

'To the African the march of man has become a living reality . . .' — Oliver Lyttelton

THE most significant thing about the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to Kenya is not so much what it reveals as the fact that it is the first official admission since the emergency that the Africans especially the Kikuyus, have justifiable grievances.

Until now this has been strenuously denied by the Secretary of State for Colonies, who has all along tried to create the impression that the Africans who support Mau Mau rebellion are just gangsters who, for some mysterious reason, have suddenly "reverted" to a state of savagery. This childish superficial explanation of the causes which have given rise to Mau Mau even finds credence in this otherwise well informed and very revealing report.

Contrary to the hitherto cynical attitude evinced by Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttelton, the authors of the Report—three die-hard Tories, Messrs. Walter Elliot, C. J. M. Alport and E. B. Wakefield, and three middle-of-the-road Socialists, Messrs. Arthur Bottomley, James Johnson and R. W. Williams—have been compelled by the very nature of the objective situation which they found during their 16-days' visit to Kenya to admit frankly that notwithstanding some of the revolting methods used by Mau Mau adher-

By

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Well-known African author and journalist and recognised authority on African affairs. His book on the Gold Coast was recently banned by the Kenya Government

ents, there do exist justifiable grievances among the overwhelming majority of the African population.

These grievances (admitted in the Report) range from land shortage, economic and social colour bars, low wages, bad housing, limited educational facilities, the absence of social security up to the denial of political and civil rights.

#### POLICE INDICTED

Moreover, their strictures on police brutality and corruption recall some of the worst features of the "Black and Tan" in Ireland. "Brutality and malpractices," says the Report, "have occurred on a scale which constitutes a threat to public confidence in the force of law and order."

In support of the indictment of the police force, the Report quotes official records, showing that "there have been 130 prosecutions for brutality among the police forces, ending in 73 convictions. Forty cases are pending. There have also been 29 prosecutions for corruption, of which there were 12 convictions, 13 are pending." God alone knows how many other cases of brutality have gone unpunished by those in authority. This disgraceful and revolting state of affairs is the logical outcome of British methods of colonial administration.

#### BLACK 'STORM TROOPERS'

Although the Report is silent on the point, it is a well-known fact that the large majority of the police employed against Mau Mau are recruited from tribes other than the Kikuyus, and that they are encouraged by their European officers to carry out their duties in the spirit of tribal vendetta. It is, therefore, sheer hypocrisy merely to indict "the lower levels of police" without condemning the entire system of colonial administration, which is actually responsible for the recruiting and training of the African police as an instrument of terror against the civilian African population.

This applies not just to Kenya but to most parts of Africa. Everywhere these black "storm troopers" are looked upon as enemies of the people and the watchdogs of alien domination. And as such, they enjoy unbridled licence to practice brutality, corruption and bribery. Matters have now reached such a shocking state in Kenya that the Commissioner of Police has been retired and the head of the City of London Police, Colonel Young, has been engaged to reorganise the police force. Colonel Young performed

a similar mission in Malaya last year.

#### THE GAINS OF VIOLENCE

Whatever readers of the Report may think about the atrocities ascribed to Mau Mau, details of which have been deleted, the fact remains that they have achieved one positive good. And that is that their very methods of violence have accomplished what other Africans have failed to do. They have forced a Parliamentary Commission to recognise the real grievances of their fellows, including those described as "loyal Kikuyus." For they, too, are part of the five million Africans whose economic, political and social needs have until now been ignored by the white authorities in Kenya and Whitehall.

This being so, one of the greatest indictments that can be brought against colonial government as carried on in multi-racial territories such as Kenya is that the system is so repressive that unless the Africans resort to direct action, their rulers just refuse to recognise—much less redress—their grievances. This is confirmed by the revelations made in the Report.

#### BELATED RECOGNITION

All the problems mentioned by the Visiting Mission—land hunger, colour bar, lack of education, low wages, social security, lack of political representation, etc., etc.—have frequently been brought to the attention of both the Kenya Government and the Colonial Office. But instead of dealing sympathetically with the recognised leaders of the people, these men were invariably abused as "dangerous agitators," and "semi-educated trouble-makers."

Little or no attempt was made even by Labour Governments after the end of the war to right the wrongs of the long-suffering Africans. Had they done so, the present trouble in Kenya could have been avoided.

Kenyatta spent over 16 years in Great Britain, during which time he presented several petitions to both Tory and Socialist Colonial Ministers and submitted many memoranda to Royal Commissions appointed to examine the land problem in Kenya.

Despite repeated promises to implement extremely modest agrarian reforms based upon the recommendations of the Hilton Young and Morris Carter Commissions, African land hunger was ignored and allowed to go from bad to worse.

