

THE REAL TERRORISTS IN KENYA

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WHEN a State of Emergency was declared in Kenya a year and more ago, the Colonial Secretary and other spokesmen of the British Government indignantly denied allegations that an attack was being made against the legitimate demands of Africans in Kenya. All along they have solemnly declared that military and police operations in Kenya are restricted to the suppression of a minority of 'terrorists' alleged to be organised by the Mau Mau. Prior to the state of emergency, repeated warnings were given by responsible African leaders that an all-out attack upon their democratic organisations was being prepared by the white settlers. On September 30, 1952, four African unofficial members of the Kenya Legislative Council issued a statement which said

The recent move by the European elected members and their leader on what is termed crime and unrest in Kenya is dictated by the interests of the European settlers who, in their desire to divert attention from the social and economic problems facing the African people, and to justify their attacks against civil liberties, have embarked on a campaign of misrepresentation by grossly exaggerating the extent of crime and subversive activities. . . .

Attempts are also being made to destroy and wreck the Kenya African Union—the only political organisation representative of all Africans in Kenya—at a time when the country faces important constitutional changes.

(Manchester Guardian, September 30, 1952.)

These warnings by African leaders were ignored, and, under pressure from the white settlers and the pretext of combatting an alleged secret 'terrorist' organisation, a State of Emergency was declared in Kenya on October 20, 1952, simultaneously with the arrival of troops in the Colony. When Mr. Lyttelton made his statement in the House of Commons on the emergency measures taken, 'not a single Opposition voice was raised in criticism'. *(Manchester Guardian, October 22, 1952.)*

The correctness of the warnings given by African leaders has now been conclusively proved with the recent publication of extracts from the newsletter of the European Electors' Union—the mouth-piece of the white settlers in Kenya. On August 7, 1952, over two months *before* the declaration of the emergency a 14-point memorandum was submitted to the Government of Kenya by the European Electors' Union, through their Elected Members' Organisation. A covering letter was sent with the memorandum,

giving the background to one aspect of its recommendations 'namely, the neutralisation of political leaders'. The letter points out that some years previously the Electors' Union had urged on Mr. Foster Sutton, the then Member for Law and Order, the need to neutralise certain African leaders. The letter continues that the time has now arrived 'for their neutralisation *or liquidation*'. Both documents are signed by Kendall Ward, Executive Officer.

The memorandum itself draws attention to the need to 'combat and suppress the present wave of crime and subversive activity', and proceeds to make certain proposals, which, if not acted upon by the Government, the white settlers would 'themselves feel that the time had come for them to act in default of Government intervention'. The memorandum points out that 'as it was impossible to deal with the situation under ordinary law the Government should declare a state of emergency' which would enable them to introduce 'all such measures as might be necessary for the suppression of subversive activity, crime, and the restoration of law and order'. To restore this law and order, it proposes curfews, a pass system, corporal punishment, and a system of rewards for 'Africans laying information of use to Government in suppressing crime, etc.'

The recent publication by Her Majesty's Government of the annual report on Kenya for 1952 officially explodes these wild and extravagant allegations of a wave of crime and subversive activity. Official figures of crime in Kenya for the years 1951 and 1952 are:

			1951	1952
Crime against property	13,975	15,930
Crime against persons	1,086	904

These figures certainly do not indicate a crime wave. Nonetheless, the Government very willingly introduced a State of Emergency and promptly implemented all the proposals made by the white settlers, who, in their Newsletter of November 1952, boastfully proclaim that 'our suggestions for dealing with the present emergency have been extensively implemented by the Government'.

However, it is the concluding paragraph of the white settlers' memorandum which pinpoints the real cause of the State of Emergency and its subsequent stark and tragic story of mass slaughter and unbearable suffering. This illuminating passage reads:

Associated with the whole of this present position were the statements being made by African leaders in regard to the European Highlands. Such statements the Committee considered were dangerous and inflammatory. The Committee were of the opinion that Government should

make it quite clear that the position of the European Highlands as laid down by the Kenya Land Commission in 1933 and as established by Order-in-Council, was unassailable. Statements now being made by African leaders are provocative in the extreme and if African leaders persist in the sort of claim they are now making it will result in the provocation of the European community to such an extent that sooner or later some individuals will take the law into their own hands.

