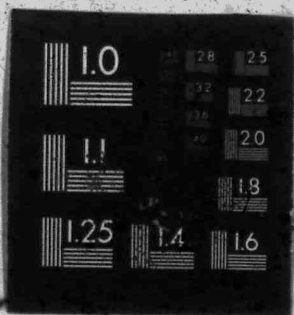


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SETTLERS, GOVERNORS, AND THE COLONIAL OFFICE: A
STUDY OF POLITICAL PRESSURES IN KENYA, 1903-1923.

by

C. P. YOUNG

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at Dalhousie University.
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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The British Government was highly sensitive to the pleas of the Government of India in the aftermath of the Great War. Since ultimate control of Kenyan affairs was vested in Whitehall it should have been easy for Lloyd George's Coalition or Baldwin's Ministry to right the Imperial wrong being done in the colony. Yet the Devonshire Declaration of July 1923 denied Kenya's Asian subjects equal rights of citizenship with the Europeans. The denial represented a formidable victory for the small band of white politicians. How they achieved that success is the subject of this dissertation.

In numbers alone the settlers were an almost negligible proportion of the total population, even compared to their South African and Southern Rhodesian counterparts. The arguments they propounded were often dismissed by Colonial Office personnel as preposterous. The European strength lay, not in numbers or a convincing philosophy, but in strategy. Tactics alone though did not ensure economic and political hegemony but the sympathy of the Governor did. The remoteness of the colony would not have obviated real Whitehall control had the appointed Governors conformed to Government directives, but often times they did not.

This thesis covers the twenty years from the inception of white settlement to the 1923 White Paper. It analyses the strategy employed by the white oligarchy and investigates the position of Kenya's Governors. The administrations of Sir Edward Northey and Sir Robert Coryndon are emphasised since the years 1918-23 were critical for both Europeans and Indians in the colony.

INTRODUCTION

The Eurocentricity which epitomised the earlier histories of colonialism in Africa is now being superseded by a more balanced historiographical trend which stresses the significance of the Africans' role in determining the shape of their own history. A deleterious effect of the current perspective is the lack of revision and re-interpretation of the European position. In the case of Kenya, two recent works - J. Galbraith's MacKinnon and East Africa (Cambridge, 1972) and G. Mungeam's British Rule in Kenya (Oxford, 1966) - have provided a deeper insight into the nature of British administration. These studies, however, are restricted to the early colonial period and a much more comprehensive history is Marjorie Dilley's British Policy in Kenya Colony (New York, 1937) which was published nearly forty years ago. A more recent work is the late George Bennett's Kenya: A Political History (London, 1963) which is altogether too brief to be of value to the specialist scholar. On the whole the position of white settlers and Governors has been neglected by current historians and more emphasis seems to have been placed upon Indian political organisations, the best examples being R. Gregory's India and East Africa (Oxford, 1971) and J.

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Mangat's A History of Asians in East Africa (Oxford, 1969).

This thesis investigates the tripartite relationship of settlers, Governors and the Colonial Office from the inception of white settlement to the Devonshire Declaration. The two introductory Chapters provide the political background for the twenty years and the rest of the text deals with political pressures.

The disposition of the various Governors from Eliot to Belfield is reviewed in Chapter Three and this is followed by a study of the régimes of Northey and Coryndon in Chapters Four and Five respectively. The latitude allowed to Governors, especially regarding the fait accompli, has been well documented but very few historians have delved into the position of Governors in more than just general terms. The administrations of Northey and Coryndon are examined in an attempt to understand the men, their policies, and their relationship with both the settlers and the Colonial Office during a critical period in Kenya's history.

The final two Chapters focus upon the European political activists, who they were, the reasons for their prominence, and the amount of influence they exerted upon Westminster. The significance of the planned settler rebellion of 1923 is the subject of Chapter Seven.

Most of the original research for this thesis pertains to the years 1912-23 since it was a period of rapid political advance for the European activists and the most crucial episode of the Indian question. As Mungeam's book concentrates upon the Governors up to and including Girouard it was regarded as

unnecessary to repeat that study. More might have been said about Belfield's term of office but such a task would have proved too extensive for a Master's thesis.

Essentially the dissertation is an attempt to discover the strategy of the European activists and the significance of the man-on-the-spot with particular reference to Governors Northey and Coryndon.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. P. D. Pillay for the guidance he offered during the course of my research, and to Dr. John Flint who kindly agreed to supervise this study when Dr. Pillay took his sabbatical leave; their assistance and criticism has proved invaluable. To the many people who helped me during my stay in England I extend my heartfelt appreciation. Finally I would like to thank my wife, Nancy, whose inspiration and typing abilities have made this thesis possible. Responsibility for errors are naturally my own.

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Halifax,
Nova Scotia,
October 1974.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A. S. African Standard
- C. O. Colonial Office
- Conf. Confidential
- E. A. P. East Africa Protectorate
- E. A. S. East African Standard
- F. O. Foreign Office
- Hansard Hansard's Parliamentary Debates
- Leg. Co. Minutes of the Proceedings of
the Legislative Council
- Pers. Personal
- Secret. Secret

PART ONE

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER ONE

PROLOGUE: 1903-1912

One would scarcely believe it possible that a centre so new should be able to develop so many divergent and conflicting interests, or that a community so small should be able to give to each such vigorous and even vehement expression.

The acquisition of the East Africa Protectorate in 1895, or rather the transference of responsibility from Mackinnon's Imperial British East Africa Company to the Foreign Office, was of diplomatic design. Uganda, the back door to Egypt² was the objective, whereas the East Africa Protectorate was regarded merely as "the road between Uganda and the East Coast"³

1. W. S. Churchill: My African Journey (London, 1908), p. 21.

2. Egypt's significance lay in the protection of the Suez Canal and subsequently Britain's trade route to India. The protection of the Upper Nile, Egypt's life blood, instigated designs on Uganda, the location of the river's source. For a full account see R. Robinson and J. Gallagher with Alice Denny: Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism (London, 1961) and P. Gifford and W. R. Louis (eds): Britain and Germany in Africa (New Haven, 1968).

3. Portal to Rosebery, 1 Nov. 1893, F. O. (Conf. Pr.) 184/161.

something which "conveniently filled the gap".⁴ For the next eight years the mainland region was more or less disregarded by the Foreign Office, the result of the legacy of MacKinnon's failures and traditional emphasis of Imperial policy upon the Sultan's coastal dominions. The advent of white settlement, however, promoted renewed interest in the Protectorate and in 1904 the Foreign Office issued instructions to Sir Donald Stewart, the new Commissioner, that the mainland deserved more attention than hitherto. To complete the consideration being paid to the area later known as Kenya Colony the Foreign Office handed over responsibility of its affairs to the Colonial Office in April 1905. An East African Department⁵ was created immediately, ostensibly to improve the organisation of Protectorate affairs. Two years later the title "Commissioner" was replaced with that of "Governor" and the centre of government was removed from Mombasa to Nairobi.

The increasing interest in the affairs of the Protectorate stemmed from the building of the railway from the coast to Uganda (virtually completed to Kisumu on Lake Victoria by 1901). This vast project, costing over f.5,000,000, was built to facilitate the administration of Uganda and fulfil Britain's pledges made under the General Act of the Brussels

4. G. H. Munger: British Rule in Kenya 1895-1912 (Oxford, 1966) p. 1.

5. The head of the Department was R. L. Antrobus, one of the four Under-Secretaries of State, and his personnel included H. J. Read and T. C. Bottomley both from the West African Department. Fiddes replaced Antrobus as head in 1909. For further details see Ibid., p. 137.

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Conference of 1890 to halt the slave trade and control the liquor traffic. Although it was more than a "political railway to reach Uganda"⁶ it was much less than an economic enterprise. In order to place the railroad under one administration the Eastern Province of Uganda was transferred to the Protectorate in March, 1902. This tract of territory comprised most of what was later known as the White Highlands.

The Foreign Office was less concerned about the principal cost of the communication's system than it was about underwriting the railway's operating deficits. The Foreign Office had hinted to Sir Charles Eliot, Commissioner of the East Africa Protectorate, how the railway might be made to pay:

Speaking generally, His Majesty's Government are most anxious to encourage settlers, and would welcome any well considered enterprises involving the expenditure of British capital and energy in the British Protectorate.

Events were to prove that the Foreign Office, or more specifically, the Treasury, was reluctant to augment the vast sum already expended on the East Africa Protectorate in order to assist incoming settlers. Eliot, writing after the first wave of settlers had arrived in the country,

6. W. S. Churchill: African Journey, p. 6.

7. Lansdowne to Eliot; 27 Aug. 1901; F. O. 2/433 quoted in G. H. Mungeam: British Rule, p. 78.

explained:

The Foreign Office fully recognized that it has the qualities necessary to reduce the heavy unremunerative expenditure to which the African Protectorates at present give rise

but after invitations to settlement were promulgated

there was a lamentable discrepancy between promise and performance. Then in response to these invitations, colonists began to arrive in the last months of 1903 no attempt was made to facilitate their settlement

and the settlers

found it no easy matter to discover where they might go and where they might not.

Nevertheless, Lansdowne, Foreign Secretary following Salisbury's resignation in November 1900, had cautioned Eliot in the despatch advising settlement that the East Africa Protectorate was, at the time, too inefficiently administered to warrant large scale immigration. But Eliot was anxious that the "fundamental and recurring problem of East African finance", the railway, should be made to pay by inducing settlers onto the western plateau. The altitude modified the tropical heat and rendered the Highlands amenable to permanent occupation by Europeans.

Superficially, the territory later known as Kenya Colony did appear ripe for settlement. The East Africa Protectorate was populated by only two million people and

8. C. Eliot: "The East Africa Protectorate as a European Colony", The Nineteenth Century and After; Ivi, (1904), p. 374.

9. Quoted in J. Huxley: White Man's Country, Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya, (2 vols: London, 1935, reprinted in New York, 1968) vol. 1, p. 77.

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this in a country which could boast of 75,000 square miles of habitable land. The indigenous peoples such as the Masai, Nandi and the Kipsigis were mainly pastoral, nomadic peoples and hence used rather than owned the land. The highlands, therefore, were considered alienable even though Masai herdsmen ventured into the district every few years. The spaciousness of the country offered prospective settlers ample accommodation and, although African land rights proved to be more than a minor obstacle in later years, in 1902 settlement could be considered a viable economic expedient.

The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902, drafted by the Foreign Office, provided for freehold and leasehold sale of Crown Lands. However, without the consent of the Foreign Secretary, sales were not to exceed 1,000 acres and development clauses were included. The ninety-nine year lease was equally unacceptable to the settlers who seemed to dislike any restrictions. Eliot's incorporation of provisions regulating the sale of homesteads in December 1902 laid a foundation for the alienation and distribution of land. Coupled with this, the East African Order-in-Council, 1897, provided a legal framework based on Indian codes for the Protectorate.

In spite of all these provisions Eliot initiated too rapid an influx of immigration and overloaded the country with settlers when the administration could not cope with them. Perhaps if he had waited for the completion of land surveys and the evolution of a more sophisticated government

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framework, settlement in the foetal years might have been achieved with greater ease. Hobley, an official recruited from the Chartered Company, thought "that it was a rather rash proceeding to invite settlement without having made some previous arrangement for the distribution of incomers".¹⁰ Another ex-Company official, Ainsworth, had warned Eliot that "if...the European settlers continue to come in in the future at the rate they are coming in just now complications are almost sure to arise under existing conditions".¹¹ Even Grogan, militant spokesman for the colonists, agreed that in 1903 "the country was not ripe for settlement on any scale owing to the lack of surveys and the necessary data as to native requirements, water, etc".¹² Lord Delamere, a renowned figure in settler politics, endorsed this view addressing the Convention of Associations in 1913 when he regretted "the scandal of administration inviting settlers to this country and having no land to give them on arrival".¹³

The arrival of settlers in a land poorly administered

10. C. W. Hobley: Kenya from Chartered Company to Crown Colony (London; 1929) p. 141.

11. Ainsworth to Eliot; 23 Oct. 1903, Ukamba Province Land File, 1903, Nairobi Archives, quoted in Mungeam; British Rule p. 106.

12. The Times: 27 Aug. 1904.

13. Quoted by: M. F. Hill; Permanent Way: The Story of the Kenya and Uganda Railway (2 vols: Nairobi 1950) vol 1, p. 328.

sowed the seeds of political activity. Early settlers were concerned for their livelihood and the Government controlled their destinies. Administrative inaction proved a frustrating obstacle to easy settlement; to place pressure upon the government and attempt to alleviate their economic distress, or leave the Protectorate were the only courses open. One contemporary observer, a volunteer in the King's African Rifles, pinpointed the frustration:

It must be disheartening to prospective settlers when they have to wait months and months, eating up all their capital during their idleness and not even getting a word of encouragement from the Administration. Many settlers, unable to get satisfaction, have gone home disgusted and yet matters are as bad and inefficient in Nairobi as they were two years ago.¹⁴

Before analysing the causes of political activity during these years, a resumé of the nature of settlement, (the origins and composition of the settler population), will provide some insight into the nature of politics.

At the turn of the century the Highlands were occupied by "several scores" of men of:

little or no means who had begun to trickle in the country in the 1890's, trading in ivory, driving ox-wagons ahead of the railway, running hotels and occasionally growing fruit and vegetables for the officials and railway builders".¹⁵

Even these pioneers were politically conscious, twenty-two of them assembling at Wood's Hotel, Nairobi, in January

¹⁴ R. Meinertzhagen: Kenya Diary 1902-06 (Edinburgh; 1957) p. 292. Entry for 7 Mar. 1906.

¹⁵ Vincent Harlow and E. M. Chilver (Eds): History of East Africa (Oxford, 1965) p. 217.

1902 voicing demands which were to epitomise Kenya's troubled history -- freehold land, more labour and a restriction on Asiatic immigration.

The bulk of settlers arrived in response to Marsden's mission to South Africa in 1903 which advertised the economic potential of the Protectorate. Marsden, Eliot's Chief of Customs, owed the success of his venture to the fact that South Africa was experiencing a period of depression after the Boer War. These new arrivals, "hardly any" of whom "had much capital"¹⁶ formed the majority of the white population prior to 1910.¹⁷ Nearly all of them had come from the English colony of Natal or were Transvaal Afrikaners and occupied homestead land of 640 acres. Not big enough (or wealthy enough) to undertake plantation farming or compete with larger scale agriculture of the British aristocrats, the incoming Natalian was forced into small pastoral farming or market gardening. This line was hardly a profitable one and it is interesting to note that the native production of the Kavirindo maize growers contributed more to the wealth of the country prior to the First World War.

Independent indigenous production occupied the African labour supply during the seasons that the South African settlers needed more farm hands. With the African preference

16. C. W. Hobley: Kenya: From Chartered Company p. 141.

17. East African Standard: 20 Apr. 1907 and M. F. Hill; Permanent Way, vol 1; p. 323.

for leisure time and the ineffectiveness of the Poll Tax -- introduced ostensibly to make the African work -- the Natalian and Boer found his early years in East Africa extremely difficult. Even if he could economically work the farm himself, it was, true to South African mores, socially degrading to do so. Due to the fact that forced labour was not sanctioned by government policy, and much depended on the local official's ignorance of it, labour was in constant short supply. Forced labour had been commonplace although its extent was still inadequate to cope with the demand. This coercion was revealed in a report by A. C. Hollis, Secretary for Native Affairs, which deplored the fact that:

with little or no voluntary labour, it appeared that recourse had frequently been had to forced labour through the chiefs, who had seized upon local Africans and driven them out to work.¹⁸

On the basis of this report, the Liberal Government declared that compulsory methods of labour recruitment could not be tolerated within the British Empire. Hence the supply of labour in 1908 began to dry up and Delamere's remark that the East African Protectorate was no place for the small man¹⁹ rang true for the South African who was hardest hit by the 1908 edict. It was no wonder that he made "the loudest

18. Hollis also praises Sadler for his endeavours to end forced labour in his Memorandum, 8 Apr. 1908, Enclosure 3, in Sadler to Elgin, Confidential, 8 Apr. 1908, C. O. 533/43 quoted in Mungeam, British Rule pp. 194/195.

19. E. A. S. 8 Feb. 1908.

outcry against the lazy negro".²⁰

If Churchill could remark that Nairobi was "a typical South African township"²¹ then the township of Eldoret, two hundred miles north of Nairobi, was typically Afrikaner. Many Boers had settled on the Uasin Gishu plateau around Eldoret and according to Lord Cranworth, had arrived "pretty well destitute".²² The attraction of the country to the Boer was its space and "it was a sense of spaciousness that was an intimate ingredient of his sentiment".²³ The Boer had always been attempting to escape from government, yet in East Africa he was forced to sacrifice the distance between himself and the administration, a distance he had become attuned to in the Transvaal. Huxley has noted that if the Dutch in the Transvaal:

disliked government policy their method was to inspan their oxen or saddle their ponies and leave it behind. It was the simplest form of political action.

But this was no longer possible when East Africa was settled...opportunities for friction with the government were far more numerous...the government could no longer be avoided. It had therefore, to be argued with.²⁴

Hence in the East Africa Protectorate the Afrikaner was

20. H. H. Johnstone: "The East African Problem", The Nineteenth Century and After; vol lxiv (1908) p. 575.

21. W. S. Churchill: African Journey, p. 20.

22. Lord Cranworth: A Colony in the Making (London, 1912) p. 82.

23. C. W. de Kiewet: A History of South Africa: Social and Economic (O.U.P., London, 1957) p. 55.

24. E. Huxley: White Man's Country, vol 1, p. 180.

forced into political activity by the labour problem. Boer philosophy figured largely in the Masters and Servants Ordinance proposed in 1906, an Ordinance condemned by Elgin because it appeared to be based on the Transvaal law stipulating payment in kind and imprisonment of labourers for breach of contract.

Of the English contingent, many arrived from Cheshire and Lancashire in 1904 and took up the 640 acre homesteads. These settlers arrived in response to meetings held throughout those counties in the previous year by Frederick Jackson, who had been Acting Commissioner during Eliot's leave in 1902.²⁵ Approximately two hundred settlers from northern England with about £1,000 of capital each and "not likely...to make rapid fortunes"²⁶ undertook small scale English-type farming. The English nobility, including such figures as Lords Palmerston, Cranworth, and Hindlip, formed the large landowning class of the East Africa Protectorate. They had come because "bored with the life of a country gentleman or a peace time cavalry officer, the East African Highlands offered the possibility of gain, the certainty of action and adventure".²⁷ Although the Highlands was the area of the Protectorate most congenial to European settlement, it was still much less suited to cereal and livestock farming than to tropical

25. Ibid., p. 110.

26. H. H. Johnstone: "East African Problem": p. 575.

27. Vincent Harlow and E. H. Chilver (Eds): History, p. 217.

plantation crops such as sisal or coffee. Delamere especially was to discover, much to his cost, the ravages of east coast fever and wheat rust. Only Cranworth, of all the English peers, had the foresight to start up a sisal plantation and this was following in the footsteps of two enterprising middle class Englishmen, Rutherford and Swift, who had planted sisal on the edge of Kikuyu country in 1904.²⁸

Hence by 1910 there were four main groups among the white population in the East Africa Protectorate:- the Afrikaners from Transvaal, the English speaking Natalians, middle class Britons, mainly from Cheshire and Lancashire, and finally the English or Anglo-Irish aristocrats. Although they were hardly a homogeneous community, the problems they faced, they shared:

They encountered the danger of crops and livestock succumbing to some mysterious affliction or disease; they faced the possibility of malaria or dysentery; they lived in fear of roving rhinoceros and sometimes man-eating lions; they faced attacks from tribes such as the Nandi or Kipsigis, whose reaction to British rule had yet to be gauged. In 1912, a big game hunter complained that there were "no police stations in the bush or on the veld"²⁹ and this lack of law

28. Lord Cranworth in his Kenya Chronicles (London, 1939) refers to Rutherford and Swift as having left "snug jobs at home". (p. 11).

29. H. Seton-Carr: "Some East African Problems", The Nineteenth Century and After, vol lxxi (1912) p. 330.

enforcement along with the isolated existence of the farmer left the settlers open to stock thefts.