By the time of the outbreak of the Mau Mau revolt, 16,000 square miles of land had been alienated to 2,000 European settlers, many of them retired British army officers and members of the old landed gentry and feudal families.

#### DRIVEN OFF LAND

Among the earliest settlers was Lord Delamere who had first pick of the best land in the Kikuyu

# KENYA: THE FACTS

## Parliamentary Delegation Lifts the Lid—a Little Bit!



country. He got plantations of over one hundred thousand acres.

Other aristocrats like Lord Francis Scott, uncle of the Duchess of Gloucester, and the Earl of Plymouth secured about three hundred and fifty thousand acres between them. The son of the Duke of Abercorn acquired an estate of thirty thousand acres, while other aristocratic land-grabbers and speculators formed joint stock companies through which they control vast plantations, such as the East Africa Estates, which owns over three hundred and fifty thousand acres. The chairman of the company is Viscount Gobham. His uncle, the Hon. R. G. Lyttelton, holds 14,108 shares in the company.

Viscount Cobham is a cousin of Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttelton

The Kikuyus, who were expelled from their ancestral homes to

make way for the settlers, alone lost over 500,000 acres, for which they were not paid any compensation. The Masai, Kavirondo and Wakamba tribes have also lost considerable lands since the British occupation.

At present the 5,500,000 Africans are confined to special areas known as Reserves. These cover about 50,000 square miles. The Kikuyus, who are the most advanced tribe, number about 1,500,000. Their reserve is about 2,000 square miles of cultivable land. The density of population is so great that in some areas it is over 1,000 per square mile. Those unable to find accommodation within the Reserve have become squatters on the farms of white settlers. Over 250,000 of these landless Kikuyus have no rights or security of tenure. They have been reduced to the status of serfs. Others, especially the younger men have drifted to Nairobi, the capital, where very few of them are able to secure employment because of the absence of large-scale manufacturing or mining industries.

#### WHAT AND WHO IS MAU MAU?

After the failure of his mission to Britain, Jomo Kenyatta returned to Kenya in 1947. During his absence, however, the Kikuyu Central Association was suppressed by the Government in 1940 as a "subversive organisation." But shortly after the end of the war, a new organisation known as the Kenya African Union, was formed by a new generation of Africans to continue the agitation for political, economic and social reforms.

To promote the aims and objects of the K.A.U., the organisers launched a campaign to collect a million signatures to a petition to be presented to the British Parliament. The campaign proved to be such a success that within a few months after its inauguration, the

K.A.U. was able to despatch two of its executive members, Mr. Mbiyu Koinange, a Kikuyu, and Mr. Achieng Oneko, a Luo, to England, with the intention of presenting a petition to the Secretary of State for Colonies, asking him to appoint a commission to enquire into and redress their grievances, which were similar to those to which Kenyatta had drawn the British Government's attention nearly twenty years before.

After Mr. Lyttelton had refused to receive the mission, which had the backing of Mr. Fenner Brockway and a small group of Labour left-wing back-benchers, Mr. Oneko returned to Kenya to report on the failure of the mission. His colleague, Mr. Koinange, remained in Britain to carry on the work of enlightening the British public about actual conditions in Kenya.

When news of Mr. Koinange's exposures in Britain, reached Kenya, the settlers became most indignant and the leaders of the Electors Union, the European political organisation, demanded the suppression of the K.A.U. But since Jomo Kenyatta, president of the Union, and other officers had publicly repudiated the use of violence, and were conducting their campaign for reforms strictly along constitutional lines, the Governor found it difficult to justify the suppression of the K.A.U.

#### "DISCOVERED!"

This, however, did not restrain the settlers from carrying on their incitement against African organisation as a seditious body. Then, suddenly, the European press announced that they had "discovered" an African secret society, which they called Mau Mau, and which they asserted was inspired and directed by Jomo Kenyatta and other leaders of the K.A.U., with the object of driving the white settlers out of Kenya

Highlands and seizing political power for themselves.

The K.A.U. leaders denied these allegations and continued to appeal to their followers to avoid the use of violence. They offered to co-operate with the Government to help maintain law and order; but this was rejected and a state of emergency was declared in September, 1952.

A few weeks later, Jomo Kenyatta and 25 other officers of the K.A.U., including Achieng Oneko, were arrested. From then on, mass arrests of members of the K.A.U. have taken place. Two months after Kenyatta and five of his colleagues were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment with hard labour on charges of "assisting in the managing of Mau Mau", the Government declared the K.A.U. an illegal organisation, thus creating a political vacuum as far as the Africans are concerned.

Mau Mau, unlike the K.A.U. is not an organised political party or nationalist movement with a regular membership, a constitution, political programme and officers. Even the designation has never been satisfactorily explained, as no such word as Mau Mau exists in the Kikuyu language. Nevertheless, its socio-economic causes can be explained.