What are the 'sort of claims' the Africans are making, to which the white settlers take such extreme exception?

The very modest claims of the Africans were incorporated in the Land Petition circulated by the Kenya African Union in 1951, which obtained over 400,000 signatures. The petition stated that 'a grievous wrong is being suffered by the people of Kenya through the alienation of 16,700 square miles of the most fertile land in Kenya and its transference to European settlers, without the consent of the people of Kenya and without compensation for the value of the land' resulting in a disastrous situation of mass poverty and malnutrition for the African people. The petition therefore made the modest claim that Africans shall 'immediately be allowed to occupy and farm the large unused areas which are in the territories reserved to Europeans' and that 'immigration of further settlers shall be stopped in view of the land hunger from which the African community suffers'. Such a modest claim—put forward in a completely constitutional manner through a petition to the House of Commons at Westminster!

This is the background to the State of Emergency. But what is the position since its declaration? Mbiyu Koinange has repeatedly claimed that what is happening in Kenya today is genocide. The British Government and the white settlers are murdering the African people. The present number of Africans killed is over 4,000, yet by the summer of last year when about a thousand Africans had lost their lives, the *Observer* stated 'It is only a matter of . . . how many will be killed before active resistance stops' (July 8, 1953). The evidence for this charge of genocide continues to mount. On April 2 and 9, the weekly news digest of the *Hindustan Times* reported Mr. Murumbi (Secretary of the Kenya African Union) as stating in India that European settlers in Kenya had been given the right to shoot coloured people at sight, and that wholesale murders had been committed under this system. When an attempt was made by Mr. Peter Evans, on May 6, 1953, to substantiate charges of indiscriminate murder, he was at once deported by order of the Governor.

As early as February 1, 1953, the *Manchester Guardian* published a report of a protest to the Governor of Kenya about the use of

collective punishment, violence towards suspected persons, and third degree measures by both African and European police in attempts to gain information from the Kikuyu people about Mau Mau activities, made by a Secretary of a Missionary Society, Canon T. C. F. Bewes.

The extension of the death penalty 'for consorting with terrorists who are in possession of firearms' (*Manchester Guardian*, September 15, 1953) or 'for trafficking in firearms or committing any act likely to assist the operation of terrorists or impede security forces' (*The Times*, May 15, 1953) taken in conjunction with the statements in the *Manchester Guardian* (April 4, 1953) that in Nairobi city area all police have been instructed to shoot to kill if they see any suspicious assemblies of Africans and fail to get a quick and satisfactory answer to a first challenge, and the statement by General Erskine that 'in prohibited areas security forces regarded everybody they saw as an enemy and shot them. . . . In other types of operation Kikuyu were not treated as an enemy and were only shot at if they ran away when challenged' (*The Times*, August 3, 1953) do not convey the impression that African lives are respected. The evidence points to genocide.

What is perhaps most significant about the allegations made against Mau Mau by the Government is the fact that when in September the Government introduced more aggressive measures against Africans in Nairobi, the African replied by boycotting buses and motor vehicles and boycotting smoking in public. While *The Times* states that the boycott was observed by 'the city's entire African population' no attempt has been made to call all Africans in Nairobi Mau Mau.

Under the smokescreen of Mau Mau the British Government sent its troops and armed cars. The screen is no more, and the exposure enables the British people to take effective action to see that the Government is called to a halt. The wealth of evidence that accumulates around the charge of genocide can no longer be ignored. The responsibility to see that the evidence is marshalled and the charge answered at Westminster rests on the British people. The National Day of Protest organised by the Kenya Committee (of which I am a member) on December 9 brought the matter clearly before Members of Parliament, the Colonial Secretary and the Government on that day. It is vital that the Labour Party, the Trade Unions and the whole progressive movement in Britain raises a protest that compares in size only with Britain's shame.