The two major problems during these early years, as they were later, were land and labour. Sir Donald Stewart had appointed a Land Board in 1905 to look into the working of the 1902 Ordinance but the board quickly succumbed to the influence of the large landowning interests. Delamere assumed the chairmanship of the committee and the subsequent report condemned Colonial Office land policy as being too restrictive. The Secretary of State, Lord Elgin, appointed a Commissioner of Lands to review the Board's findings and on perusing the Commissioner's report, proposed to introduce an Ordinance which was even more prohibitive. Elgin intended to retain the existing restrictions against transfers, reduce the term of leases to twenty-one years and to initiate measures to prevent dummying.³⁰ The Chief Secretary did, however, make concessions pertaining to the leasehold provisions in response to renewed settler protests. Although the other proposals remained in their original form, this was no disadvantage to people like Grogan and Delamere because "the successive governors, Sadler, Girouard and Belfield, were unwilling to use their official majority to push the ordinance through the Legislative Council".³¹ This action

30. Dummying was the process whereby a purchaser, wishing to buy more than the legal maximum acreage of land, would induce a dependant to buy the required land for him and have it transferred into his possession later. The dependant was the "dummy".

31. V. Harlow and E. Chilver (Eds): History, p. 679.

reveals the pro-settler sympathy of the various Governors, very often a decisive influence in white political success.

To the majority of settlers the main stumbling block was not so much the land laws as the lack of staff in the Land Office. An East African Standard reporter noted in 1907 that "the land and surveys department is still undermanned [sic] and in consequence incapable of coping satisfactorily and speedily with the wants of intending settlers".³² The other bone of contention was labour and after 1908 its supply was dependent upon the officials who had the task of either encouraging or discouraging the native to work. The fact that these officers conveyed to the African that he need not work for the Europeans unless he wished to, was interpreted by many settlers as being definite discouragement.³³ The Masai, Kamba, Mandi and Kirsigis tended to remain outside the system altogether although many Kikuyu "squatted" upon the Highland farms in later years, thus easing the settlers' labour problem. The widespread use of compulsory labour, regarded by the Europeans as an economic necessity in view of the inadequate work force, prompted A. C. Hollis, Secretary for Native Affairs, to investigate the problem. He eventually called upon the Colonial Office to end the abuse.³⁴ The ensuing edict from the Home Government aroused a storm of

32. E. A. S. 2 Mar. 1907.

33. E. A. S. 4 Mar. 1908.

34. See above p. 10.

protest, particularly from the South African settlers, and Sadler, then Governor, was unresponsive to their demands for a Labour Bureau and legislation fixing maximum wages for native labour. There followed the infamous confrontation between the Governor and the settlers outside Government House in March, 1908.³⁵

If it had not been for the existing friction between officials and settlers, the labour problem might have been eased considerably. But hypothetical conjecture is not the stuff of history and the mutual animosity felt between these groups provide another reason for increased settler political activity during these years.

Lack of Colonial Office directives left the administrative officers, many of whom were ex-Company officials, to decide for themselves a day-to-day routine policy. Already overworked with legal and financial problems and sending out subordinates to prevent big game hunters from venturing into dangerous, unpatrolled territories, the settler's impatient demands placed a greater burden upon the official's shoulders. Officers such as Hopley and Ainsworth managed to cope but these men were not typical of their class. Clement Hill, Foreign Office visitor to the

35. The settlers marched to Government House and demanded an immediate abrogation of the labour rules. Sadler's attempts to quell the unruly crowd were to no avail. The Governor eventually agreed to appoint a Board of Inquiry but suspended Delamere and Baillie from the Legislative Council as a result of their misconduct.

Protectorate in 1900, complained that "Civil Servants were enlisted from the gutter".³⁶ H. H. Johnstone, Special Commissioner of the Uganda Protectorate, had remarked that "the average quality of the East African official at the present day" was not "of the same high level of ability as I have noticed in the Uganda officials, especially those of some years standing".³⁷ If the official was inefficient, the settler was equally impatient, always expecting "some dramatic Napoleonic decision".³⁸

Eliot's assessment of the situation was a balanced one; suggesting that the officials:

are apt to think that they know best what the unofficial world really wants and the unofficial world is apt to ignore the really serious difficulties which often prevent the execution of what seem simple requests.³⁹

The Commissioner's contemporaries were less merciful. Lord Cranworth rebuked "the officials" who "gave the first few settlers an extremely nasty time"⁴⁰ while the East African Standard called upon:

all the honourable officials of the Protectorate to aid us in our endeavours to expose all mischievous officers who are guilty of this heinous crime of increasing the ill feeling between the settler and the officer.⁴¹

36. R. Meinertzhagen: Diary p. 132. Entry dated 13 Jan. 1904.

37. Johnstone to Lansdowne: 9 Aug. 1901. F. O. 2/463, quoted in G. Mungeam, British Rule, pp. 90/91.

38. C. W. Hobley: Kenya: From Chartered Company p. 141.

39. C. Eliot: "East Africa Protectorate", p. 384.

40. Lord Cranworth: Colony in the Making, p. 77.

41. E.A.S. 20 Apr. 1907.

The official resentment of the presence of settlers contributed much to the political situation but it was really all these problems -- land, labour and settler/official hostility -- which stimulated the political ferment.

M. F. Hill neatly summarises the outcome:

The settler was in a hurry and very impatient with the tentacles of State control which he encountered in all ways of his life.... The settler was always in contact with the government. Land and the land laws, the supply of labour, transport facilities and freights, stock thefts and countless other matters all meant dealing with the Government. The very closeness of his contact made argument inevitable, and argument meant politics.⁴²

With only two appointed unofficial members on the Legislative Council⁴³ and little chance of being entertained by the Governor (unless aristocratic blood ran through their veins) the settlers endeavoured to place pressure upon the Governor and indirectly, the Colonial Office, from outside unofficial channels. Political pressure was, in essence, the natural corollary of administrative inaction.

A settler was not, as Dillely suggests, "a fortune hunter...more interested in securing control of the government machine at once, so that by manipulation of it, his fortune may grow rapidly and allow him to leave [the Protectorate] more quickly".⁴⁴ She errs in this assessment for most of the

42. M. F. Hill: Permanent Way, vol 1, pp. 297/298.

43. The concession of the Legislative Council and unofficial membership had been acceded to in 1906.

44. M. Dillely: British Policy in Kenya Colony (New York, 1937) p. 35.

settlers intended to make permanent homes in the country and the prospects of rapid fortunes in East Africa were negligible. Similarly, Elspeth Huxley's view that the political ferment in these early years was due to the fact that incomers "were pioneering about half a century too late" and "were trying to follow a covered-wagon tradition in the era of the Ford"⁴⁵ is a dramatic, sweeping statement more suited to her novels than to historical analysis. Quite simply, the settlers thought the political machine was grinding along at snail's pace; frustration with the bureaucracy concomitant with diminishing financial resources spurred them on to political action.

The Commissioners and Governors of the East Africa Protectorate were obviously in a key position, for to influence them was an indirect, yet powerful, method of influencing the British Government. The policy of replacing Governors every five years and endowing this man-on-the-spot with authoritative powers meant that the personal sympathies of the Governor were of utmost significance to the settlers.⁴⁶ It was the Governor's social position which tended to be decisive; Eliot, Stewart, Sadler and Girouard were more likely to hold court with a noble personage of

45. E. Huxley: White Man's Country, vol 1, p. 179.

46. For a comprehensive study of the Governor's position and in particular the attitudes and actions of all Governors preceding Northey see Chapter 3. For in-depth analyses of the roles of Northey and Coryndon see Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

Delamere's calibre than they were with a Boer or an Indian trader. Girouard complained that nearly all of his Provincial Commissioners lacked:

the social qualifications necessary for the handling or entertaining of a white community. This is most unfortunate and has been a very potent factor in accentuating the situation.⁴⁷

Governors of the East Africa Protectorate were an integral part of white society; any hint of pro-native or pro-Indian politics on their part would alienate the settlers, and the possibility of ostracism would ensue. It was much easier for an Englishman, more especially an upper class Englishman, to move in gubernatorial circles and voice East African problems over a scotch and soda.

Manipulation of the Governor often paid handsome dividends. Elgin's proposals of 1906 were not effected because of the Governors' reluctance to push them through.⁴⁸ It is even more interesting to note that Lewis Harcourt, Colonial Secretary in 1912, dropped Elgin's anti-dummying proposals "on Belfield's advice".⁴⁹ As dummying was a procedure adopted by landowners who had the capital to develop large tracts of territory, the evidence showing that Belfield, at least, was susceptible to the demands of

47. Report upon the British East Africa Protectorate, enclosure in Girouard to Crewe, Confidential, 26 May 1910, C.O. 533/74 quoted in G. Mungeam British Rule, pp. 215/216.

48. See above p. 14.

49. A phrase used by M. P. Sorrenson in Appendix 1, Vincent Harlow and E. M. Chilver (Eds) History, p. 679.

this class is beyond dispute.

Similarly the same class was favoured in having its members appointed as unofficial delegates to the Legislative Council because nominations were made by the Governor. Robert Chamberlain, a South African who was a prominent figure within the Pastoralist's Association, addressed Winston Churchill protesting that "the dummy system is a flourishing institution. Already there are signs that the Legislative Council is passing in its cradle days under the influence of one class of special interests".⁵⁰ Although the Council's ineffectiveness was in part a reason for the formation of the Convention of Associations, it provided at least one channel of access to the Governor and the official majority. By 1911, five years after the creation of the Executive and Legislative Councils, the settlers had increased their representation from two to four members on the latter body. Justifiably, the Council was regarded as an impotent sop to the settler aspirations and the Convention of Associations was a pis aller to circumvent this impotence.

The landed class of noble stock not only had easier access to the armchair in Government House, and consequently to the Legislative Council, but also had a traditional forum at Westminster. Lord Hindlip became the

50. E. A. S., 16 Nov. 1907.

Westminster spokesman during these years,⁵¹ Delamere refraining from such activities until 1923.⁵² Whereas some settlers, more particularly the big Landowners, had platforms in the House of Lords and in the Legislative Council, most settlers had none. The creation of many extra-governmental organisations in the embryonic years of settlement is not, therefore, altogether surprising.

The original European Colonists' Association which met at Wood's Hotel in January 1902⁵³ was superseded the following year by the Planters' and Farmers' Association, an organisation quickly formed by Lord Delamere on his arrival in the Protectorate.⁵⁴ According to an African Standard correspondent, the Colonists' Association "whose birth was ill-omened and whose life was unfortunate, gave the Planters and Farmers an opportunity for forming an Association".⁵⁵ The new organisation was, initially, purely economic in design and formed to co-ordinate the marketing of potatoes to South Africa, particularly the Transvaal. It soon became a political body and in 1905, when it reverted to its predecessor's name, the Colonists' Association presented a list of grievances subsequently

51. See F. A. S. 20 Jul. 1907; 3 Aug. 1907; 10 Aug. 1907.

52. Hansard, 5th Series, v. 54, c. 1834, Lords, 5 Jul. 1923.

53. See above pp. 8-9.

54. African Standard 22 Jan. 1903.

55. Ibid., 5 Mar. 1903.

published in the Morning Post (5 August, 1905). The fear of a native uprising and the request for fortifications, Imperial troops, white police and a burgher force reflected the South African influence of the Association and this was instrumental in Delamere's withdrawal of support. The demand of "no taxation without representation" had a greater effect than the demand for English common law, for Lyttelton, Secretary of State, thought the idea of a council a "reasonable one". This concession was acted upon in more tangible terms by Lyttelton's successor, Elgin, who granted a Legislative Council. Nevertheless, Lyttelton's sympathetic response was due more to Hindlip's pressure upon the Colonial Office than to the Morning Post petition.⁵⁶ The demands of two hundred settlers,⁵⁷ representing 0.1% of the Protectorate's population, were at least partly satisfied by the events of 1906.

Indian protests of discrimination against them over land grants in the Highland's led to another meeting of the Colonists' Association in May 1906. Sadler forwarded the Association's resolutions to the Colonial Office while at the same time expressing sympathy with the Highland's "policy" of Eliot. He managed to solicit the "Elgin

56. Hindlip to Duke of Marlborough, 2 Aug., and Lyttelton to Stewart, 18 Aug. 1905; C.O. 533/10. See Vincent Harlow and E. M. Chilver (Eds) History, p. 275. where Bennett assesses the significance of Hindlip's role.

57. The membership of the Association in Jan. 1906 was just over 200. See E. A. S. 6 Jan. 1906.

pledge", ensuring that a "reasonable discretion" in land grants to non-Europeans would be exercised as the area available for European settlement was "comparatively limited".⁵⁸ The pledge gained greater force two years later when Elgin instructed the Governor:

It is not consonant with the views of His Majesty's Government to impose legal restrictions on any particular part of the community, but as a matter of administrative convenience grants in the upland area should not be made to Indians.⁵⁹

The vociferousness of the Colonists' Association, helped by Hindlip and Sadler, had been instrumental in forcing Elgin to pronounce on "Highland's" policy and securing the unofficial representation on the Legislative Council.

By this time many district associations, each with its own special interests, had grown up out of a feeling that the Colonists' Association was no longer representative. These "newer and more local bodies resented the assumption of authority and accused the parent body of

58. Elgin to Sadler, 17 July 1906, in Papers Relating to British East Africa, H. L. 158 (1907) pp. 41-43. Quoted by Bennett in Vincent Harlow and E. M. Chilver (Eds): History, p. 278. This pronouncement on the position of the Highlands was, in essence, approval of a policy already accepted in the Protectorate. In Aug. 1902, Jackson, the Acting Commissioner, promulgated a circular shutting out Indians from the area between Kiu and Fort Ternan. In May 1903, Eliot instructed his Land Officer, Barton Wright, in accordance with Jackson's circular. The settler dominated Land Committee under Stewart endorsed this policy leaving the area of the proposed reserve vague but implying that it should lie between Kiu and Fort Ternan. Elgin saw fit not to reverse this policy.

59. Elgin to Sadler, 19 Mar. 1908, Correspondence Relating to the Tenure of Land in the East Africa Protectorate, Cd. 4117, (1908) pp. 29-34. Quoted in G. Mungeam; British Rule, p. 201.

using its old name for furtherance of the interests and ambitions of a small clique".⁶⁰ The strongest of these local bodies was the Pastoralists' Association, the brainchild of Robert Chamberlain.⁶¹ At a meeting in Nakuru in 1908 the idea of "some form of union or affiliation with other political bodies" was first mooted. Dr. Atkinson, President, recognised the existence of "a certain antagonism between the Pastoralists' Association and the Colonists' Association" and that successful political action depended upon "unity of purpose".⁶² The idea of a confederation of Associations was endorsed at a Colonists' Association assembly two months later when Delamere presided,⁶³ and a Central Committee was set up as a result. However, disenchantment with the Colonists' Association was a major factor in stimulating Chamberlain's suggestion of a Convention of Associations. Delamere, on resigning from the Colonists' Association in 1910, took up his arch-rival's idea in a letter to the East African Standard:

We have got to a point where the Colonists Association has either got to lose influence or voluntarily to dissolve itself as an association of individuals and reconstitute itself as an association of associations, calling itself, say, the United Colonists' Association and expressing the combined public opinion of the country.

60. Lord Cranworth: Colony in the Making, p. 218.

61. The membership of this body in 1908 was 73. See E. A. S., 15 Aug. 1908.

62. E. A. S., 16 May 1908.

63. E. A. S., 11 Jul. 1908.

...There seems to be only one way out, which has been suggested by Mr. Chamberlain. It is that each district should have its own association which would deal with any business it thought fit, but that each association should send, say, one delegate for every twenty members to a half yearly Convention in Nairobi. The Convention would debate all subjects brought before it by different associations which the considered sufficiently important to send forward...Mr Chamberlain is drafting a constitution on these lines. An elastic scheme enabling each association to deal as it likes with any matter, but giving it the chance to get the weight of the country behind its policies seems to me the one likely to find favour in all.⁶⁴

The idea of a Convention was agreed upon at a farewell dinner given in honour of Girouard before his departure to England in 1910.⁶⁵ The inaugural meeting was held less than three months later with representatives from the Colonists' Association, the Pastoralists' Association, Limoru Farmers, Ulu Association, Coffee Planters and the Ruiru Association taking part.⁶⁶ The "colonists" were indeed "getting into line",⁶⁷ for the Convention came to be regarded as "what might be termed a second chamber".⁶⁸ Apart from this parliamentary type of organisation within the Protectorate, the

64. Quoted in Huxley: White Man's Country, vol 1 pp. 261/262.

65. Girouard had in fact suggested that he should have consultations with the Colonial Office in London in order to represent the settlers' demands in person. Girouard to Crewe, Secr., 26 May 1910, C.O. 533/74 in Bennett; Kenya, A Political History (London, 1963) p. 31.

66. E. A. S. 4 Feb. 1911.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid. 31 Jan. 1920.

settlers could also boast of a British East Africa Association formed in 1906 "to take all the interests of the Protectorates under its wing...and establish a central Office in London".⁶⁹ Although not exclusively concerned with the affairs of the East Africa Protectorate it was another potential channel which could be used to exert pressure upon the Colonial Office.

The Convention of Associations marked a turning point. Out of the melée of the initial European settlement an organisation signifying cohesion of political pressure had been born. It was not all-pervasive. The Protectorate could not boast a homogeneous white population and the Convention in consequence could not reflect the politics of the whole white community. Nevertheless it provided a platform for the more vociferous sections of the whites and in politics only the more vocal sections are heard. If the Convention marked the beginning in Kenya⁷⁰ of cohesive political organisation, it was the war which was instrumental in securing marked constitutional advance.

69. Ibid., 18 Aug. 1906. See also W. McGregor Ross, Kenya From Within (London, 1927) pp. 309/310.

70. To avoid being pedantic the title "Kenya" will be used henceforth, although, officially, the Protectorate was not granted colony status until 1920.

CHAPTER I: C

CRISIS AND CRISES: 1912-1923

Primarily, Kenya is an African territory, and His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if, and when, those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail.

The years immediately preceding the war were prosperous ones with the export of sisal and coffee in particular reaching record levels. Hence, in March 1913, the Treasury saw fit to end the Imperial grant-in-aid which had injected almost £3,000,000 into the Kenya economy prior to that date.² The advent of the war stunted economic growth as resources were directed into the war effort. By contrast, political advance was accelerated for the white community under these conditions and the promises of the Home Government were consolidated in the reconstruction era. Constitutional progress for the European irked the Asian political leaders who viewed such

1. Indians in Kenya: (Memorandum), Cmd. 1922 (1923)p. 10.

2. The final estimate was £2,843,000. See The Times, 23; Jan. 1920.

advances as retrograde steps for their own community. The baptism of the Indian crisis took place in the font of war.

The newly formed Convention of Associations was already assuming that responsible government was at hand in 1911 and the idea of elective representation to the Legislative Council was unanimously adopted as a prime target in August of that year.³ The Colonial Office had scotched such proposals although Girouard himself who "had won the confidence of the settlers"⁴ was an exponent of increased settler power in politics. The enforced resignation of this Canadian born Governor in 1912 was thus regarded with dismay by the local Europeans. The question was the Masai move from Laikipia, ostensibly to reunite the northern and southern sections of the tribe. Girouard's gross mismanagement of the move carried out without Colonial Office sanction provoked immediate suspension of the forced migration.⁵ This alone was insufficient to warrant Girouard's dismissal. It was the revelation that promises had been made to allocate the vacant land to some settlers which caused an example of political mismanagement to transcend to the realm of moral principle. The reconciliation of native and white interests had been ignored and the Governor was forced to give up his post. The Colonial Office was, nevertheless, haunted by the consequence of breaking a promise made in good faith by an

3. See E. A. S., 4 Feb., 1911; 5 and 12 Aug., 1911.

4. Mungeam's assessment in British Rule, p. 259.

5. Crewe to Girouard, Tel., 22 Apr. 1910, C. O. 533/73 quoted in Mungeam, British Rule, p. 262.

agent of Government. The Masai were nonetheless moved and the land was ultimately granted. The only mishap was the loss of the settlers' advocate.