It is a spontaneous revolt of a de-classed section of the African rural population, uprooted from its tribal lands and driven into urban slums. At the time of the declaration of the emergency, it is estimated that over ten thousand Africans were permanently unemployed in Nairobi. Removed from tribal discipline and embittered, many of the young men took to a life of crime. It was from this 'lumpen proletariat' that "dead end" gang leaders recruited adherents to avenge themselves upon the white men, whom they hold responsible for breaking up their tribal life and replacing it with nothing but slave labour on European farms.

Like the slave revolts of ancient Rome, the Mau Mau supporters are fighting for land, without which they prefer death.

In a country like Kenya, where, according to the Parliamentary Delegation Report, "old age security, by way of pension or national provident fund" does not exist, unless an urbanised African owns a piece of land in the Reserve to which he can return in his old age, he may as well be dead.

The progressive and nationalistically-minded leaders of the K.A.U. had a positive economic, political and social programme which envisaged the building of an integrated African self-governing state with democratic safeguards for minority races. The Mau Mau leaders, however, look back to the past and seek to exploit traditional tribal oaths and practices to recruit and bind their followers in supporting their limited fight for land for the landless.

The immediate problem is the ending of the bloody violence on both sides and creating an atmosphere in which even the modest recommendations embodied in the Report can be discussed by the representatives of the different racial groups. But such a Round Table Conference can only be brought about by first of all securing the support of those African leaders who enjoy the confidence and loyalty of the mass of the people. And as most of those people are under arrest, it will be up to the Governor to grant them amnesty. Yet even this will not be enough to restore the status quo ante.

The British Government will have to give the Africans an irrevocable guarantee that they intend to open the Highlands to landless Kikuyus, abolish the colour bar, re-open the Independent schools and expand educational facilities, pay Africans in the civil service equal pay for equal work, and recognise the principle of parity in representation in local and central councils of government. For unless African leaders are armed with these assurances, which will enable them to offer their people something concrete by way of a better future, even the most trusted among them will be unable to bring about that psychological change which alone can help to bridge the present gulf between the Europeans and the Africans, the rulers and the ruled, without which there is no hope of cordial race relations in Africa—the prerequisite of Partnership.

# The Engineers' Wage Claim

By Norman Dinning

THE findings of the Court of Enquiry into the Engineers' wage dispute are in favour of an increase, and on this basis recommend a resumption of negotiations. It now remains to be seen how the Unions and Employers will deal with these findings.

A 5 per cent recommendation on a 15 per cent claim is, I suppose, a partial victory—but such a 'victory' must be seen in its true light.

The Confederation Unions have bent over backwards to avoid action thoroughly warranted by the Employers' attitude, and, since December 2nd, the rank and file, dubious about the postponed overtime and piecemeal ban and desiring militant action, have been, so to speak, held on a leash.

The employers will probably take heed of the Court and offer

a rise of 7/—a figure that has been implied ever since the Railwaymen's dispute was settled. If the Unions agree to this, the employers will have gained the full fruits of their strategy.

Their original refusal was undoubtedly based upon an ultimate intervention by the Ministry of Labour and a subsequent demonstration by the employers of their readiness to accept an "impartial" opinion, which (how fortunate!), concedes to them two-thirds of the case in dispute.

Even the left press is stressing the Court's decision for an increase as proof of the Unions' case. But the 'proof of the pudding is in the eating' and seven shillings won't buy twenty shillings and eightpence worth which the Union demanded.

Furthermore, many thousands of engineers are tenants of rent-controlled houses and will shortly be called upon to pass the wage increase (assuming the 7/- is accepted), on to the landlords.

#### OMINOUS TALK

The supposed 'impartiality' of the Court is further expressed in the proposal, reported in last Sunday's 'Observer', for an "authoritative and impartial body to advise industry on the broader questions raised by wage claims... that would enable them to put their own particular problems in the wider context of the nation's need and difficulties."

Ominous stuff this. The "nation's needs and difficulties" were precisely what the employers advanced in justification of their

opposition to the wage claim from the moment the claim was made.

The 'Observer' points out that a similar idea—for a National Wages policy—was mooted when Labour was in power but it "aroused considerable opposition in trade union circles." This is well, for a 'national' wages policy is acceptable to trade unionists only when the nation's resources belong, not to the profit-makers but to the producers themselves.

The idea of a community of interests between employer and worker, capital and labour, is both pernicious and pathetic. For the planned satisfaction of needs we require an intensification of political activity and a more positive use of the Confederation Unions' power at the Labour Party Conference in support of socialist planning. The rank and file must see that we get it—and not this tinkering with modern day 'Mond-Turnerism'.