a Kuke—they'd rough up one for days. Once I went personally to drop off one gang member who needed special treatment. I stayed for a few hours to help the boys out, softening him up. Things got a little out of hand. By the time I cut his balls off, he had no ears, and his eyeball, the right one, I think, was hanging out of its socket. Too bad, he died before we got much out of him."

One settler's description of British Interrogation

In June 1957, Eric Griffith-Jones, the attorney general of the British administration in Kenya, wrote to the governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, detailing the way the regime of abuse at the colony's detention camps was being subtly altered. He said that the mistreatment of the detainees is "distressingly reminiscent of conditions in Nazi Germany or Communist Russia". Despite this, he said that in order for abuse to remain legal, Mau Mau suspects must be beaten mainly on their upper body, "vulnerable parts of the body should not be struck, particularly the spleen, liver or kidneys", and it was important that "those who administer violence ... should remain collected, balanced and dispassionate". He also reminded the governor that "If we are going to sin," he wrote, "we must sin quietly."

Hola Massacre

The Hola massacre was an incident during the conflict in Kenya against British colonial rule at a colonial detention camp in Hola, Kenya. By January 1959 the camp had a population of 506 detainees of whom 127 were held in a secluded "closed camp". This more remote camp near Garissa, eastern Kenya, was reserved for the most uncooperative of the detainees. They often

refused, even when threats of force were made, to join in the colonial "rehabilitation process" or perform manual labour or obey colonial orders. The camp commandant outlined a plan that would force 88 of the detainees to bend to work. On 3 March 1959, the camp commandant put this plan into action – as a result, 11 detainees were clubbed to death by guards. 77 surviving detainees sustained serious permanent injuries. The British government accepts that the colonial administration tortured detainees, but denies liability.

Mau Mau War Crimes

Lari Massacre

Mau Mau militants were guilty of numerous war crimes. The most notorious was their attack on the settlement of Lari, on the night of 25–26 March 1953, in which they herded Kikuyu men, women and children into huts and set fire to them, hacking down with pangas anyone who attempted escape, before throwing them back into the burning huts. The attack at Lari was so extreme that "African policemen who saw the bodies of the victims . . . were physically sick and said 'These people are animals. If I see one now I shall shoot with the greatest eagerness'", and it "even shocked many Mau Mau supporters, some of whom would subsequently try to excuse the attack as 'a mistake'".

A retaliatory massacre was immediately perpetrated by African security forces who were partially overseen by British commanders. Official estimates place the death toll from the first Lari massacre at 74, and the second at 150, though neither of these figures account for those who 'disappeared'. Whatever the actual number of victims, "The grim truth was that, for every person who died in Lari's first massacre, at least two more were killed in retaliation in the second."

Aside from the Lari massacres, Kikuyu were also tortured, mutilated and murdered by Mau Mau on many other occasions. Mau Mau racked up 1,819 murders of their fellow Africans, though again this number excludes the many additional hundreds who 'disappeared', whose bodies were never found.^[4] Thirty-two European and twenty-six Asian civilians were also murdered by Mau Mau militants, with similar numbers wounded. The most well known European victim was Michael Ruck, aged six, who was hacked to death with pangas along with his parents, Roger and Esme, and one of the Rucks' farm workers, Muthura Nagahu, who had tried to help the family. Newspapers in Kenya and abroad published graphic murder details, including images of young Michael with bloodied teddy bears and trains strewn on his bedroom floor.

"Electric shock was widely used, as well as cigarettes and fire. Bottles (often broken), gun barrels, knives, snakes, vermin, and hot eggs were thrust up men's rectums and women's vaginas. The screening teams whipped, shot, burned and mutilated Mau Mau suspects, ostensibly to gather intelligence for military operations and as court evidence".

Caroline Elkins

In 1952 the poisonous latex of the African milk bush was used by members of Mau Mau to kill cattle in an incident of biological warfare.

Legacy

Though Mau Mau was effectively crushed by the end of 1956, it was not until the First Lancaster House Conference, in January 1960, that African majority rule was established and the period of colonial transition to independence initiated. Before the conference, it was anticipated by both African and European leaders that Kenya was set for a European-dominated multi-racial government.

There is continuing debate about Mau Mau's and the rebellion's effects on decolonisation and on Kenya after independence. Regarding decolonisation, the most common view is that Kenya's independence came about as a result of the British government's deciding that a continuance of colonial rule would entail a greater use of force than that which the British public would tolerate. Nissimi argues, though, that such a view fails to "acknowledge the time that elapsed until the rebellion's influence actually took effect [and does not] explain why the same liberal tendencies failed

to stop the dirty war the British conducted against the Mau Mau in Kenya while it was raging on." Others contend that, as the 1950s progressed, nationalist intransigence increasingly rendered official plans for political development irrelevant, meaning that after the mid-1950s British policy increasingly accepted African nationalism and moved to co-opt its leaders and organisations into collaboration.

It has been argued that the conflict helped set the stage for Kenyan independence in December 1963, or at least secured the prospect of Black-majority rule once the British left. Another view downplays the contribution of Mau Mau to decolonisation.