Girouard was replaced by a Governor fresh from service in the Malay states with little African experience.⁶ The settlers, feeling that "a Mr. N. Belfield" was an unworthy successor, protested against the appointment⁷ not knowing that this Oxford graduate was converted to their cause before leaving England.⁸ Belfield, like his predecessor, proved to be more than just a sympathetic ear,

The cessation of the Imperial grant-in-aid and the institution of a non-native poll tax were the stimuli behind Delamere's refusal to accept his appointment to the Legislative Council in February 1913. This action heralded the birth of the "no taxation without representation" campaign, adopted by the Highland⁹ politicians in the summer meeting of the Convention. Not only was the election by Europeans of minority membership on the Council regarded as a right but as an answer to administrative deficiencies. Natives and Asiatics "being

6. Belfield, a trained barrister, was educated at Oriel College, Oxford. He had spent 28 years in the Malay States, first as Chief Magistrate, then as Commissioner. In 1912 he undertook a brief tour of the Gold Coast as part of a mission to assess land tenure rights. This was his only African experience prior to his appointment as Governor of Kenya. See F. P. K. Sorrenson: Origins of European Settlement (Nairobi, 1968) p. 130.

7. E. A. S. 20 Jul. 1912 and 17 Aug. 1912.

8. Sorrenson: Origins, p. 132.

subject peoples" could be adequately represented by official members. Resolutions calling for the wholesale resignation of unofficials from the Legislative Council were proposed⁹ and the September meeting of the Council was attended by only one unofficial. This solitary member was the representative of Mombasa, J. H. Wilson, his presence emphasising the confinement of Protectorate politics to the Highlands.¹⁰

Belfield gave full support to the demands of the local activists but his representations to the Secretary of State were rebuffed, Harcourt feeling that "one section of the community" hardly deserved to have such a large voice in the affairs of a country in which it was "vastly outnumbered".¹¹ The settlers were indignant. Surely, they argued, the quality of European genes was sufficient to hoist them to the status of élite in spite of the numerical superiority of both the indigenous and Asiatic population. One unofficial was indeed adequate to safeguard the interests of the Indian¹² so why should the existence of a second immigrant community detract from the fact heritage alone automatically conferred upon them the right to greater representation? Harcourt had implied that the Indians were a bulwark against the settlers' political

9. E. A. S. 2 Aug. 1913.

10. A point made by Bennett in Kenya, p. 36.

11. Letter from Chief Sec. to the Sec. of Convention, 18 Nov. 1913 published in E. A. S., 29 Nov. 1913.

12. E. A. S., 31 Jan. 1914.

aspirations and the Europeans realised that mere genes were not enough to eliminate that obstacle. The dissonant parties were to commence the battle proper after the war.

The Colonial Office waited until the end of July 1914 before indicating to Kenya that the situation in Europe was becoming uglier. The Great War broke out within a week and on the 5 August the Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency and imposed martial law. The formation of a few settler military cliques, complete with cockades, was the immediate response in a country ill-prepared for war. This response witnessed the formation of motley bands and regiments with such colourful names as Bowker's Horse, Monica's Own (in reference to Belfield's daughter) and Arnoldi's Scouts. The Colonial Office felt, however, that the seriousness of the situation warranted a return to the farms so that the settlers could provide supplies for the professional men and Indian troops called in to fight in East Africa. Even so foodstuff had to be imported from India or brought up from South Africa and machinery was virtually unobtainable.

War conditions emphasised the inherent weakness of Kenya; she was virtually cut off from the rest of the world. With Suez closed, the port of Mombasa could only be reached by a tedious journey around the Cape of Good Hope and with limited cargo space, very little arrived in the Protectorate. Economically Kenya was nowhere near self-sufficient and the most the settlers could do was prevent their holdings from falling into decay. Not unnaturally the soldiers in the front line felt that the European farmers were not playing their part in

the war effort. The settlers' pique aroused by this criticism instigated a mass meeting on 7 September 1915 in Nairobi and the outcome was the appointment of a War Council. This Council initially consisted of three settlers, two unofficials and one military representative under the chairmanship of Bowring, the Chief Secretary. Its aim was to advise the Government on war matters and the manipulation of civil industry during the conflict. The only war measure of note which it introduced was that of conscription (March, 1916); otherwise the body was purely political in nature.

First the settlers demanded elective representation to the Council when the situation hardly justified such a measure. Belfield, in his usual assentient mood, felt that it was "of utmost importance that the country should recognise the constitution of the War Council as really representative"¹³ and so the country was divided into electoral areas to accommodate three more unofficials. Within a year the Home Government conceded the principle of elective representation to be enforced after the war. The boycott of the Legislative Council was no longer necessary so, in February 1917, after four years absence, the unofficials accepted nomination again.

It is interesting to note that the machinations of the activists were far more concerned with what would happen after the war than with the war itself. The War Council paved the way for the abortive ex-soldier settlement scheme which while

13. E. Huxley: White Man's Country, vol 2, p. 22.

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increasing the English contingent of the Protectorate hardly blessed the country with skilled agriculturists. Even Northey was later to refer to them as "amateurs as far as the knowledge of Agriculture goes"¹⁴ and yet the Settlers were determined to attract more of their own kind in order to swell the white population and give greater force to their demands.

In many respects the war was a catalyst hastening political progress for the Europeans. With far greater dilemmas facing British statesmen on the world scene Kenya slipped from the focus of their discerning eyes. The course of politics was to accept without probing too deeply and consequently much ground could be gained without too much questioning. Already in May 1915 a Crown Lands Ordinance had been passed extending leaseholds to a minimum of 999 years (Elgin had limited them to 99) and lifting the restriction on transfers of land (which Elgin had insisted upon) except when the transfer was between different races in which case the Governor's veto could be used. This anti-Indian law was coupled with the introduction of the registration of natives for identification purposes. Ainsworth, the Chief Native Commissioner, insisted that it was "not a pass law"¹⁵ but its effects were not dissimilar, the kipande proving to be a major grievance in Harry Thuku's movement after the war. Due to lack of staff the Ordinance was not put into effect until November 1919 as the realisation

14. Northey to Churchill, 14 Apr. 1921., C.O. 533/258.

15. Kenya, Legislative Council Debates., 18 Jan. 1915, p. 12.

of another war time gain.

An Economic Commission was appointed in March 1917 to examine potential sound measures which could be implemented to ease the burden of reconstruction. Appointed under Belfield's auspices it was dominated by unofficials including the ubiquitous Grogan and Delamere along with T. A. Wood and three others. The report, which took over two years to compile, was finally submitted in June 1919 and whatever economic philosophy was contained therein became ancillary to the malicious invective against the Asians. But by the time the investigatory Commission had got under way, Belfield's five year term of office was up. Again the settlers had the audacity to put forward suggestions for a successor. The War Councillors could think of no-one better to fulfill the role than Sir Percy Girouard.

The petition requesting a Military Governor was passed at a meeting in Nairobi on 29 January, 1918.¹⁶ Bowring, in his capacity as Acting Governor, suggested the motives behind the demand:

The only real issue between this Administration and the settler community is the question of forced labour. Every planter and farmer... desires forced labour in his heart of hearts and knows that he cannot get it constitutionally. Hence the cry for increased production to help the War and the call for an autocratic Governor in the shape of Sir Percy Girouard who is commonly believed to be violently opposed to the Crown Colony system of Government as applied to this Protectorate. It is thought that if the cry is heard and

¹⁶ Monson, Deputy Govr. to Long, Tel., 5 Feb. 1918, C. O. 533/193.

the call answered the problem will be solved and the native compelled to do his duty to his country in which the European community desires it to take.¹⁷

It was widely believed that the return of Girouard would put paid to what the settlers regarded as "unnecessary interference from home"¹⁸ but it came as an illogical non sequitur after the furore for elective representation. To counter this demand for an autocratic Governor, the Indian Association begged for "the appointment of a Governor who...is strong enough to hold the scales even between the various communities".¹⁹ In the end a Military Governor was assigned to Kenya, not Girouard as requested (or demanded!), but Sir Edward Northey, a man of honourable experience in the South African War 1899-1902, the Great War at Mons and later the African campaign in Nyasa-land.²⁰ As with Belfield the settlers suspicions were soon dispelled. Northey was to become "a first rate, far seeing and energetic Governor",²¹ at least in the minds of the settlers.

Northey attended a meeting of the Convention before presiding over the Legislative Council, a move indicative of the power of that body. It was Grogan, the Lumber King of Kenya²², whose magniloquence stole the show at this particular assembly.

17. Bowring to Long, 11 Mar. 1918, C. O. 533/194.

18. A phrase used by Delamere in Kenya Leg. Co., 20 Nov. 1918, p. 34.

19. Monson to Long, Tel., 6 Feb. 1918, C. O. 533/193.

20. E. A. S. 1 Jul. 1918.

21. Lord Cranworth, Kenya Chronicles, p. 271.

22. Cranworth's designation: Ibid., p. 45.

In a characteristic pompous speech he asked if Northey was going to be just another "telephone girl"²³ between the Home Government and the settlers. Grogan, described by one contemporary as "a man of considerable gifts who combines a colossal egotism with a passion for political intrigue"²⁴, was in his element at the meeting. Northey, taken aback by such an array of sophistries, offered a subdued "thankyou" in reply and referred to Grogan as his [Northey's] "godfather."²⁵

In his opening address to the Legislative Council on the 24 February 1919, Northey expressed the hope that he would be invited to attend the Convention in order to develop a mutual understanding between that body and the Government. What subsequently grew up was "government by agreement", a term coined by Delamere, whereby the Government actually consulted elected members before introducing legislation. From the first meeting of elected members in May 1920, the Convention assumed the role of an advisory body for elected members who became ex-officio members of the Convention without votes but with the right to submit resolutions.²⁶ Dilley points out that "Elected Members are not only responsible to their particular constituencies, but to the public opinion reflected in the Convention as well".²⁷

23. E. A. S. 15 Feb. 1919.

24. Bowring to Long., 18 Mar. 1918, C. O. 533/194. See Norman Wymer: The Man from the Cape (London, 1959) for Grogan's biography.

25. E. A. S. 15 Feb. 1919.

26. E. A. S. 11 Feb. 1920, 1 Apr. 1922.

27. M. Dilley: British Policy., p. 41.

38

An interesting extension of the "government by agreement" was the grant of unofficial membership to the Executive Council, conceded by Milner on 22 February 1919. The existence of two nominated officials on the policy-making committee set a unique precedent in constitutional history, the Governor himself regarding them as "members of the Government".²⁸ The implications of this development were indeed far reaching:

The nominated members are under no obligation to support the government and in fact frequently oppose it in the Legislative Council. The presence in the Executive Council, the proceedings of which are confidential, of a member who may be elected to the Legislature as a professed opponent of government policy, is a peculiarity which is confined to the Constitution of Kenya.²⁹

With the Convention holding a tight rein on the settlers' representatives and with unofficial infiltration into the higher echelons of government, the Asians were inevitably discouraged. The passage of the Legislative Council Bill in July 1919, increased their bitterness. Milner had issued instructions prior to the Ordinance which offered little solace to them, stating:

For the present, elective representation must be confined to the European community and the interests of the Asiatics and natives must for an indefinite time to come be secured by nominated representation on the Legislative Council.

²⁸. Kenya Leg. Co., 12 Oct. 1921 reported in E. A. S. 15 Oct. 1921.

²⁹. Lord Hailey, An African Survey (London, 1938) p. 166.

³⁰. Milner to Northey, 17 Mar. 1919, C. O. 533/206. The Legislative Council Bill of 10 Jul. 1919 provided for eleven electoral areas (two designated for Nairobi), suffrage for both European men and women over 21, a literacy qualification for election plus provisions for triennial elections.

Colonial Office neglect of Asian claims along with the presentation of the Economic Commission report gave rise to Indian talk of non-co-operation. It is true that Milner later condemned the report as "purely deplorable"³¹ but the Secretary of State's "definite intention" to "mete out even handed justice between the different races"³² in Kenya was little more than glorious words to cover consistent inaction. The Government of India complained, "It is not clear to us why the European community should require eleven members to voice its views, while two members are considered sufficient for the Indian community" and requested the abrogation of the Segregation Ordinance of 1918 and the introduction of a common roll system of election. Nomination or communal franchises accentuated the Indians' separateness and therefore implied inferiority.³³

The blatant racialism of Belfield's Economic Commission, which was not even denounced by Northey, was complemented by somewhat poetic references to the Europeans role:

The function of Europeans in Middle Africa is to act as a yeast leavening the inert dough of Africa's indigenous peoples.

Where one white immigrant into Canada represents merely one additional participant in Canada's development, one white immigrant into East Africa may galvanise a thousand economically speaking 'dead' Africans into

1920 31. Hansard, 5th series, vol. 41, c. 161, Lords, 14 Jul.

32. Ibid., c. 153.

33. Letter from Govt. of India to H. M. Sec. of St. for India, 21 Oct. 1920, in Correspondence Regarding the Position of Indians in East Africa, Cmd. 1311 (1920).

active participation in Imperial trade ... all its economic functions are complementary and not competitive with those of England

and similarly "the economic spheres of the two races" were "complementary and not competitive". The unofficials also clarified their position on native policy stating that the ideal was the encouragement of African emigration from the Reserves and labour tenancy on the European farms. Politically they desired the replacement of the Executive Council with a Cabinet and they reiterated their plea of minimum interference from the Colonial Office.

The theme stressed throughout the emotive document was that of partnership between the black and white races although the Africans themselves were not fitted to voice their side of the partnership. If the Europeans were the trustees then the Indians "organised as they are to keep the Africans out of every position which an Indian could fill, deprives the African of all incentives to ambition and opportunities for advancement" and they were not fit enough to be in the Protectorate because "the sphere of the Indian in this country is not complementary but competitive with those of the European and African".³⁴

The Indians in defence also manipulated the trusteeship principle but like their opponents used it merely as a political

34. Final Report of the Economic Commission. Commission appointed by Belfield under the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance, 1912. Report enclosed in Northey to Filmer, 5 Jun. 1919 C.O. 533/210. No African or Indian witnesses were called upon to give evidence.

tool to boost their image.³⁵ In fact the Home Government used the trusteeship principle as its major instrument in the Devonshire Declaration of 1923.

The main fears of either side when stripped of their emotive and often flagitious outbursts boiled down to the fact that Europeans did not want to lose their political hegemony and the Indians did not want to lose their political dignity by submitting to segregation and communal franchise. The fear that any form of common roll would eventually swamp white civilization with a flood of Asiatics induced the settlers to look towards South Africa. Was Kenya to be a link in the chain of white settlement or was it to be the scene of Asian domination in East Africa? The East African Indian Congress assembly in Nairobi, November 1919, referred to Indian colonization but one author points out rightly that this was only an "angry rejoinder to the racialist visions of the Europeans in East Africa".³⁶ With little hope of intruding upon the domination of the whites the Indians had two advantages which would prevent complete subjection. One was the support of the Government of India and the other was the example of the Tanganyika mandate which "barred the surrender of political power to a

35. For examples of this see E. A. S., 9 Jul. 1921; 16 Jul. 1921; 23 Jul. 1921; 21 Jan. 1922.

36. W. K. Hancock: Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs (2 vols; London, 1937), vol. 1; p. 212. See particularly Chapter iv providing a fascinating insight into the position of Indians in both South Africa and Kenya.

resident minority who might use it for exclusive racial interest".³⁷ The existence of Indians was the main obstacle between the Europeans and self government, and while Asians outnumbered them³⁸ their position was inherently weak. Hence the desire to attract more whites to the Protectorate and the abortive soldier settlement scheme promoted by the Land Settlement Commission, an offshoot of the War Council. In the bid to attract more colonists the settlers were damaging their own position by exacerbating the labour shortage, made all the more acute by the heavy losses in the war and the influenza epidemic of 1919. However in November 1919, the soldier settlers, all 1,500 of them, left England on the Garth Castle.

The fact that the controversial labour circular of the month before more or less condoned compulsion to alleviate the crisis played little part in the minds of the new settlers. They were seeking adventure and escape, as one settler on that ship remarked:

Life in civvy street in the land fit for heroes to live in was a precarious business in those days and prospects for promotion in the services were dim indeed. I answered the advertisement and received a pamphlet which extolled in glowing terms the prospects that awaited anyone with a capital of £500 that accepted the opportunity to take up a farm on 999 years lease from the crown.

The proposition looked tempting and held out prospects

37. Ibid, p. 216.

38. 1921 census: Africans approx. 3,000,000
 Indians 22,822
 Arabs 10,102
 Europeans 9,651

in R. Gregory, Sidney Webb, p. 5.

of adventure, that fill the vacuum left by the aftermath of war.³⁹

Adventure soon turned sour since these men were ill-equipped to undertake full scale farming. One correspondent to The Times described the affair as "an unfortunate experiment"⁴⁰ with many of the ex-soldiers "on the verge of bankruptcy"⁴¹ due to drought, the inaccessibility of their farms, and the labour shortage. It was this acute labour shortage which led to the promulgation of a Labour Circular (23 October 1919) by Ainsworth whereby:

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.

However it was the second circular of the 17 February 1920 which sparked off the controversy when it stated "there is the intention to induce men by all lawful means to seek work"⁴² something which was interpreted by many as meaning compulsion and "a complete reversal of British Imperial Policy".⁴³ A third

39. Capt. C. Todd "Kenya's Red Sunset (Autobiography of a Settler)", (Manuscript, 2 vols., Rhodes House Library) vol 1, p. 1.

40. The Times, 11 Nov. 1920.

41. Ibid., 21 Apr. 1922.

42. Despatch to the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate and relating to Native Labour and Papers connected therewith, Cmd. 873 (1920), pp. 6 and 12.

43. Executive Committee of the Labour Party to the Editor of The Times, 8 May 1920.

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circular was issued on the 14 July 1920 in an attempt to clear up the misunderstandings and Milner insisted that the Labour Circular No. 1 had been misinterpreted.⁴⁴ It is ironic that Ainsworth, regarded by many as being pro-native,⁴⁵ should have been responsible for both the circular and the Native Registration Ordinance of May 1915, two highly polemical documents which smacked of settler villainy.

The Colonial Office probably had no aversion to forced labour in practice (compulsion had been resorted to since the inception of white settlement) but they did not want it written into the letter of the law. The image of Kenya and the image of firm Colonial Office control was the constant pursuit of the numerous Secretaries of State. In fact compulsory labour was not blunted by the events which followed the Labour Circulars. Over a year later, Northey was to comment:

that in certain instances Headmen have gone rather further than Government would have approved; i.e. by instructing or causing to be instructed individuals to work for particular settlers and I am taking steps to prevent this course in future".⁴⁶

But Northey was being unduly optimistic for while a labour shortage existed many "chiefs" manipulated the situation to acquire not only elevation in status through the British connection but also to acquire wealth. Two notable examples

44. Cmd. 873 (1920), pp. 4 and 7.

45. Cranworth says "Mr. Ainsworth was not a settlers' man, he was a natives' man pure and simple" in his Kenya Chronicles, p. 73.

46. Northey to Churchill, Conf., 31 Oct. 1921, C. O. 533/264.

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were Kinanjui and Kioi who were Kikuyu "chiefs" in the eyes of the British, and yet the Kikuyu were divided into age sets under the aegis of kiamas or councils of elders. There were no chiefs just as there were no tribes.⁴⁷ The dual benefits of increased status and wealth were great incentives for these "chiefs" to keep "encouraging" their brethren to work for the European.

Another aspect of the economic crisis was the rapid post-war appreciation of the rupee and the attempts to stabilize the currency. The abandonment of the gold standard in 1914 left exchange rates at the mercy of market fluctuations and speculators. Consequently the East African rupee more than doubled in value by the early months of 1920. The agricultural producers in Kenya, white and black alike, saw the value of their exports plummet by half. This more than doubled the Europeans' indebtedness to the banks as now they were liable to interest payments on a "principal" which before never existed. The producers pressed Northey, at home on leave, to make representations to the Colonial Office on stabilising the rupee at its old gold standard value of 1s 4d. Such a reversion would have meant no loss whatsoever to the European producers but the Colonial Office compromised at a 2s 0d stabilisation, stating:

To have gone further and attempted to force back the rupee to its old sterling equivalent, however desirable in theory, would not have been possible in practise. It would have meant considerable injustice to the banks and all other creditors, more particularly to those who have obligations in India.⁴⁸

47. See G. Mungeam: British Rule, pp. 248/249.

48. The Times, 13 Feb. 1920.

The proposed 2s Od fixation was a compromise between banking and producing interests and was effected in March 1920 and by the middle of the year plans for a 2s Od standard coin, the florin, were being drawn up. Unfortunately for the agriculturalist element the rupee began to decline in value and by February 1921 had fallen to 1s 5d, a penny more than its pre-war value. The settlers in a meeting with Northey in January 1921 clamoured for an abrogation of the 2s Od stabilisation of March 1920 and a reversion to the 1s 4d rate, something which the bankers viewed with alarm as all their advances in the previous year would be automatically cut by a third.

Northey wrote to Milner:

The change in the local currency from the rupee to the florin has increased all cost of production, both labour, inland transport and handling charges at the port by 50%. This combined with the high cost of shipping prevents export at a profit, even when markets are normal, of low price commodities such as maize and beans.

Northey was assured, by the unofficials that they would support him in his endeavours to effect a reversion even at the cost of breaking the pledge of the previous March. A special session of the Legislature was called on 10 February 1921 to confirm, as a matter of formality, the proposal to revert. In a remarkable volte-face by the elected members, only Cole voted for the motion. Wood, going back on his word, said "they [the settlers] had made one mistake originally by fixing an arbitrary value on the rupee. It would clearly be a mistake

49. Northey to Milner, 31 Jan. 1921, C. O. 533/255.

to fix another arbitrary value on it".⁵⁰ The influence of the banking interest had been crucial, one settler revealing that they had been told that it was 2s Od or nothing, and they hoped that maybe at that figure they might pull through".⁵¹ However, by accepting this, the producers were not resigned to carrying the financial burden. They sought a pis aller, probably on commercial advice, by phasing out the florin and the rupee and replacing them with the standard coin of one shilling. The proposal at the February meeting to introduce sterling currency as early as possible was adopted nem. con.. The Colonial Office agreed to this and by an Order-in-Council on the 1 January, 1922 the B.E.A. shilling replaced the defunct rupee.

By this move the producers attempted to pass on the 50% increase in cost by introducing the new shilling while simultaneously retaining the cental denominations of the florin. From thereon they would be worth one hundredth of a shilling and not a florin, in essence half their value. Such coins (cents) "in quantities" could be redeemed at full value but "natives and others, holding the same coins in small quantities would find them decline to half their original value".⁵² Fortunately the Colonial Office discovered the intentions of the Kenya agriculturalists and in November 1921 the Office

50. Kenya, Leg. Co., 10 Feb. 1921, p. 80.

51. Lord Cranworth: Kenya Chronicles., p. 301.

52. W. McGregor Ross: Kenya From Within. (London, 1927) p. 210.

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issued the following statement:

It is notified for information that when the shilling is made the standard coin of the Colony and Protectorate, the present subsidiary coinage... will remain cents of a florin until redeemed by new coins, so soon as they can be made available, at the rate of two cents of a shilling to one of a florin.⁵³

This inspired a violent reaction from the European activists who complained that the whole scheme was "being engineered from London" and "there is an imminent probability of the shackles of high costs of production being permanently fixed on the long-suffering settler of the Colony."⁵⁴ The fact that there was a reaction at all to the proposed essential prerequisite for the currency change suggests that it is impossible to portray the incident as anything other than deception of the African. Why would the confirmation of a perfectly logical requirement, i.e., the redemption of the florin cents for shilling ones, provoke such a storm? The settlers were obviously trying to cut production losses at the expense of the native and the indignation aroused by the Colonial Office's notice explicitly confirmed this. The bankers' ploy had not had the desired results. Nevertheless, a safeguard against the possible failure of this action was an enforced one-third reduction in native wages resolved by

53. E. A. S., 8 Nov. 1921.

54. Ibid. The story of the currency crisis is related in detail by McGregor Ross in the Chapter entitled: "The Collapse of the Great Shilling Swindle" in Kenya From Within, pp. 199-216.

the Convention in June 1921.⁵⁵

On the 11 June 1920 an Order-in-Council was signed promoting the Protectorate to the status of Kenya Colony. In terms of administrative change the "annexation" was virtually meaningless. The Under-Secretary of State, in reply to a question, in the Commons, pointed out that it merely clarified the ambiguity of designating the name of British East Africa to a particular region when the name was applied loosely to cover all the territories in East Africa.⁵⁶ More succinctly the term "British East Africa" had become obsolete and the action of 1920 was a mere change of name and little else. In one practical way it eased the lot of the settlers because now it was possible to raise a loan under the Colonial Stock Act, something which was not possible before. Regardless of its actual meaning the Kenya settlers still interpreted the change of status as being symbolic of political advance. Bowring had advised annexation as early as 1918 on the grounds that "annexation would probably be welcomed by the local European community as a sign of progress and as a marked step toward the goal of 'responsible

55. This second line of defence was initiated at the February meeting of the Legislative Council which not only passed the demonetization of the rupee but allowed the "legitimate reduction of wages when shillings are available and falling prices justify a general reduction in wages". See Kenya, Leg. Co., 25 Feb. 1921., p. 98. The adoption of even such "legitimate" reductions might have been a factor in the Kikuyu unrest and the riot of 1922 in which 25 Africans were killed by police. See Papers Relating to Native Disturbances in Kenya. (March, 1922), Cmd. 1691, (1922), passim.

56. Hansard, 5th series, v. 131, c. 2393, Commons, 14 July 1920.

government" although he himself did "not attach much importance to this aspect of the proposal".⁵⁷ Cransby-Gore, in delivering a probing question to Amery in the Commons, elicited the true meaning of the annexation. He enquired:

...whether, with the termination of the Protectorate in British East Africa, Kenya Colony is self-governing, or whether full authority and responsibility for the administration of the Colony remains with the Colonial Office; whether the status of the Indian settlers has undergone any improvement by the change of status of the Colony or of its constitution and, if so, in what respects...?

to which the Under-Secretary of State replied:

The Kenya Colony is not self-governing, and the authority and responsibility of the Secretary of State for the Colonies are not affected by the annexation nor will it affect in any way the status of the Indian residents in the country.⁵⁸

What local European activists might term progress, the Indians would naturally regard as retrogression. The events of 1920 offered little indication of improvement in the Asian status. Filmer had already confounded logic by announcing that any encroachment on the European exclusiveness in the uplands would, because Asiatics were "physically fitted to settle in other areas from which Europeans are by nature excluded", be "a virtual discrimination in favour of Asiatic as against European settlement." He also advised the continuation of segregation in residential and commercial areas on

57. Bowring to Long, 12 June 1918, C. O. 533/196

58. Hansard, 5th series, vol. 131, c. 2638, Commons, 15 July 1920.

both sanitary grounds and "on grounds of social convenience".⁵⁹ In view of the Indian uproar over Milner's subsequent speech reiterating this,⁶⁰ the Secretary of State quickly tried to placate Indian opinion by conceding the election of two Indian members to the Legislature having been "impressed by the representations which have been made to me both by the Indian representatives from East Africa and by the Secretary of State for India".⁶¹ However, this only increased Indian demands for equal rights and subsequent European agitation and Milner's attempt to define policy merely aggravated the situation. As a protest, Visram, one of the two Indian members on the Legislative Council, resigned in November 1920⁶² and recourse to non-cooperation by the Indians followed. For the next fourteen years they sporadically boycotted the Legislature.

Northey endeavoured to promote some sort of agreement by calling a Conference of both parties for May 1921. It was agreed that the Europeans drop their insistence on commercial segregation but the question of elective representation was the contentious one. The Indians pressed for equality; Northey advised five seats and the Europeans regarded three seats for the Asians as an absolute maximum. Three days of

59. Milner to Bowring (O.A.G.), 21 May 1920; C. O. 533/245.

60. See above p. 20 and Hansard, 5th series, v. 41, c. 112-162, Lords, 14 Jul. 1920.

61. Milner to Northey, Tel., 30 Jul. 1920; C. O. 533/234.

62. Northey to Milner, Conf., 18 Jan. 1921; C. O. 533/238.

discussion proved fruitless and the conference was abandoned.⁶³

It was then that the Europeans resorted to resigning from the Council in a bid to strengthen their hand, and formed the Reform Party. This was Delamere's brainchild; a party which would give the "Elected Members an organisation for the investigation and discussion of questions preliminary to the meeting of the Legislative Council"⁶⁴ although Delamere later pointed out that its aim was co-operative rather than factious.⁶⁵ The formation of the party was really an attempt to convince the activists of their own unity and to prevent any straying from the unofficial line at a critical time. In the elections of January 1922, three of the four new members were elected on the Reform Party programme.⁶⁶

In June 1921 the Convention formulated the "irreducible minimum" which even went back on the limited agreements of the May conference. The activists now insisted upon residential and commercial segregation and no more than two nominated Legislative members for the Indians. They reiterated their demands for immigration restriction and continuing exclusiveness of the Highlands although they

63. Northey to Milner, Tel., 7 May 1921, C. O. 533/259.

64. M. Dille: British Policy, p. 53. See also E. A. S., 15 Oct. 1921.

65. Ibid. 13 Jan. 1923.

66. Ibid. 7 Jan. 1922.

recognised "existing Asiatic rights in property and security of tenure".⁶⁷ The Indians were furious and complained that "when we ask for our rights here the Convention of Associations show us their rifles".⁶⁸

Northey returned to England in July with a view to discussing the financial situation of the Colony... Churchill took the opportunity of reviewing the Indian claims although Northey stressed that before any definite proposals were put into practice by the Government local agreement would have to be reached first. On his return to Kenya Northey emphasised that "it cannot be expected that a question of such importance as this Indian policy... can be settled out of hand or in a hurry"⁶⁹ and pointed out that much of his time in London had been devoted to the country's financial problems.⁷⁰

The early months of 1922 exhibited much promise for the Kenyan Europeans. Churchill's speech at the East African Dinner described Kenya as "a characteristically and distinctively British Colony looking forward in the full fruition of time to responsible self-government" and he offered little comfort to the Indians with the added proviso that "natives

67. E. A. S., 1 July 1921 and E. Huxley, White Man's Country, vol. 2, p. 122.

68. Ibid.

69. Kenya Leg. Co., 10 Oct. 1921, p. 42.

70. Ibid. p. 41.

and Indians alike the ranch and confers to well marked European standards shall not be denied the fullest exercise and enjoyment of civic and political rights".⁷¹ Jeevanjee and Polak, writing to Churchill, on behalf of the East African Indian delegation, said that "what you appear to imply... is that the interests of the European settlers are paramount."⁷²

On financial matters too the settlers managed to secure domination of another investigatory body, the Economic Committee chaired by Bourne, which was appointed by Northey in March 1922. They recommended, with success, the abolition of the income tax which, according to the Governor, had been "unpopular and difficult to collect"⁷³ and furthermore advocated prohibitive import duties of 50% on wheat and 100% on flour, the bulk of these products coming from India.⁷⁴ The policy of stabilising the budget by cutting back taxation and retrenchment was part of the Reform Party programme.⁷⁵ In August the Committee advised a heavy reduction of staff in most departments in its efforts to reduce expenditure. The Public Works Department, in its existing structure, was abol-

71. The Times, 28 Jan. 1922.

72. East African Indian delegation to Churchill, 9 Feb. 1922, C. O. 533/290.

73. Northey to Churchill, Tel., 11 May 1922, C. O. 533/277.

74. The Times, 27 May 1922.

75. For arguments against the income tax see Kenya, Leg. Co., 4 May 1920, p. 37. ; 24 Oct. 1921. ; pp. 73-82; 25 May 1922, p. 3.

ished completely and with it went the articulate McGregor Ross, Director of the Department and arch-opponent of what he himself termed the Political Machine.⁷⁶

The events of mid-1922 were dramatic reversals for the settlers. The Customs Ordinance Bill of May was recommitted and the wheat and flour duties were slashed to 30%⁷⁷ in accordance with Churchill's instructions. Then, out of the blue, Churchill recalled Northey saying that "circumstances which require the services of a Military Government no longer obtain" and peace conditions required a "Govr. well versed in purely civil administration".⁷⁸ The Europeans, who had shown much regard for Northey, were shocked, the Leader recalling:

the coincidence in the careers of Sir Percy Girouard and Sir E. Northey, both cut short...because they exhibited the greatest zeal and sympathy with Colonial aspirations. Both found impossible the task of imposing the will of London on the people and of pleasing their own public.⁷⁹

The new Governor was Sir Robert Coryndon, Governor of Uganda since 1917, and the activists were suspicious of his appointment because they felt he was a "federationist" and that he was brought in to end the Indian crisis to the disadvantage of the European community.⁸⁰ The federation of

76. For the enforced resignation of Ross see Northey to Churchill, Conf., 22 July 1922, C.O.533/280. For Ross' condemnation of the European activists see his book Kenya From Within, passim.

77. The Times 3 June 1922.

78. Churchill to Northey, 29 June 1922, C.O.533/288.

79. Quoted by The Times 16 Aug. 1922.

80. E.A.S. 19 Aug. 1922; 26 Aug. 1922; 23 Sept. 1922.

East African territories had been hinted at by Churchill in his January Dinner speech and the settlers concluded that Northey's recall would be followed by an amalgamation of the whole East African region and hence, so they ascertained, Indian domination. On the 5 September, five days after the South African born Governor⁸¹ arrived in Nairobi, the Wood-Winterton⁸² proposals were cabled to him. This was a joint scheme of the Colonial and India Offices designed to solve Kenya's problems. The proposals provided for a common electoral roll enfranchising approximately ten per cent of the Indian population, retention of the official majority and complete ablation of segregation. In order to placate the Europeans the status quo in respect of the Highlands and immigration was to be kept.

The Wood-Winterton proposals were both bold and naive. The trend of European politics portrayed an "all or nothing" attitude and this in turn gave force to an exaggeration of Indian claims. If the Europeans in Kenya were going to be persistent in their arrogant dogmatism the Indians were going to strive for nothing less than complete equality. Coryndon wrote back to Churchill saying "neither side will give way".⁸³

81. For Coryndon's career see Chapter 5 below.

82. E. F. Wood was the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and Lord Winterton was the Under-Secretary of State for India.

83. Coryndon to Churchill, Tel., 23 Sept. 1922, C.O. 533/282.

It became obvious that local agreement on policy matters was nigh impossible. Policy would have to be imposed and imposition necessitated dilution of the Wood-Winterton plan.

The introduction of an Emergency Ordinance in February 1923 by the new Secretary of State, the Duke of Devonshire,⁸⁴ seemed to confirm the imminence of an imposed settlement. The provisions for postponement of elections and the extension of the Legislature were looked upon by the white politicians with some foreboding. British Government dictatorship was not going to be accepted flaccidly and Delamere called the Ordinance:

wanton and provocative action on the part of the Sec. of St...it was provocative because it was a fact that this act was unwarranted by the precedents of the British constitution as laid down and was, in fact, illegal for that reason. If that was so it was nothing but direct action on the part of the Sec. of St. and there was no doubt, that direct action invariably bred direct action."⁸⁵

Plans for rebellion had already been drawn up with the idea of staying in the Empire. The motto "For King and Kenya" appeared to be a contradiction in terms.⁸⁶ Whether or not the threat of force was ascertained as real or as a bluff, the Colonial Office was faced with considerable embarrassment. Dictatorial proclamation of policy might have disastrous consequences and so it was back to local agreement.

84. He took office on 25 Oct. 1922.

85. Kenya: Leg. Co., 8 Feb. 1923, p. 112.

86. See E. Huxley: White Man's Country, vol. 2, pp. 135-139 and below Chapter 7.

The leading politicians on both sides were invited to London to negotiate although with the European threat of force there was no reason to believe that the discussions would yield anything better than the usual specious arguments and chicanery. The Governor and the European delegation of Delahere, Wood, Archer (President of the Convention) and the Rev. Arthur proceeded in one boat towards England; the Indian delegation proceeded, via Bombay, in another. It was March.

The culmination of the Spring negotiations was the promulgation of the famous White Paper, "Indians in Kenya", in July 1923.⁸⁷ The key, delicate and hence controversial pronouncement was the establishment of the paramountcy of African interests. Due to the fact that Kenya was primarily an African territory it was best that the home Government should assume the role of sole trustee. As for responsible self-government for the Europeans, that was "out of the question within any period of time which need now be taken into consideration".⁸⁸ More specifically the Devonshire Declaration put paid to two of the five irreducible demands, namely segregation and denial of the Indian right of franchise. There was to be no change in the existing immigration laws although Devonshire later conceded that such regulations could be amended at the discretion of the Governor. The contentious common-roll was eliminated and in its place a communal franchise was proposed which would provide "a framework into which native represent-

87. Cmd. 1922 (1923).

88. Ibid., p. 11.

ation can be fitted in due season".⁸⁹ The major inroads of European hegemony as elucidated by Wood-Linton had been lost. To add insult to injury the Highlands were still exclusive to European settlement.

The British Government was worried about the local European reaction to the document. Devonshire hastily cabled the Governor of Tanganyika and the Acting Commissioner of Zanzibar: "In absence of any news from Sir S. Bowring, I should be glad if you would at once report what information you have regarding events in Kenya since decisions on Indian question were published".⁹⁰ He need not have worried. All was quiet. There was no direct action.

The White Paper by no means marked an end to the controversy. The Europeans were still entrenched. They still had eleven elected members against the Indians' five on the Legislature; they had won the battle against the common roll and its intirations of Indian equality; land ownership in the uplands remained exclusive to the Europeans and they retained membership on the Executive Council. Since the war they had won and lost segregation and made little headway in their bid for stricter immigration controls. The White Paper's announcement that "there will be no drastic action or reversal of measures already introduced...the result of which might be to destroy or impair the existing interests of those who have

89. Ibid., p. 12.

90. Devonshire to the Officers Administering the Governments of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, Tel., Urgent and Secret, 27 Jul. 1923, C. O. 533/303.

already settled in Kenya"⁹¹ was no more than confirmation of the status quo. Rather than being a major climacteric in policy it was no more than an attempt to clarify the addled thinking on Kenya. Unfortunately the "paramountcy" doctrine was prone to varying interpretations and it was because of this that 1923 cannot be regarded as the ultimate statement on policy. Yet, in a sense, Devonshire had to promote the "paramountcy" principle and the East African Standard eight years later offered the explanation:

In 1923, a harassed Secretary of State, the Duke of Devonshire, seeking a solution of a very difficult problem to which Europeans and Indians were parties, found that the only point of agreement was their professed disinterested concern for the interest and welfare of the Native. Seizing upon that, the Secretary of State made it the basis of his decision and inserted it, like a wedge, between the contending parties.⁹²

The local activists still retained their domination over the Indians, Africans and their poorer white counterparts. If Devonshire had scotched self-government there were plenty more changes of Government and Colonial Secretaries to come that might lead to a modification of the 1923 settlement. After all Ormsby-Gore's findings, embodied in the 1927 White Paper,⁹³ recognised both the permanency of European settlement and the association of the white community in trusteeship. Were the Africans now paramount? Was the British Government still sole trustee? After that Amery re-opened the goal of

91. Cmd. 1922, (1923).

92. E.A.S., 18, Jul. 1931, quoted by R. Gregory: Sidney Webb, p. 44.

93. Future Policy in regard to Eastern Africa, Cmd 2904(1927).

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self-government with "the growth of a large settled community".⁹⁴ Not long after came the Labour Government's Memorandum on Native Policy in East Africa, the so-called Black Papers, in which Passfield stressed the advantages of the common electoral roll and repeated the 1923 decision regarding the British Government as sole trustee of the Africans.⁹⁵ Hence the settlers advanced and retreated on the basis of White Papers whereas the position in Kenya remained much the same.

The assertion that 1923 witnessed "the defeat for European agricultural settlement in British East Africa"⁹⁶ is thus a gross exaggeration. The "chief merit" of the Declaration was that it reduced "the Indian-European conflict to the moderate proportions which properly belonged to it".⁹⁷ Essentially it was really "the final settlement of nothing".⁹⁸

Of course the dissonant parties were not now on friendly terms because of the compromise but the conflict never again attained the alarming intensity of the immediate post-war era. The Indians realised that although their opponents

94. Hansard, 5th Series, v. 209, c. 291, Commons, 19 Jul. 1927.

95. Cmd. 3573 (1930).

96. R. Remole: "White Settlers, or the Foundation of European Agricultural Settlement in Kenya", (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Harvard, 1959, microfilm, Rhodes House Lib.) p. 334.

97. W. K. Hancock: Survey, vol. 1, p. 223.

98. W. McGregor Ross: Kenya, p. 454.

might retain hegemony they would never attain complete domination. Much more significant to them was the Rhodesian example⁹⁹ which assured the Indian politicians that even the most ardent, cantankerous Kenya European could never get that far with an Asiatic fly in the ointment.

99. Southern Rhodesia was granted the status of a self-governing colony in September 1923 when she was formally annexed to the Crown. The Letters Patent established a single chamber Legislature consisting of thirty elected members.

PART TWO

POLITICAL PRESSURE

CHAPTER THREE

THE GOVERNORS' DISPOSITION

Governors are frequently referred to in public as the colonists' defenders against the Colonial Office and most recent governors have acquiesced in such a conception of their position.

The immediate post-bellum witnessed the accommodation of social justice and a new humanitarianism in Britain. Lloyd George, who before the war had looked upon social reform as an alternative to socialism, now viewed it as a necessity to avert the international threat of Communism and its accompanying civic disorder. Popular welfare schemes, including the first uncovenanted benefit or dole, were instituted. The most positive embodiment of the new humanitarian ideals was the Labour Party which, between the wars, replaced the Liberals as the alternative form of government in Britain. The Conservative establishment realised that its survival depended upon its response to these new values and there grew up a certain sensitivity in government. Concomitant with the humanitarian pressure was the switch of attention, regarding Indian disabilities, from South to East Africa. The focus on

Indian discontent, prior to 1914, was directed at the Gandhi-Smuts confrontation but the spotlights in the post-war world were on Kenya partly because the South African turmoil had diminished and partly because of the rapid European political advance during the war itself.

The pressures on the Home Government were far different from those exerted upon the Kenyan one. Governors and settlers became a party of pressure in the same sense that the humanitarians and the Government of India were parties. It was the British Government which bore ultimate responsibility for a solution in Kenya and so all the lobbying centred around Westminster. World opinion looked towards London, not Nairobi, for a settlement. Herein lies the dichotomy of the Kenyan situation. In Britain the survival of the establishment depended upon its assimilation of the new ideals; in Kenya it depended upon their outright rejection.

The centre of power in Kenya was the Governor. Much depended upon his personal opinion and nearly all the time it was pro-European. Some, like Girouard and Coryndon, were products of the white pioneering society. Others like Belfield and Northey, had already formed their attitudes regarding the proper direction of Kenyan politics before the assumption of their executive posts. Even if this had not been the case, local pressures would prove to be critical as that crusading Labour backbencher, Josiah Wedgwood, pointed out in a Supply Debate:

The Governors... tried to keep their end up but the pressure of the entire European population of a colony can be too much for a Governor... You place the man, in whom you have

the most confidence in a society where everybody he meets pushes in the same direction, thousands of miles from here, where letters and telegrams have little effect and you expect him to maintain the attitude which hon. Members would wish him to maintain.²

Settler scepticism of gubernatorial appointments, such as their distrust of "Mr. H. Belfield"³ and of Coryndon because of his supposed "federationist" intentions, was ill-founded. The peculiar social forces within Kenya were sufficient to sway even the most philanthropic of Governors. As Leys, the author of two contemporary, highly polemical, anti-settler books, points out:

A definite type exists of men who in London and in the company of missionaries profess the strongest sympathy with native rights but in Africa emulate, before the hardy settler, the behaviour of the maiden who 'swearing she would ne'er consent, consented'.⁴

Keeping in mind the pro-settler tendencies of the Governors, there were two factors in the post-war years which contributed to the continuing European hegemony in Kenya. One was the entrenchment of Conservatism in Britain and the other was the unique power afforded to the Governor which was far in excess of the nominal powers granted under the Letters Patent and Royal Instructions.

Conservatism was the undeniable political creed in Britain; it was not undermined by what may be termed the

2. Hansard, 5th series, v. 167, c. 540, Commons, 14 July 1920.

3. See above Chapter 2, p. 30.

4. Leys, Kenya - pp. 138.

5. See M. Dilley, British Policy, pp. 21/22.

humanitarian assault. There were many strains to this assault but none of them strong enough to unsettle the establishment. Sidney Webb and Sydney Olivier, with their Fabian doctrines were becoming weaker within their own party in its search for a broader base to its appeal. Redwood seemed like a lone voice in the Commons in espousing Indian interests. The crusading authors such as Norman Leys, Leonard Woolf, and W. McGregor Ross were well aware that the humanitarian net was not as mighty as the Conservative sword. Perhaps one of the most cohesive groups drawing attention to Kenya was Henry Polak's Indian Overseas Association. Polak, a vegetarian Jew, joined the Association in October 1919 and it subsequently took upon itself the promotion of the rights of the oppressed majorities in Kenya, Malaya and India alike. Although the association was primarily an Indian organization it represented the first sincere attempt by one of the interested parties in the conflict to lessen the plight of the native. Whereas European and other Indian leaders exploited the trusteeship principle as a political weapon, the Indian Overseas Association adopted it as a true humanitarian aim. It even "rivalled the Anti-Slavery Society in humanitarian interest in Africa".

The exponents of humanitarianism were able, articulate and weak. Their forte lay in their ability to embarrass successive British Governments. Although sometimes, in deference to these groups, Governors were recalled or forced to resign (e.g.

G. H. Gregory: India and East Africa (Oxford, 1971) p. 175.

Northey and Girouard) they were never replaced with anyone having an expert knowledge of African and Indian, as well as European, affairs.

Hence, Conservatism was never really threatened in the inter-war years. The numerous Secretaries of State "sought compromises in East Africa which were judged most likely to quell dissatisfaction there and in India and preserve the Imperial connection". Of all the Secretaries of State:

only Elgin, J. H. Thomas and Lord Passfield pursued policies favourable to Indian and African interests. But Elgin's administration came too early in the period of European settlement to have significant consequence. Thomas's first term of office, the only one of his three that may be termed humanitarian, was too brief for real accomplishment. Passfield efforts to apply an enlightened policy were weak and ineffectual.

The second factor working in favour of the Kenya European politicians was the power of the Governor himself. The nominal power of the Governor was that of Chief Executive with ultimate responsibility to the Imperial Government. Hence all local Ordinances and large scale land alienation required the sanction of the Secretary of State. In practice the Governors were allowed great latitude. The Home Government, anxious not to tarnish its image in Parliament or the press, let dubious actions on the part of the Governor pass for fear of creating an uproar. Even when such actions came to light, as in the case of the Masai move under Girouard, it was difficult, if not impossible, to reverse them. In fact the sensitivity of the Imperial Government was significant in the continuance of

7. Ibid. p. 505.

the fait-accompli in post-war period. If a Governor did overstep his mark it was much better to reprimand him in confidence than bring it to the attention of Parliament. Thus the term "sanction of the Secretary of State" became in many instances a rarely used veto on the Governors' actions.

Coupled with the lack of checks on the Governors' authority from above there was equally no attempt to build up a system of local government to decentralise the administration in Kenya itself and take some of the lesser responsibilities away from the Governor. Municipal development and education were left in the hands of ad hoc local organisations and boards. This delegation of power, in a sense, took away some of the tedium of the Governor's work. Had the various committees been comprised of experts in the field the solution would have been an admirable if temporary one. Not unnaturally the Governors tended to delegate such power to those whom they felt would be most capable of reaching a sensible solution. And men of the same breed as Girouard and Northey were not inclined to believe that the Mombasa Chamber of Commerce with its sprinkling of dukawallas was going to be as proficient as the blue-veined British emigré. It was an unsatisfactory development which merely underlined the notorious absence of local government:

Of local government in its usual sense there is practically none. The local unit is the district with the district officer not the elected municipality or County Council. Not even in tribal affairs is there any real local government. The only tribal authorities recognised by the law are such as the government appoints. In the absence of elected bodies and of rates for local government, local affairs such as roads and education tend to pass into the hands of the boards nominated by the Governor from among those of the planters, farmers and

merchants whom he regards most highly.⁸

The political structure within Kenya involved a tremendous concentration of power in what might be called the "local centre" -- the Governor and the European political activists. The Governors found not only a lack of local government beneath them but a lack of Imperial Government above. Thus, rather than being representatives of the British Government the Governors often assumed the role of representatives of the Europeans in Kenya. Leys remarked that "Governors are frequently referred to in public as the colonists' defenders against the Colonial Office, and most recent governors have acquiesced in such a conception of their position".⁹ In effect the Governors were not against the Colonial Office per se as against the pressures of the Government of India and the humanitarians which reflected itself in the statements of the Conservative politicians. For instance, Milner's "definite intention" to "mete out even handed justice between the different races"¹⁰ and Churchill's "fullest exercise and enjoyment of civic and political rights"¹¹ by Indians, were aimed to quell the anti-settler lobby.

The British Government usually found that placating the Government of India aroused the anger of the settler

8. Leys: Kenya p. 269.
9. Ibid., p. 361.
10. Hansard, 5th series, v. 41, c. 161, Lords, 14 Jul. 1920.
11. The Times, 28 Jan. 1922.

politicians and vice-versa. While the concentration of power within Kenya and Conservative entrenchment in Britain would always ensure constitutional settlement in favour of the European, the existence of Indians and more significantly the Government of India lobby, would never allow complete self-government. Essentially this was the dilemma of the Home Government. Imperial policy favoured white domination in the spirit, but not the letter of law. Whereas the European activists and the Governors, acting as a particularist pressure group, wanted both.

As already noted,¹² Eliot was the progenitor of European settlement in the area later to be known as Kenya colony. He was repulsed by native customs and once referred to Masaidom as a "beastly, bloody system" and added that "the sooner it disappears and is unknown, except in books of anthropology, the better".¹³ His stand over the alienation of land to two South Africans earned him belated praise from his new sub-

12. See above Chapter One, p. 5.

13. Eliot to Lansdowne, 9 Apr. 1904, Cd. 2099 (1904) pp. 26-28, quoted in G. H. Fungeam British Rule in Kenya, p. 113.

jects.¹⁴ In spite of his pro-European ideas Eliot was a misfit in both official and unofficial circles. He was a gifted intellectual who remained aloof from the people he had invited to the country; they were mere objects of his mission. Even if he had had entertained at Government House it was unlikely that his less talented compatriots would have appreciated his propensity to throw in a Latin or Greek quotation during a conversation. The resignation of this erudite Commissioner was partly due to his disregard of Masai property rights and partly due to his subordinates, Jackson and Bagge, communicating with the Foreign Office behind his back. On the one hand Eliot showed little interest in the native, on the other his condescension towards the Europeans hardly stood him in good stead with the white community.

Sir Donald Stewart, Commissioner from 1904, was a far different personality from his predecessor. An arrogant soldier had replaced a quiet intellectual yet they had two common traits. Both had no regard for the native and both remained aloof from white society (although somewhat less in Stewart's case). Hollis, one of Donald Stewart's subordinates at Government House, provided this illuminating description of the new Commissioner:

14. Eliot exceeded his authority in promising extensive estates to Robert Chamberlain and A. G. Flemmer. Chamberlain became a champion for the rights of small farmers in the U.A.P. and was DeLaet's arch-rival. Flemmer, born 1850 in Denmark, lived in South Africa 1852-1903 before entering the U.A.P. For further information on Chamberlain see above Chapter 1 and on Flemmer see Northey to Churchill, 27 May 1921, C.O. 533/259.

Though indolent, he was a disciplinarian and he thought that no country could be properly administered until (to use his own phrase) the natives had been knocked into shape. At the same time he stood in nonsense from the settlers and Lord Delamere once confided to Alfred Claud Hollis that he never knew when he went to Government House whether the A.D.C. would be instructed to give him a whisky and soda or to kick him down the steps.¹⁵

By the time of Stewart's death the native had indeed been knocked into shape. His punitive expeditions against the Sotik and the Mandi had opened up the frontier for white settlement. The Foreign Office had actively endorsed the expansion of the frontier by appointing Stewart. It was the manner of accomplishment, i.e. Stewart's inability to provide the Colonial Office with notification of his expeditions, which caused concern in the Cabinet.¹⁶ Stewart's military excursions even without Colonial Office sanction were commitments which were impossible to retract. The legacy of the regime, upon the Commissioner's premature death, was assumed by the ineffectual Hayes Sadler.

Even if his predecessors had shunned acceptance in European society at least they had helped to foster the development of that society by introducing them to the Protectorate and expanding the frontier. Sadler on the other hand turned out to be the complete antithesis to the activists' ideal. Eliot and Stewart were not well liked but Sadler was an anathema. One of

15. Hollis, unpublished autobiography (iii) 45, quoted by Hungeam, British Rule, p. 116.

16. Minute by Lyttleton, 20 July 1906 on Stewart to Lyttleton, 8 Jun. 1905 C. O. 533/2 in Ibid., p. 151.

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the Governor's initial actions upon arrival in the Protectorate in December 1905 was to hold a social meeting with seventy Indian merchants. He addressed them in fluent Gujarati, a necessary language for someone who had spent 25 years in the Raj.¹⁷ Such a close affinity with the Asiatic race did not endear him to Delamere, Grogan and company. Sadler, rather disrespectfully nicknamed "Flannelfoot" by the settlers, tried to keep a grip on the Europeans' more militant spokesmen. Delamere and Baillie, for example, were suspended from the Legislative Council after the Government House confrontation in 1908,¹⁸ and the Governor even suggested to the Colonial Office that the militant South African settlers should be repatriated.¹⁹ Under Churchill's instructions Sadler also took steps to provide Indian representation on the Legislative Council.²⁰

The Governor had much difficulty in keeping the settlers in line, something which irritated both the Colonial Office and the settlers. Before the moves for Indian representation were under way the unfortunate Sadler was transferred to the quieter post of Governor of the Windward Isles. His successor was the first real settlers' man -- Sir Percy Girouard.

Born in Montreal, the son of a Supreme Court judge, Girouard had devoted his career to the meticulous organisation

17. Gregory: India p. 86.

18. See Bennett: Kenya p. 25.

19. Sadler to Crewe, Conf., 31 May 1908, C.O. 533/44
cited in Mungeam: British Rule p. 198.

20. Bennett: Kenya p. 26.

of the railway systems in Egypt, Sudan and Nigeria. His main task as Governor of Nigeria (1907-1909), was that of technical expert for the railroad. Upon arrival in Kenya, Girouard expressed disdain for the inefficient administrative network, and the laziness of the officials who supervised it. More significantly he was disgusted by the inferior social status of his new colleagues. For Girouard administrative proficiency had to be supplemented by an ability to fit into European society. He confided in Crewe, the Secretary of State, that most of his subordinates lacked "the social qualifications necessary for the handling or entertaining of a white community."²¹

In addition he turned down Indian claims for a replacement of Jeevanjee on the Legislative Council on the grounds that there were "no prominent Indians of sufficient educational qualifications"²² for appointment.

Girouard never really understood the African societies in Kenya although he had taken a deep interest in the indigenous institutions in Nigeria. He felt that the West African practice of working through the local chiefs should be supported in Kenya, not realising that such "chiefs" were unrepresentative of their peoples -- men who owed their status to the advent of

21. Girouard to Crewe, Conf., 26 May 1910 C.O. 533/74 quoted in Mungana: British Rule, p. 215. See above Chapter One, pp. 19-20.

22. Girouard to Crewe, 19 Feb. 1912, C.O. 533/102 quoted by Mangat: History of Asians, p. 108.

British rule. Girouard's primary concern was European economic development, and for this the native must come out of his reserve and work for the settlers. This of course had the added beneficial effect of civilizing the native.

The confidence of Girouard was in direct contrast to the weakness of his predecessor. His urge to get things done quickly provoked a certain impatience with Colonial Office control, a facet of his temperament which led up to his enforced resignation. The Governor had not kept his superiors informed of the Masai move in Laikipia. That land had been promised to settlers upon the tribe's vacancy was a fact that he chose to hide from Whitehall. Ramsey MacDonald, leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, had heard through the grapevine from a "reliable source" that the move was in response to settler pressure and Harcourt, the Secretary of State, at first denied this. When Girouard, on leave in England in 1912, admitted that such promises had been made he was forced to resign. Perhaps Leys had Girouard in mind when he wrote:

One can understand such a man [the Governor], sorely beset on the one hand by a Colonial Office timidly anxious that no occasion should be given for awkward questions in Parliament, and on the other by the leaders of the local European community whom he dare not openly oppose, reluctantly resorting on rare occasions to deceit.²³

Girouard's deceit might have been inconsequential were it not

23. See unteam: British Rule p. 263. For a full account of the events leading to Girouard's resignation see pp. 259-270.

24. Leys: Kenya p. 134.

for blocks regarding the mismanagement of the money and Jersey MacDonald's knowledge of the land provisions.

The Governor's departure was viewed, justifiably, as a great loss to the settler cause. He had been the first Governor actively to encourage the native to work for the European. Coupled with the condemnation of the land tax and anti-dummying regulations (he felt it did not matter how much land a settler held as long as it was developed) his policies were held in great esteem by the larger landowners. Other actions, such as the scotching of the Indian representation proposals and the ending of the official settler rift by recruiting men with acceptable social backgrounds, only enhanced his status in European eyes.

Balfour's successor was just as anxious to win over the white community. During Balfour's term of office (1912-1917), less by Kaitiaki standards, many important settler demands were realized. The most significant were the 999-year lease demands embodied in the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915 and the concession of the elective representative principle in October 1916. Like his mentor, Henry Balfour was convinced that dummying and the illegal transfer of land could not be halted. Balfour overruled many the important restrictions instituted by him. The 99-year lease was now extended to 999 years and Maori's proviso limiting the transfer of land was made defunct by the 1915 Ordinance. Only when the transfer was between different races could it be vetoed by the Governor-in-Council.

That aspect with such obvious racialist overtones could be sanctioned, is a reflection on the political advantage of war conditions for the European activists.

Similarly Belfield's pressure for the elective principle was considerably aided by British concentration on the war effort. When Bonar Law acquiesced, probably to prevent further disturbances in the Protectorate, Belfield announced before Council that:

I am proud to think that I may have been in some small measure instrumental in obtaining for the population of British East Africa the concession of a right which I am confident that they will exercise with a sense of grave personal responsibility to the material benefit and betterment of the consultations of the Council.²⁶

It is interesting to note that the white contingent of the East African peoples and the population of East Africa were synonymous in Belfield's view.

The Governor, who vacated his post as Commissioner of the Malay States to assume the Kenya Executive, was just as adamant as Girouard in his anti-Indian stance. Continued prohibition from the Highland areas and the segregation, for sanitary reasons, of the communities in the townships hallmarked Belfield's regime. As for the grant of Indian equality in respect of trial by jury and the appointment of judges, that was, for obvious reasons...neither necessary or desirable.²⁷

26. Kenya, Leg. Co., Oct. 1916, pp. 3/4.

27. I.O. Migration, Aug. 1914, Pros: 22, file 34, part A, Belfield to Harcourt, 1 May 1914, quoted by Langat: History, p. 109.

The Acting Governor during these years, Charles Bowring, was much less of a hard-liner. He had a distaste for political agitation but was impotent to act against it. Early in 1918, when learning that the prominent agitators were members of his War Council he informed the Secretary of State:

I seriously contemplated the abolition of the War Council in consequence of the agitation and only refrained from taking such a step because I felt it would have tended to promote further discord and would have been utilised by the organisers of the movement as a pretext for stirring up further trouble.²⁹

It was one of the ironies of the Keny situation that even a man who regarded unruly settlers with disdain felt powerless to do anything about them.

Bowring, in confidence, supported Indian demands for effective representation and strongly objected to the European share of Bellfield's Economic Corporation.³⁰ He was much less affectionately disposed towards the native and promoted forced labour and increases in the Native Hut and Poll Tax without the prior consent of the Secretary of State.³¹

29. He had been Chief Secretary in the protectorate since 1909 after serving 4 years (1895-99) as auditor to the British Central African Protectorate (later Nyasaland). In 1923 he was made Govr. of Nyasaland. See The Times 20 Jul. 1923.

Bowring to Sec. of St., 11 March 1918, C.O. 533/194. Bowring was the Chairman of the War Council.

30. Bowring to Milner, Conf., 28 Feb. 1920, C.O. 533/230.

31. On the forced labour question see Baring to Sec. of St., 30 Oct. 1918, Long's reply Tel., 4 Nov. 1918 and Bowring's explanation 7 Nov. 1918 in C.O. 533/198. On the taxation question see Bowring to Milner, 24 Nov. 1919, C.O. 533/215. This contains this illuminating minute from Read to Fiddes, 1 Dec. 1920: "as the taxation has been actually imposed in the past, I think we had better let it stand. It may only hurt the natives if we chop and change."

In his capacity as Officer Administrator of the Government, Bowring was a mere stop-gap for Governors on leave or between resignations and appointments. His personal sympathies were, as a consequence, not as critical as the sympathies of the Governors themselves. His opinions, however, provide a contrast to the staunch pro-European line adopted by Governors right through from Girouard to Coryndon.

Belfield was the first Governor since the inception of white settlement to serve a full term of office. His successors, Northey and Coryndon, proved that Belfield was an exceptional case indeed. A different trend which began with Girouard's rule was not interrupted by Belfield. This was the ardent pro-settler sympathies of the Governors. Girouard, Belfield, Northey, and Coryndon, unlike their predecessors, did not remain aloof from European society. They regarded themselves as the linch-pins of that society, for the task which they placed upon their own shoulders had to ensure the continuation of European political domination. The Governor on the one hand was "the framer and enforcer of all policies" and on the other was "above politics".³² Successive Governors in Kenya from 1909-1923 held such an affinity with white society that they hardly discerned this dichotomy of their position. They were so wrapped up in the settler cause that being "above politics" was a realm of Government more formal than real. Nominally Governors like Northey and Coryndon were H. E. Representatives; in actuality they were "defenders of the colonists" against H. E. Government.

32. Huxley, Assessment in White Man's Country, p. 111, 234.

CHAPTER FOUR

"A MILITARY MAN": NORTHEY'S GOVERNORSHIP 1919-1922.

The kind of man who has had a distinguished military career often makes an admirable Governor of a country inhabited by uncivilized tribes in the process of being compelled to accept our authority, with the hut tax and forced labour as its insignia. Such men know how to subjugate with maximum speed and minimum bloodshed. But a generation or more later, when the spread of libertarian and other ideas produce changes that are all the more rapid because so long delayed, the man with military experience and ideas is soon out of his depth.

The settlers' demand for the return of Sir Percy Girouard was treated with some trepidation by Bowring, the Acting Governor, and the Colonial Office. The resolution requesting "a man with special organising capacity and the prestige of past achievements" and that "Sir Percy Girouard be sent out as a Military Governor" was passed at a Nairobi meeting in January 1918. The ensuing petition, supposedly endorsed by a "large European and Indian mass meeting" (according to the European signatories!) was cabled to the Colonial Office on 5 February.

1. Norman Leys: Last Chance in Kenya (London, 1931), p. 166.

1918.² Bowring's scepticism of the motives underlying the request was revealed in his telegram to Long in the following month.³ He condemned the petition (for its implications rather than its actual wording) on three counts. The Acting Governor felt that "certain prominent local settlers who have long objected to a system of Crown Colony Government"⁴ had taken advantage of the patriotic feeling of the general public to add force to their demands. Secondly "their [the petitioners'] object of a change of system" by substituting a Colonial Office Governor with a Military one was a prime motive which, unfortunately, was strengthened by the peculiar conditions of the aftermath of war. Finally, once this change of system had come about, the agitators would implement (with the Governor's approval) "a policy of forced native labour... the removal of all restrictions on export from the United Kingdom to East Africa of machinery and appliances" and the "immigration of skilled European technical and artizan [sic] workmen for local industries". Bowring concluded that this was only his personal opinion and it might be that he was "mistaken and that organizers are solely actuated

2. Fosson, Deputy Governor, to Sec. of State, Tel., 5 Feb. 1918, C. O. 533/193. Petition signed by Belamere, Green, Wood, McLellan-Wilson and Hunter. Not surprisingly the Indian leaders objected to the petitioners' contention that the resolutions had Indian backing. The complaints of M. Pesai, Secretary of the Indian Association, are aired in Bowring to Sec. of State, Tel., 15 Feb. 1918., also in C. O. 533/193.

3. Bowring to Secretary of State, Tel., 6 Feb. 1918, C. O. 533/193.

4. Long's marginal comment is "esp. Lord Belamere?"

by genuine motives of patriotism and a desire to help further in the war". Long, however, felt that "this, at all events, is highly improbable".⁵

W. C. Bottomley, a prominent official in the East African Department, wrote a rather lengthy memorandum to Sir George Riddes, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, concerning the petition.⁶ He did not endorse Girouard's re-appointment for there was "nothing in his record to shew that his efforts would be directed to the permanent welfare of the country rather than the expediency of the moment and his own popularity". More importantly, Bottomley's discourse on the true course of Kenya policy was a striking indictment of what had gone before:

The demand that the Protectorate should be out of the ordinary colonial system (which is what the petition amounts to) is a part of a general feeling of impatience of Downing Street control which has grown up in this country in the last few years. The settlers are largely from South Africa or are men of position in this country who find themselves cramped by the limitations of administration in a black man's country. They have been anxious in the past not only to obtain self government or as a first step a system of representative government which would lead at an early stage to the grant of responsible government, but also to secure decisions in such matters as land and labour which would benefit their own interests, irrespective of those of the future European community of the country and irrespective also of the claims of the native population.

Bottomley was willing to concede the nomination of two unofficials to the Executive Council but postponed a decision on elective representation to the Legislative Council. "There is

5. Long's minute, n.d., on Bowring to Sec. of State, Tel. C. Feb. 1918, C. O. 533/193.

6. Memor., Bottomley to Riddes, 16 Feb. 1918, Ibid.

a danger" he remarked "lest the emergencies of wartime should be made the ground for hasty decisions" and added "if we give way to the unofficials now we should find that we had surrendered native interests to them for all time". The Protectorate, in the opinion of this high ranking civil servant, was decidedly a "black man's country" and the Europeans could not be trusted to look after native interests. It is interesting to note that Bottomley was still the chief official in the East African Department at the time of the Devonshire Declaration.

The demand for an autocratic Governor seemed to be an illogical step after the furor for elective representation to the Legislative Council. It was, however, merely a change of tactics by the activists. The elective principle had, sure enough, been acceded to by Donar Law in October 1916 but eighteen months had elapsed since that concession. When it appeared that the new Secretary of State, Long, was delaying the implementation of such a policy the leading settlers resorted to the request for Sir Percy Girouard. The latest demand was an alternative to elective representation not complementary to it. The step was thus not as illogical as it first seemed.

The appointment as Governor of Major-General Sir Edward Northey in May 1918 was in one way a concession, although not a deliberate one, to the European agitators. He was after all

7. Bowring admitted that it was "somewhat illogical" but attributed it to the "peculiar conditions which prevail here and make it comparatively easy for unscrupulous individuals to manipulate the political situation to their own advantage". Bowring to Sec. of State, 11 Mar. 1918, C. O. 533/194.

8. Refer below next paragraph.

a military man even if the Colonial Office saw fit not to endow him with dictatorial powers. In the realm of colonial administration Northey was a novice⁹ but as a soldier he had had a distinguished career. The Home Government had appointed him when he was still actively engaged in combat with the German army in Portuguese East Africa. It was not until the General von Lettow-Vorbeck was finally defeated that he was able to assume his post as Governor in February 1918. Only two years after Belfield, the last Governor of East Africa Protectorate, had retired.

In the circumstances the selection of Northey for his post in military techniques was a natural one. It was felt that such a man would be best suited to the task which had to make the uneasy transition from military to civil is doubtful whether the decision had been based on the petition of January 1918 even if Northey's appointment in some extent, meet the requirements of the agitators.

When the agitators campaigned for a military Governor it was ancillary to their demand for a Governor. Hence Northey's appointment was not greeted with much enthusiasm in the Protectorate. The Last African Standard referred to him as one of East Africa's "most successful commanders" but was more reserved in its value judgements of a man who was still an unknown quantity. Three years later, when Northey was an East African

⁹ D. McGreggor has remarked: "General Northey had had no experience in colonial civil administration - nor of Political Machines". See Kenya From Within, p. 317.

discussing the Indian question, the same newspaper would herald the Governor with the title "Our Ambassador".

Sir Edward Northey soon fell under the influence of the large landowner class of the Protectorate and when taking into account the Governor's personal history it is not hard to see why. Apart from his commendable career in the army¹² there were many other facets of his life likely to recommend him to European society in the East Africa Protectorate. Northey had lived most of his life in England (at the time of his appointment his residence was Woodcote House in Brom) and was "reputed to be a wealthy man". During one of his prolonged stays in South Africa he had married into Cape society (just as Girouard had done) two years before his participation in the South African war. This in itself was an impeccable reference for admission to the Nairobi Club of the white elite. Northey hailed from the same generation as the principal activists, only two years older than Deland and six years the senior of Crogan.

Mr. E. A. S. 4 July 1918

Northey served in the South African War, 1900-1902. He received the Queen's medal (5 clasps) and the Distinguished Service Medal (3 clasps). At the outbreak of the first World War he was Lieut. Col. in the King's Royal Rifles and took part in the retreat from Loos and in the Battles of Arras where he was twice wounded. From 1916 he was Commander of the Nyasa-Rhodesia Field Forces and was promoted to Major-General in January 1918. For details see E. A. S. 1 June 1918 and The Times, 7 and

June 1918

It was Moran's "telephone girl" speech¹⁴ delivered on Northey's arrival which left a deep impression on the new Governor. With no experience in colonial civil administration Northey was determined to prove himself in his new capacity. The fact that he could easily identify with both the aristocratic and South African sectors of the settlers facilitated his emergence as an arch-protagonist of European preponderance. Like Girouard he became an integral part of European politics in the colony. He was "above politics" in name only and rather than being a representative of the Colonial Office he became a defender of the settlers against it. The racial strife of the Northey regime owed as much to the Governor's participation¹⁵ as it did to the principal agitators.

There were three, not entirely distinct, factors which illustrate Northey's role in Kenya politics. Firstly there was the attempt at "government by agreement"¹⁵ which, as will be shown, ensured European political hegemony. Next there was the Governor's acquiescence with the economic demands of the large landowners which on more than one occasion entailed deceiving the Imperial Government. Finally Northey was one of the chief advocates of the militant anti-Indian stance, a pursuit which eventually led to his recall after having served only three and a half years of his five year term of office.

14. See above Chapter Two, p. 30.

15. A term coined by telegraph.

Two important concessions had been acceded to prior to Northey's inaugural Legislative Council address, namely elective representation and unofficial admission to the Executive Council.¹⁶ Milner had already consented to these in response to Bowring's pleas¹⁷ and Northey was no more than the carrier of good tidings; the man who came "with a lump of sugar in his pocket to reward the colonists for their good behaviour in the war".¹⁸ However, these virtually irreversible concessions determined Northey's line of policy is difficult to assess. His opening speech to the Legislative Council, which set the tone of his régime, seems to suggest that it was as much inherent, or rather predetermined, as it was the result of the elective concessions and the highly impressionable Convention meeting on 14 February. The fact that Northey chose to attend the Convention meeting¹⁹ before addressing the Legislative Council adds force to this argument. Northey's speech to the Council, however, left no doubt that he was determined to consolidate and extend the settlers' war time

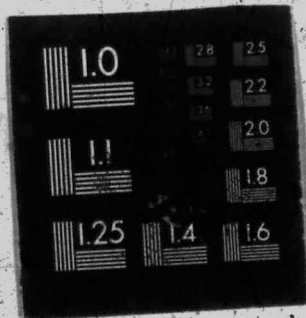
16. Milner had agreed to the implementation of elective representation on 10 Feb. 1919 (see Milner to Northey, Tel., 10 Feb. 1919, C. O. 533/206) and the cable arrived in the Protectorate on the twentieth - four days before Northey's address to the Legislative Council. The approval of the introduction of unofficial members on the Executive Council was sent to the Governor on 22 Feb. 1919; see Milner to Northey, Tel., 22 Feb. 1919, C. O. 533/206.

17. Kenya Leg. Co., 20 Nov. 1918. (Special Session on the cessation of hostilities) and Bowring to Sec. of State, 8 May 1918, C. O. 533/195.

18. E. Muxley, White Man's Country, vol. 2, p. 53.

19. F. A., 5.15 Feb. 1919 carries a report of the meeting.

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gains.²⁰

The Protectorate has taken over the ownership of millions of acres of good land and the guardianship of a large native population. Is it our duty to allow these natives to remain in uneducated idleness in their so called Reserves. I think not...the native must be taught, to realise that co-operation between the European and himself will be beneficial to both...I believe there is a great future in this country but only if a steady flow of natives out of the Reserves working willingly for a good wage, well housed and fed, under European control and supervision can be properly organised.

These comments on native policy while endorsing co-operation ran contrary to Belfield's Economic Commissioners' theory of interpenetration with its accompanying closure of the Reserves.²¹ Milner eventually heeded Northey's advice and concomitant with the grant of colony status in July 1920 was the division of the country into white settled areas under Resident Magistrates and native reserves under Native Commissioners.²²

The rest of Northey's speech was in complete sympathy with the unofficials' political demands. "The burning question" (there seemed to be so many in Kenya), according to the Governor, was the settlers' place in government. "The time has come" he remarked "when the unofficial members of the Legislative Council should be elected" to "assist the Government

20. Kenya Leg. Co., 24 Feb. 1919.

21. Northey to Milner, 31 Oct. 1919; C. O. 533/214. Northey remarked: "Native policy in regard to land tenure must not be rushed and...no tentative measures of interpenetration without precise enquiry should be tolerated. I am therefore opposed to the Commissioners' recommendations for the immediate abandonment of the principle of native reserves".

22. The Times 9 July 1920.

on questions in which Arabs and Indians are interested" and that, further, it was only necessary that "one or more representatives of these communities should be nominated" and not elected. Northey believed that:

British European preponderance in the Government is essential. The contention put forward by prominent Indians that they should be given equal representation in the Government or Municipal Councils is untenable. ...With regard to immigration I am of the opinion that we should educate the African native so that he will gradually replace the lower classes of Indian immigrants.

The Governor's concluding remarks were a glowing tribute to the "British European preponderance" already in existence:

The Convention of Associations seems to be your most representative body and I shall hope to be invited to attend its future meetings with any Heads of Departments or others desired, to advise and discuss, hear and put forward reasonable views. We don't want two Parliaments; but the Convention can help the Government and the Government can help the Convention.

Northey's reference to the Convention as being "your most representative body" was a strange one considering the Council was composed of a minority of unofficials.²³ There is no doubt that the Governor's speech was directed primarily at the unofficials; the remarks were made for the activists' benefit not for the officials'. It was for the unofficial politicians' benefit also that Northey set in process the gradual erosion of the official majority by narrowing the distinction between the two political cliques. Before discussing that let us first take a look at the "lumps of sugar".

Milner followed up his concession of the elective

23. I owe this point to McGregor Ross: Kenya, p. 173.

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principle with a despatch²⁴ a month later which emphasised that "elective representation must be confined to the European community" for the time being whereas "the interests of the Asiatics and natives must for an indefinite time to come be secured by nominated representation on the Legislative Council". The Secretary of State suggested that the Council should consist of 7 elected Europeans, 2 nominated Indians and 11 officials. The Legislative Council Ordinance, when finally given Milner's sanction in the July, was slightly different from the Act originally contemplated. The first reading of the Bill²⁵ cut the Asiatic nominees from 2 to 1 and increased European representation first to 10 and then 11 members. Bottomley was wary of this move²⁶ but Milner agreed to the increase provided that the Asiatic nominations were brought up to 2 again, as initially intended. Other salient points of the Bill were the introduction of British male suffrage (amended on 8 April to include women) and provisions for triennial elections. Inability to read, write and speak English was a disqualification for election. An amendment to extend the franchise to non-Europeans possessing certain educational qualifications, in this case approved University standing, was thrown out by thirteen votes to

24. Milner to Northey, 17 Mar. 1919, C. O. 533/206.

25. Kenya, Leg. Co., 7 and 8 Apr. 1919.

26. Bottomley to Fiddes, 24 Apr. 1919, memorandum pertaining to Northey to Secretary of State, Tel., 17 Apr. 1919, C. O. 533/209.

two. 27

The Legislative Council Bill even in its original form was a tremendous blow to Indian aspirations; its enactment, with four extra European seats and denial of Indian enfranchisement, was far more devastating. Coming as it did practically simultaneously with the settler infiltration into the policy making body (the first appointments to the Executive Council were made on 29 April 1919) it seemed that the white politicians might now sit contentedly on their laurels for awhile. Delamere, at least, continued to press for greater political control.

The first Legislative Council meeting of elected members²⁸ was a landmark in more ways than one. Delamere resigned, fed up with having to debate "ineffective resolutions" while the official majority and the Secretary of State's veto blocked the way. It was not until August 1921 that the settler spokesman returned to the fold. Meanwhile the Governor was doing his best to eradicate those "ineffective resolutions": One way of realising this was allowing officials a free vote, in itself meaningless unless the officials were of the same vested interest group as the settlers themselves. Northey, however, had already made progress in his efforts to allow officials some stake in the economic life of the Protectorate. He took his cue from a Convention resolution adopted in January 1919

27. W. McGregor Ross: Kenya p.360 and Kenya Leg. Co. 8 April 1919.

28. Ibid. 3 May 1920

advocating "a reversal of the present Government policy of debarring its officials from holding pecuniary interests in the country". The Governor wrote to Milner explaining that the "small but enterprising and progressive European community in East Africa" had "unfortunately conceived the idea that Government officials as a class are not only apathetic but actively opposed to the development of the country". Northey adjudged this to be "totally erroneous, but some colour is lent to it by the fact that the official is precluded from having any stake in the land of his adoption".²⁹ The Secretary of State concurred with the proposal to give the official such a stake although he had some reservations; it would be best if he [Milner] were kept informed of developments.³⁰ In assenting Milner had acquiesced in the first stage of Northey's campaign to rid the Government of an effective official majority. The next stage was the allowance of the free vote or voting according to conscience.

Shortly after the grant of colony status Northey set about increasing the power of the Legislative Council at the expense of the Secretary of State. On 12 June 1920 a resolution was passed during a General Committee meeting of the Legislature giving Council "power of the purse". The motion was adopted by an overwhelming 23 votes to 2 with practically unanimous concurrence of the officials.³¹ Milner's reaction was one of

29. Northey to Milner, 12 May 1919, C. O. 533/208.

30. Milner to Northey, Tel., 17 July 1919, C. O. 533/208.

31. Northey to Milner, 21 July 1920, C. O. 533/234.

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disgust and he reproached the Governor in no uncertain terms:

The recent changes in the constitution of the country do not give it any measure of responsible Government and the control, executive and financial, rests, as hitherto, with the Governor and the Secretary of State who cannot divest themselves of the responsibility for that control... To ensure that the control is in fact exercised by the executive government it is essential that the majority of official members should be under no misunderstanding as to their duty to support the views and proposals of the Government not only where important questions of principle are involved but also in minor matters where, for example, the Govr. or the Secretary of State considers the certain expenditure is necessary.

Although Milner reiterated that he did not condone Government instruction of the official vote which "could not fail to be resented by the unofficial members" he left no doubt that the official vote was much freer than it should have been.

Milner's words must have fallen upon deaf ears; it was left to his successor, Churchill, to issue a stronger reprimand.³³ It is ironic that Churchill's clamp-down was a result of the Governor's own ineptitude. In January 1922 Northey deliberately promulgated a circular based on a despatch from the Home Government marked "Confidential". The circular referred to Churchill's condemnation of members on the Government side voting according to conscience on the Kenyan Legislature.³⁴ But Northey had misinterpreted the despatch which was forwarded in the September of the previous year to Coryndon in Uganda in response to a request for "guidance as to the

32. Milner to Northey, Secret, 28 Sept. 1920, C. O. 533/234.

33. Churchill to Northey, Conf., 7 Apr. 1922, C. O. 533/275.

34. The circular is enclosed in Bowring to Churchill, 24 Jan. 1922, Ibid.

duties of official members".³⁵ A copy was sent to Northey as an afterthought and the Governor subsequently published it and omitted the section which allowed "a reasonable latitude when the interests of the public service do not forbid any expression of a diversity of views among its members".³⁶

Essentially the despatch was sent to Uganda not Kenya; it did allow "reasonable latitude" in voting, which Northey chose to ignore; and it should never have been promulgated anyway. The ensuing press reaction was inflammatory. The Leader of British East Africa (18 Feb. 1922) supported Northey in his efforts to end the "steam roller" and called upon the unofficials to resign "and so offer the whole world a unique protest against autocratic Government methods without parallel under the British Flag". The Daily Leader (14 Feb. 1922) referred to Churchill's ultimatum as "the casting down of the gauntlet" while the Daily Mail (14 Mar. 1922) carried the headline: "Vote for Government - Or Go".³⁷

Although the Colonial Office personnel were incensed at Northey's misdemeanour the circular was allowed to stand, probably on Bottomley's advice. His final comment on the affair³⁸ provided good reason for C. O. inaction:

35. Bottomley's memo. to Read, 22 Feb. 1922 on Bowring to Churchill, 24 Jan. 1922, C. O. 533/275.

36. Batterbee's minute, 15 Mar. 1922 on Bowring to Churchill, 24 Jan. 1922, C. O. 533/275.

37. These newspaper clippings are attached to the file C. O. 533/275 but were not enclosures in Bowring's letter.

38. Bottomley's minute of 29 Mar. 1922 on Bowring to Churchill, 24 Jan. 1922, Ibid.

Lord Delamere had made it clear that the unofficial members regarded themselves as a permanent opposition and I think that is their record - never constructive, always destructive. A greater solidarity on the Government side will not mean greater solidarity on the other side, or if it does it will tend to the elimination of the local and class differences which exist among the European community and so create a genuine public opinion which does not exist at present.

At all events, Northey's publication of the circular, whether he had genuinely misinterpreted the original despatch or not, was a provocative action. His defence of the free official vote was so dogmatic that the merest hint of reversal of policy inspired him to the indiscretions of January 1922. In the end the latitude that the Governor gave to his officials was quashed by his own miscalculation.

One of the facets of politics - white politics that is - under Northey was "government by agreement". In the narrowest sense this meant Government consultation of Elected Members before the introduction of Bills thus enabling the unofficials to assess the legislation without undue haste.³⁹ This consultation was rendered all the more easy from 1920 onwards because the Elected Members were ex-officio members of the Convention and as much responsible to that body as they were to the Legislative Council.⁴⁰ Hence consultation entailed the attendance at Convention meetings by Northey and various Heads of Departments. "Government by agreement" may not only be interpreted as the assimilation of unofficials in the

39. Bennett's view in Kenya, p. 48.

40. M. Dilley: British Policy, p. 41.

Government controlled Legislative Council, but as the assimilation of officials in the settler dominated Convention. The officials' pecuniary interest in the colony and the free vote contributed towards narrowing the divisions, both economic and political, between the two classes. Indeed it was Northey who wanted them molded into one class of interests as the perfect consensus.

Unofficial membership on the Executive Council facilitated the co-operation in government. The complaint that the "door leading to the Executive side of the Government was shut, barred and bolted" was heard in the Protectorate long before Northey's accession. The Secretary of State approved the nomination of two unofficials to serve on the Executive Council in February 1919 and this was a grant without precedent in constitutional history. The fact that two settlers who were often outspoken opponents of Government in the Legislature should be admitted into the inner sanctum of the decision making body was a "peculiarity...confined to the Constitution of Kenya".⁴²

The second major tenet of Northey's policy was economic support of the white community, more especially the large landowners. This was inextricably linked with European political domination.

The endeavours of the prominent settlers to attract more

41. W. C. Hunter (Major Grogan's brother-in-law) in Kenya Leg. Co., 18 Feb. 1918, p. 10

42. Lord Hailey: An African Survey, p. 166. See also above Chapter Two, p. 38.

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European immigrants were part of a political manoeuvre. Numerical strength would give force to the argument that Europeans alone were befitted to dominate the political arena and eventually secure self-government. The ex-soldier settlers were seduced by the offer of cheap land which was enough incentive to the demobilised who found that a "land fit for heroes" was an empty political catchphrase. The scheme of 1922, allowing retired civil servants in the Colony to buy land in commutation of pensions, assisted in the "general colonising powers"⁴³ of the European population. Yet the prospects of cheap land in a tax haven⁴⁴ had their drawbacks. They were as much damaging to the Kenyan economy as they were advantageous to white politics. The desperate position of the soldier settlers and the acute shortage of native labour has been discussed in a previous Chapter.⁴⁵ Northey's ad hoc land policy, determined as it was by political considerations, was highly detrimental to the attainment of economic development in the Colony. The following analysis focuses on this haphazard policy, if it may be deemed a policy, and highlights the Governor's disregard of native rights, his support of the land magnates, and his lack of communication with Whitehall.

Northey had expressed dismay, early in 1919, that the

43. According to Bowring in his letter to Northey, 8 June 1922, enclosure in C. O. 533/282.

44. The activists managed to gain approval of the abolition of the income tax in 1922; see Northey to Churchill, Tel., 11 May 1922 and Churchill's reply, 16 May 1922, C. O. 533/277.

45. See above; Chapter Two, pp. 42-44.

Native Reserves were "not clearly defined"; he proposed to "settle that definitely".⁴⁶ Milner's division of the colony into separate administrative areas in 1920 was not a comprehensive settlement; it was not until 1926 that the size and boundaries of the five Native Reserves⁴⁷ were fixed. There was still no legal restriction on alienation apart from the necessary consent of the Secretary of State. The Ormsby-Gore Commission of 1924-25 reported that "for various reasons we are doubtful whether in the past this [the Secretary of State's consent] has provided adequate security".⁴⁸ Northey's attempts to delineate the Reserves were negligible; the pursuit of such a policy was necessarily incompatible with the aim of "British European preponderance". The latter policy inevitably prevailed and the Governor was aided, just as Girouard had been, by the Secretary of State's worthless veto.

Some of the soldier settlers had set up their homes in the extreme western part of the country in Trans Nzoia on the Uasin Gishu Plateau. Despite the difficult straits they found themselves in, mainly due to the inaccessibility of their farms,⁴⁹ Northey began to alienate more land for their "benefit", this time even further west in Nandi country, bordering the north-east section of Lake Victoria. The trouble was that the Governor

46. Kenya Leg. Co., 24 Feb. 1919, p. 2.

47. These were established in 1906 and known as Kikuyu, Masai, Ulú, Kikumbuli and Kitui.

48. Report of the East Africa (Ormsby-Gore) Commission, Cmd. 2387, (1925) p. 29.

49. The Times, 21 and 22 Aug. 1922.

did not inform the Colonial Office until after the land was alienated. Batterbee of the East African Department condemned the laxity of the manner of encroachment and minuted:

This is not the way to do things...it is necessary that we should impress on the need for more care in these matters....it would now seem clear that the original proposals did not make sufficient allowance for the requirements of the Nandi.⁵⁰

Churchill's reproval was, fortunately for Northey, suitably restrained:

It must be understood that once the boundaries have been laid down they can only be modified in most exceptional circumstances and after previous consultation with the Secretary of State whose approval must be given before any steps whatever are taken in the matter.⁵¹

Eliot and Girouard had been forced to renounce their official duties on the delicate question of land alienation and Northey only escaped because the affair was deftly kept out of the limelight. It was only after the Governor left the Colony in August 1922 that the case was publicised,⁵² and then, from the point of view of his career, it did not really much matter.

Early in 1921, A. C. Hoey, a farmer from Uasin Gishu, proposed in the Legislative Council that alienation of land of a thousand acres or more should require the consent of the Council as well as that of the Secretary of State.⁵³ It was

50. Minute by Batterbee, 20 Dec. 1921, on Northey to Churchill, 18 Nov. 1921, C. O. 533/265.

51. Churchill to Northey, 5 Jan. 1922, 533/265.

52. Report of the East Africa (Ormsby-Gore) Commission, Cmd. 2387, (1925), p. 29.

53. Kenya Leg. Co., 21 Jan. 1921, pp. 46-48.

felt by most members that, since the colony was now self-sufficient, the Legislature should assume some responsibility for the country's assets. Both Northey and McGregor Ross, in a rare moment of consensus, thought that the Executive branch of Government was well fitted to deal with such things. A Land Board was proposed as an alternative but Captain Hoey objected to this on the grounds that the whole exercise was an attempt to increase the power of the Legislative Council not to delegate it to a specialist committee. The final motion, which received unanimous consent, was that the Land Tenure Commission (appointed by Northey in August 1920) "shall consider the desirability of amending the Crown Lands Ordinance with reference to the alienation of Crown Lands".⁵⁴ Hoey's proposal was in effect pre-empted but the Captain, being a member of the Land Tenure Commission, probably felt he could continue his campaign within the delegated body. The subsequent recommendations of the Commission went much further than the honourable Member's original intentions. The Commissioners advocated the institution of a Native Land Trust which:

should have the power to grant leases for land in Reserves to non-natives without reference to the Secretary of State, the governing principle of such alienation being direct benefit to the native and the treatment of native produce.⁵⁵

The Land Tenure Commission, as will be explained, turned out to be the least significant of the three nominated Commissions

54. Ibid., p. 50.

55. Report of the Land Tenure Commission, (March, 1922), p. 2., enclosure in Coryndon to Devonshire, Conf., 2 Jan. 1923, C. O. 533/292.

which reported during Northey's tenure of office.⁵⁶ Although its recommendations were a reflection of the self interest of its personnel it did not venture any political philosophy like its predecessor nor did it advocate widespread economic reform like the Economic and Financial Committee. The main objective of the Land Tenure Commission was the alienation of land without Whitehall sanction. Northey apparently did not place too much value on this offshoot body for he never informed the Colonial Office that he had appointed it in the first place. Then he completely forgot to forward its recommendations; it was left to Coryndon to send the Report to the Home Government. Batterbee remarked:

It is extraordinary the late Govr. should have appointed a Commission with such wide terms of reference without at least informing the S. of S. It is equally extraordinary that a copy of the Report which I note was signed last March should not have been sent home till

56. The three were: (i) Belfield's Economic Commission appointed in April 1917, final report in June 1919. The Legislative Councillors on the Commission were W. C. Hunter, T. A. Wood, Baron Delamere, L. Powys Cobb and P. H. Clarke of whom Wood and Delamere were Executive Councillors as from 19 April 1919. E. S. Grogan also took part.

(ii) The Land Tenure Commission appointed in August 1920; final report in March 1922. The Legislative Councillors were A. C. Hoey, R. B. Cole and W. Mclellan-Wilson (also Executive Councillor from 18 Nov. 1919). The other member was Brig. S. H. Charrington.

(iii) Bowring's Economic and Financial Committee appointed in March 1922 and reported on a day-to-day basis in the same manner as the War Council. This 'Geddes' Committee was attended by Delamere and Grogan, and various interchanging personnel from the European trading community. The other three members were two officials and Mr. Shams-Ud-Deen, the Indian member on the Legislative Council. For the sake of simplicity I shall refer to this body as a Commission although nominally it was a Committee.

the following January.⁵⁷

The other two Commissions shared a common trait in that they were composed of the same interest group but were distinct in character in other respects. The calumnious report of Belfield's Economic Commission was much more of a propaganda sheet. Although Northey can in no way be held responsible for its composition or findings he did fail to pronounce against the malicious contents of the Final Report. It was left to Milner in the Upper House to denounce its racialism as "purely deplorable".⁵⁸ The Economic and Financial Committee chaired by Rowring never read the Report of its terms of reference. Appointed in March 1922 the Committee endeavoured to find some answers to the chronic depression which had hit the economy. Northey's decision to appoint prominent European traders to this 'Ceddes' Committee was partly motivated by a desire for expert advice. Yet these experts were not free from bias; they were not outsiders with objective authority. Not surprisingly the Committee's proposals elucidated solutions which would be far more beneficial to the white farmers and traders than to any other section of the community. The income tax was abolished, high tariffs were placed on wheat and flour (100% and 50% respectively) and, to make up for the loss of revenue, retrenchment in the public services was recommended. The Committee also

57. Minute by Batterbee (n. d.) on Coryndon to Devonshire, 2 Jan. 1923, enclosing the Report of the Land Tenure Commission (March 1922), C. O. 533/292.

58. Hansard, 5th series, v. 41, c. 161, Lords, 14 July 1920.

took advantage of its position in forcing the early retirement of McGregor Ross, Director of Public Works. Northey himself concurred with the Committee; in a despatch to Churchill the Governor, while praising McGregor Ross' debating ability, confided that he had "so powerful a command of invective that he rubs everyone the wrong way...it will be better for him to retire, compulsorily or voluntarily".⁵⁹ Ross' departure illustrates Northey's concern to purge the government of influence which might have upset the smooth working of settler hegemony.

Bowring's Committee exemplified the vested interests of the landowners and traders of British descent. The Committee members reported on a day-to-day basis and their recommendations were acted upon almost immediately, rather like the War Council procedure. The power afforded to the Commissioners was without precedent under peace time conditions. The East African Standard thought that the body was "effecting a revolution by due course of law in giving the substance if not the name of unofficial control of public affairs".⁶⁰ The term "unofficial" as used by the E. A. S. reporter is technically a misnomer, for the Committee was composed of some settlers who were not democratically elected representatives of their community. Major Grogan was a prime example of an activist

59. Northey to Churchill, Conf., 22 July 1922, C. O. 533/280. Ross decided to retire rather than take a 25% cut in salary. See his book Kenya, Chapter XV: "The Miscarriage of the Public Works Pogrom", pp. 256-76, for further information.

60. E. A. S. 16 June 1922

working completely outside the Legislative Council and yet his large timber holdings and friendship with Delamere ensured his political eminence. On the dual basis of wealth and heredity he was as much an "unofficial" as McLellan-Wilson or Delamere. Hence in Kenya it was pointless to distinguish between elected representatives and wealthy men. Northey relied on such men to dictate local policy partly as a result of his own inability to comprehend the intricacies of finance⁶¹ and partly due to the absence of any permanent administrative network to cope with such responsibilities.

A consequence of the large landowning class having such political and economic pre-eminence was Northey's reluctance to halt land speculation and dummying. He did send a Land Tax Ordinance home for approval in 1920 but it was toothless. The Governor himself described it as "a law penalizing non-development" which would "stimulate either the development by their present proprietors of large areas of idle land or the transfer of such areas to more enterprising owners".⁶² Officials at the C. O. did not need a magnifying glass to see that it was far from "a law penalizing non-development", since it only pertained to the small farmer who had carried out improvements to the value of 25% or less on the unimproved value of land. A landowner who held four estates could still let three remain

61. See Northey to Amey, 5 Apr. 1919, C. O. 533/208 and Bottomley's minute, 17 Jun. 1919 thereon. Northey sent Grogan to London to discuss the currency question and Bottomley remarked "the Govr. had admitted that he did not understand it and left it to Major Grogan".

62. Northey to Milner, 21 Sept. 1920, C. O. 533/236.

idle with impunity. Milner disallowed the Ordinance on the grounds that it was "open to serious objection".⁶³ Northey never pursued the matter further.

The Governor's concurrence with the abolition of the income tax, his lack of land legislation and non-interference in respect of the cut in native wages in 1921 because "it was purely a matter between employer and employee"⁶⁴ were all actions (or inactions) in deference to the activists. By March 1922 the settlers were "riding...with the tide"⁶⁵ until Churchill shook them out of their complacency. Northey's indiscretions were piling up. The fait accompli over the Nandi land alienation in late 1921, the promulgation of the confidential despatch ending the official free vote in January 1922, concurrence with the restrictive tariffs of Bowring's Finance Committee⁶⁶ and failure to settle the Indian crisis were all valid objections to Northey's continuation in office. Churchill recalled Northey in June 1922 because "circumstances which require the services of a Military Governor no longer obtain" and peace conditions necessitated a "Govr. well versed in purely civil administration".⁶⁷ This was, of course, Churchill's expressed reason to Northey; the overriding motive behind the

63. Milner to Northey, Tel., 4 Nov. 1920, C. O. 533/236.

64. Northey to Churchill, 1 Oct. 1921, C. O. 533/264.

65. Bennett, Kenya, p. 49.

66. Churchill cut the flour and wheat duties to 30% in June 1922.

67. Churchill to Northey, 29 June 1922, C. O. 533/288.

Governor's recall was the failure, on Churchill's part as well as Northey's, to answer the Indian question. Compared to this all other matters were subsidiary.

The early months of 1919 were ominously foreboding for Indians in Kenya. In January, Milner had replaced Long, "the country squire in politics",⁶⁸ at the Colonial Office and in February, General Northey was already dismissing Indian claims for equal rights as "untenable".⁶⁹

Lord Milner had neglected Indian interests when High Commissioner in South Africa (1897-1905) and as a result earned Indian disfavour in both Africa and India.⁷⁰ Milner's representative in Kenya proved to be diligent and unswerving in his pro-European attitude as the Secretary of State himself. The Indians must have felt as if they were fighting a useless battle in their endeavours for equal rights.

Northey in fact proved to be more militant than Milner in resisting Asian claims but this was merely a reflection of their respective positions in the hierarchy of government. The Colonial Secretary had to consider the India Office and that is why he was unwilling to submit to Northey's demand

68. G. L. Nowat: Britain between the Wars 1918-1940 (London, 1955) p. 13.

69. Kenya Leg. Co., 24 Feb. 1919, p. 3.

70. R. Gregory: India, p. 185.

that "each Colony or Protectorate should be allowed to control composition of its own population by means of restriction of immigration".⁷¹ Milner's reluctance to restrict immigration of Indians stemmed from his concern with Government of India representations. It was, however, the only major concession (although Milner was not reversing anything on the Statute book) that the Secretary of State was willing to accede to the Indians. British European preponderance in Government, racial segregation in both residential and commercial areas and European exclusive land tenure in the Highlands were all definite policies as from May 1920.⁷² Such policies, however, relied on Milner's continuation in office.

In February 1921, Churchill moved from the War Office to the Colonial Office upon Milner's unexpected resignation. The event was as ominous for the Europeans as Milner's accession had been for the Indians. Would the libertarian who wrote My African Journey in 1908 now seek a détente with the India Office? Would Montagu, Secretary of State for India, press for an equitable settlement now that Winston Churchill was at the C.O.? The events of the next year confirmed the Kenyan activists' worst fears that the advent of Churchillian politics was an ill-omen.

From March 1921 until July, a specially appointed House

71. Northey to Sec. of St., Tel., 25 Jun. 1919 C.O.533/211 and minutes by Bottomley 26 Jun. 1919 and Fiddes 30 Jun. 1919 thereon showing concern for placating the India Office.

72. Milner to O.A.G., 21 May 1920, C.O.533/245 and Hansard, 5th series, v. 41, c. 118-168, Lords, 14 July 1920.

of Commons Standing Joint Committee - including Josiah Wedgwood and Ormsby-Gore - probed into Indian affairs in general. In July the Committee accepted a motion proposed by the former Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford, "that there is no justification for assigning to Indians in Kenya a status in any way inferior to that of any other class of His Majesty's subjects".⁷³ The Imperial Conference which met in the summer months also took up the problems of Indians throughout the Empire. Churchill himself chaired a sub-committee which acknowledged, in spite of protestations from General Smuts, "an incongruity between the position of India as an equal member of the British Empire and the existence of disabilities upon British Indians lawfully domiciled in some other parts of the Empire".⁷⁴ Meanwhile, behind closed doors, the Under-Secretary of State for India, Lord Lytton, and Churchill's Under-Secretary, E. F. Wood, were searching for a compromise. A departure from Milnerism seemed imminent.

Northey, like the settlers, was becoming increasingly worried about Churchill's plans for the Colony. In April the Governor cabled home: "We must have a policy clearly laid down and we must know in what respect we are to follow or vary instructions contained in Lord Milner's despatch of May

73. Third Report by the Standing Joint Committee on Indian Affairs (London, 1921) H. C. 177, pp. 3-4, quoted by Gregory: India, p. 199.

74. Conference of Prime Ministers and Representatives of U.K., the Dominions and India Held in June, July and August 1921. Summary of Proceedings and Documents, Cd. 1737, (1921) p. 8., quoted by Gregory: India, p. 200.

21st".⁷⁵ Sensing that a policy in favour of the Indians was about to be imposed from above, the Governor did not wait for a reply. He quickly convened a conference between the Indians and Europeans for the 3, 4, and 6 May⁷⁶ in the hope of obtaining grass roots agreement. It proved abortive. The Indians demanded equality and the Europeans insisted that this would mean ultimate Asian domination. The now hackneyed defence of the European trusteeship of the African was supplemented by a new argument that Indian equality on the Legislative Council would create a preponderating majority of commercial representatives in what was a predominately agricultural country. Out of the melée of dogmatic assertions only one point of agreement was reached - the dropping of commercial segregation from the European minimum demands.

Northey informed the Colonial Office of the fruitless negotiations and added his own comments on the affair:

The Indian question as a whole can be summed up in one word, predominance, to which all other issues now under discussion are in a manner subsidiary....They [the Indians] demand a share in the government of the country and they look on the embodiment of Kenya in the Indian Empire as their ultimate goal....I am convinced that their demands must be resisted to the uttermost where any suspicion of equality in the Government would be implied by conceding them.⁷⁷

Churchill, however, had already sent Northey instructions to drop residential as well as commercial segregation since "the

75. Northey to Churchill, Tel., 23 Apr. 1921, C. O. 533/256 referring to Milner's despatch to the Officer Administering the Government, 21 May 1920, C. O. 533/245.

76. See above Chapter Two, p. 51.

77. Northey to Churchill, 14 May 1921, C. O. 533/259.

principle of race segregation" was "unnecessarily wounding to Indian sentiment". Churchill agreed at the same time to adhere to the Elvin pledge in respect of the Highlands.⁷⁸

The settler reaction was hardening. The Convention's "irreducible minimum" formulated in June now insisted upon residential and commercial segregation. A Vigilance Committee was formed "to defeat the avowed intentions of the Government of India and to persuade the Colonial Office to reverse its policy".⁷⁹ Northey cabled Churchill to reaffirm his allegiance to the white colonists. If certain policies were going to be imposed he would "do his best loyally to carry them out" but anticipated "the gravest situation will certainly arise from the attitude of the European population if the proposed [sic] entire reversal of long established policy is carried into effect". He warned Churchill that the Indian policy might not well stop at Kenya - South Africa and even Australia were affected, "for the Indian Government having got their way in a small colony are sure to try and push it on to the larger dominions". The Governor ended with a request that his views be represented at the Imperial Conference "asking in particular for the opinion of General Smuts".⁸⁰ Churchill took heed and summoned Northey to return to England to discuss the question. The Governor set sail on 4 July 1921.

78. Churchill to Northey, Pers. and Secr., 12 May 1921, C. O. 533/259.

79. Huxley: White Man's, vol. 2, p. 126.

80. Northey to Churchill, Tel., Pers. and Secr., 9 June 1921, C. O. 533/260.

On the 15 August, Churchill sent a memorandum to Northey entitled "Indian Policy in Kenya". The basic points therein were the results of consultation between the India and Colonial Office; they were later known as the Montagu-Churchill proposals.⁸¹ The agreement was a precursor of the Wood-Inter-top proposals sent out to Coryndon a year later and provided for a common electoral roll enfranchising approximately 10% of the Indian population, a guarantee of at least three Indian seats on the Legislative Council, no restrictions on immigration and no segregation but European exclusive use of the Highlands. Northey was sceptical that such an agreement could be imperiously pushed onto Kenya Europeans and he managed to persuade Churchill that local agreement was still essential.⁸²

The Governor returned to the colony and, for fear of stirring up agitation, made light of his London visit. Much of his time at home, he told the Legislative Council, had been spent discussing the Colony's economic crisis. Almost as an afterthought he stated that "it cannot be expected that a question of such importance as this Indian policy... can be settled out of hand or in a hurry."⁸³

Northey's attempts to obtain a compromise proved fruitless: "I cannot persuade them [the Europeans] to entertain the idea of any form of common franchise; that is the rock

81. Churchill to Northey, 26 Aug. 1921 (I.O. Immigration - Oct. 1922, Pros. 15, part A) quoted by Mangat: A History p. 125.

82. Huxley: White Man's, v. 2, p. 127.

83. Kenya Leg. Co., 10 Oct. 1921, pp. 41/42.

they split on".⁸⁴ Churchill, well aware of the threats of European resistance if he carried out the Montagu-Churchill reforms,⁸⁵ was in an unenviable predicament. The futility of driving headlong into the same brick wall was only too apparent. Imposition of a liberal Indian policy seemed impossible. Churchill decided to circumvent the brick wall - he reverted to Milnerism.

On the 27 January 1922 Churchill tested the political temperature by delivering his East Africa Dinner speech.⁸⁶ At a stroke he betrayed the rapprochement between the India Office and the Colonial Office, of 1921. The Secretary of State now viewed Kenya as "a characteristically and distinctively British Colony looking forward in the full fruition of time to complete responsible Self-Government".⁸⁷ The rest of the speech was a virtual denial of equal citizenship for Indians. Churchill not only conformed to Milner's policy directives but extended it to include restriction of Indian immigration. Montagu resigned in protest.

The upshot of Churchill's speech was renewed pressure to force the Indian claims, not only from the Government of India but from the Anti-Slavery Society and the Opposition benches. On the 17 February he began to give way a little by affirming

84. Northey to Churchill, Conf., 14 Dec. 1921; Northey's underlining, C. O. 533/265.

85. Northey to Churchill, Tel., 29 Nov. 1921, C. O. 533/265.

86. See above Chapter Two, pp. 53-54.

87. Memorandum for Presentation to the Cabinet, 28 Jan. 1922, unsigned, in C. O. 533/303. Probably prepared by Head.

to an Indian delegation his regret that the speech should have been taken as "his final decisions on the General question of policy".⁸⁸ By March 1922 Churchill was learning that it was impossible to drive around one Kenyan brick wall without crashing into another. The Thuku riot "which indicated that continued emphasis on European interests would augment African dissatisfaction"⁸⁹ served as another weapon for the Colonial Secretary's Parliamentary critics. Montagu's resignation increased tension within the Cabinet. Something had to be done.

Major General Sir Edward Northey was asked to vacate his post on 29 June 1922.⁹⁰ Churchill had found it impossible to dictate a settlement from home but wanted to know how much of this was due to Northey's acquiescence with the activists' demands in Kenya. Elspeth Huxley had reason to believe that Northey's recall was solely motivated by his intransigence over the common roll. When the Governor was advised of the Montagu-Churchill proposals in 1921:

Northey absolutely refused to carry out the proposals. Had to take them back with him for leaders of both sides to see. Said he wd. resign before carrying them out: would never do so. Hence his dismissal. Churchill got Coryndon because A. Coryndon had said he wd. put through the common roll. B. Wanted to promote Sir G. Gucher to Uganda. When Coryndon got to Kenya he saw it was impossible.⁹¹

⁸⁸. H. J. Read, Asst. Under-Sec. of St., to Jeevanjee and Dolak, 17 Feb. 1922, C. O. 533/290.

⁸⁹. R. Gregory: India, p. 219.

⁹⁰. See above pp. 106-07.

⁹¹. "Elspeth Huxley Papers", (Ass. Afr. s782, Rhodes House Library, 4 boxes); Notes to White Man's Country (1935), Box 1/File 5, p. 151.

Northey left Kenya on the 26 August 1922 and three days later Sir Robert Coryndon, who had vacated his post as Governor of Uganda, arrived in Kisumu. On 1 September he was in Nairobi.

The fact that the Wood-Winterton proposals, the reincarnation of the Montagu-Churchill ones, were despatched to Coryndon within five days of his arrival bears out Fuxley's contention. Churchill's vacillations had underlined his own lack of political scruples; he wanted a solution to the Indian problem. It did not matter what the remedy for Kenya's ills was; any remedy as long as it was a remedy. Events were to prove that Northey or no Northey the Kenya dilemma was just as insoluble.

Coryndon not only inherited the Indian imbroglio but the seemingly omnipresent land and labour problems. Northey's response to these problems was understandable considering the lack of definite directives from the Colonial Office. In an attempt to pave the way for the ex-soldier settlers he had opened up the Nandi reserve. It was an effective move in accommodating the new settlers with speed. Its repercussion was a mild admonition from Churchill. Not so the Ainsworth circulars which filled the vision of the public eye and induced an humanitarian assault and the displeasure of Milner. Northey learned that to get things done it was necessary to keep things quiet.

The Governor had tried to build up a greater harmony in government but he had been balked, not only by Churchill's

instructions on the officials' free vote but by Delarue and the Reform Party. "Government by agreement" failed because the settlers' factious opposition to the Secretary of State's veto transcended the political scope of local Government which Northey was prepared to allow. The Governor was frustrated by Whitehall control but made no determined efforts to gain immediate self-government for the whites. "British European preponderance in Government" might have had an obvious connotation of future self-government but Northey never pronounced self-government as an aim. The Governor could have interpreted the grant of colony status in 1920 as a step towards that goal, but he refrained. The "chief result" of the grant, he said, was that the country was now "in a position to float a loan" for its development.⁹²

Despite the Governor's reliance on the unofficial clique and his anti-Indian stance, he did realise the limit on settler power. When the settlers demanded representation on the Imperial Conference in 1919, Northey insisted that they "grow up a bit"⁹³ first. When the unofficials voiced strong objections at Milner's rejection of the Land Tax Ordinance, Northey thought that "they [the settlers] should bear in mind that the people at Home might look at such matters with a larger aspect and greater experience than they had".⁹⁴

Hence Northey's adherence to "British European preponderance

92. The Times, 9 July 1920.

93. Northey to Milner, 14 Mar. 1919, C. O. 533/207.

94. Kenya Leg. Co., 20 Jan. 1921, p. 44.

in Government" was good but not good enough for the activists. They had shown in their demand for an autocratic Governor in 1918 the desire to rid Kenya of C. O. control, and wanted nothing short of that. Northey's line of policy, on the other hand, went too far for the Indian agitators and the Governor's efforts to secure local agreement were stunted as much by his own partiality as by European threats of force. However, it was Churchill's vacillations of policy which were chiefly responsible for the instability of the Kenyan situation. His favourable attitude towards Indians in 1921 raised their hopes in Kenya. His East Africa Dinner speech of 1922 dashed them again. Northey's recall offered new hope. No one knew what course the Indian affair would take and so the tension and anxiety caused by the chopping and changing produced a highly explosive situation. When Coryndon arrived he cabled a friend: "Have accepted Governorship of Kenya: no more peace".⁹⁵

⁹⁵ E. Huxley; White Man's Country, v. 2, p. 132.

CHAPTER FIVE

"SOUTH AFRICAN BORN": CORYNDON AND THE INDIAN QUESTION.

The Governor may be called without exaggeration, the settlers' friend.¹

Coryndon's long and varied African experience² as a pioneer and administrator was a strong influence in Churchill's decision to appoint him as Governor of Kenya. Robert Thorne Coryndon, himself the son of an early Kimberley pioneer, had spent many years in the service of the British South Africa Company and was once Cecil Rhodes' Private Secretary. It was his administration of Uganda, however, which recommended him for the job in Kenya. By pressing for a Legislative Council in Uganda Coryndon was responding to European demands for

1. B. A. S., Editorial, 24 Mar. 1923.

2. Born 1870, South Africa; 1889, member of Bechuanaland Border Police; 1890, one of Rhodes' "postles", or young pioneers, in the march to Mashonaland; 1893-96, B.S.A. representative in Matabeleland; 1896-97, Private Secretary to Rhodes; 1897-1907, B.S.A. representative in Bechuanaland and Chief Administrator of N.V. Rhodesia; 1907-16, Resident Commissioner of Swaziland; 1916-17, Resident Commissioner in Basutoland; 1917-22, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Uganda; 1922-25, Governor of Kenya. Died on 25 Feb. 1925.

political representation. When the grant was conceded in 1921 the Asian community objected to the fact that there were 2 European unofficials and only 1 Asian on the body (there were 5 officials) and thus proceeded to boycott the Council for the next five years. Indian animosity was not directed against Coryndon and the local Europeans but against the Secretary of State, Milner, for his affirmation of the Indian's inferior status.³ Alongside the Governor's support of the Ugandan Europeans was his active sponsorship of African cash-crop farming which indicated that he was not willing to sacrifice the native interest to the demands of the small white community. Hence Churchill placed his faith in a man who had not only achieved the reconciliation of European and African interests in Uganda but had, at the same time, prevented Indo-European discord. Perhaps the new Governor could do the same for Kenya.

Coryndon's experiments in Uganda must in no way be construed a precursor of his dual policy, a philosophy he advocated after the 1923 White Paper. Dual policy, the complementary development of non-native and native production, was inspired by the native paramountcy clause of the Devonshire Declaration. European economic development and African production were incompatible since the necessary prerequisites of the former were large scale land alienation, an adequate labour supply, and restricted competition, all of which obviated African agricultural development. Coryndon

3. A point made by R. C. Pratt in Vincent Harlow and E. M. Chilver (Eds): History of East Africa, p. 479.

had not supported complementary development in Uganda; he had originally ignored the rapid advance of African cotton cultivation and placed his faith in European plantation farming. The deleterious effects of the world slump in rubber, and the East African currency crisis of 1922, virtually put paid to European planting in the country.⁴ African cotton production, however, was relatively unharmed by the fluctuating exchange rates and Coryndon began actively to encourage indigenous cash-crop farming in both cotton and coffee. When the Governor assumed the administration of Kenya he was more inclined to push a "West African" policy, an experimentation which, in Uganda, had proved a greater success than European agricultural schemes. Yet the Kenya situation with its entrenchment of highly capitalised European agriculture rendered emphasis on indigenous production alone impossible. Therefore Coryndon endeavoured to accommodate both systems in his dual policy although the settlers tended to distrust the Governor's encouragement of peasant agriculture.⁵ The activists, however, took up the idea of dual policy after July 1923 since it offered an apparently valid interpretation of native paramountcy while, simultaneously, it detracted from the unwanted image of white partisanship and oppression. Coryndon foresaw dual

4. The rise of cotton production and the demise of European plantation farming are analysed by Cyril Ehrlich: "The Uganda Economy 1903-45" in *Ibid.*, pp. 395-475.

5. See Bennett: *Kenya*, pp. 54-55.

policy as an economic solution which would in no way affect white political hegemony; the Europeans regarded it as a political platform and had no desire to endorse its application for it endangered their economic domination.

The new Governor's attendance at the Convention meeting of October 1922, a week before his inaugural Legislative Council address, offered no solace to the European activists. His remarks were confined to nothing more controversial than his views on a customs union with Uganda.⁶ The Manchester Guardian had already intimated that Coryndon's appointment was merely a temporary one to push through a federation of East African territories.⁷ The settlers knew, however, that Coryndon had been appointed to end the Indian crisis; Northey's premature recall had shown that. It was expected that the Governor would use the Legislative Council platform to propound a definitive policy statement but:

instead of dwelling at length upon the troubles and worries of the country, his Excellency delivered a short lecture on deportment, after the manner of a schoolmaster to a class of unruly boys.⁸

The settlers were taken aback and an East African Standard editorial arraigned Coryndon's comments as a "poor substitute"⁹ for the traditional policy statement. Coryndon was purposely

6. E. A. S., 21 Oct. 1922.

7. Reported in E. A. S., 19 Sept. 1922.

8. The Times, 22 Nov. 1922 reporting on the Legislative Council meeting of 23 Oct. 1922.

9. E. A. S., 28 Oct. 1922.

avoiding polemics in public and in private, he was antipathetic towards the settlers. He confided to Churchill:

I believe I shall be able to handle the settlers; largely by laughing at them a little and by getting them to use a sense of proportion in their outlook. I shall push native development and native grown crops. I am confident as to the future as a whole. 10

His sympathy with the position of the African was reiterated in another letter, this time to Bottomley in the East African Department:

I won't attempt to talk of this country or job yet. I can only say that I am not at all satisfied at tenure of land, native reserves and the whole way the allocation of the country between white and black has been allowed to grow up... it seems as though none of my predecessors had ever thought of the future, or that a time would surely come when there'd be a hell of a battle between claims of white and black as to land allocation. 11

The new Governor's refusal to commit himself publicly to anything more than a "strong and sensible policy" 12 was ominous for the Europeans. The change of Government at home only added to their forebodings. Baldwin's appointment of the Duke of Devonshire as Colonial Secretary on 25 October 1922 was not as significant as the selection of his Parliamentary Under-Secretary. Ormsby-Gore had condemned the settler politicians more than once in the Commons 13 and his official

10. Coryndon to Churchill, n.d., "Coryndon Papers", Box 3/File 3, pp. 10-11.

11. Coryndon to Bottomley, 17 Sept. 1922, C. O. 533/280.

12. E. A. S., 2 Sept. 1922; The Times, 26 Oct. 1922.

13. Hansard, 5th series, v. 156, c. 254-55, Commons, 4 July 1922, and v. 157, c. 684, Commons, 27 July 1922.

appointment was greeted with some jubilation by one Indian leader:

We stand a much better chance under the new Government than under the old. Ormsby-Gore is even friendlier than Wood, and the Duke of Devonshire has the reputation of being an honest man, which is hardly a virtue that one would attribute to Churchill.¹⁴

Unfortunately for the Indians the "better chance" never materialised. Devonshire's White Paper proved inimical to their interests. Ormsby-Gore soon identified with the Europeans and by early 1925 was actually praising the efforts of Delamere and company for the economic advancement of the colony.¹⁵ And Coryndon, within six months of his arrival, was being hailed as the "settlers' friend".¹⁶ What initially appeared to foreshadow a revolution in government, stamping out the last vestiges of Milnerism, turned out to be no more than a nuance from previous policy. Coryndon's defence of the white colonists was as obdurate as Northey's.

Coryndon's alliance with the settlers was the direct result of the formulation of his dual policy, although the phrase was not coined until after the Devonshire Declaration. Finding that European economic hegemony was irreversible, the new Governor advocated African production as a supplement to,

14. Polak to Andrews, 8 Nov. 1922, quoted by Gregory: India, p.224.

15. Hansard, 5th series, v.182, c.198, Commons, 30 Mar. 1925 and v.198, c.2461-62, Commons, 29 July 1926.

16. E. A. S., 24 Mar. 1923.

and not competitive with, settler agriculture. By definition this policy excluded the Indians from an economic, and thus political, role in the colony. It also involved further inducement of white immigration which in turn would add force to the European political demands. The Governor had told his reception committee at the Nairobi station that the colony needed business and revenue,¹⁷ and by that he meant sponsoring economic advance in both non-native and native production. Yet the two policies of dual development were "competitive rather than supplementary"¹⁸ since the Europeans would need the Africans as labourers and would necessarily oppose indigenous production. In spite of its inherent contradictions, dual policy became a convenient way of avoiding the real paramountcy of native interests after July 1923 and tended to "eliminate the Indians from consideration".¹⁹ It was an economic proposition to Coryndon and a political one to the settlers. Both interpretations excluded Indian participation. Northey's anti-Indian stance was inspired by his sympathy for the preponderating role of Europeans; Coryndon's alliance with the activists stemmed from his affinity with both the Europeans and the Africans.

The new Governor took little time in rejecting the

17. The Times 26 Oct. 1922.

18. R. C. Pratt in Harlow and Chilver. (Eds): History of East Africa, p. 478.

19. I owe this point to M. Dilley: British Policy, p. 281.

Good-Winterton proposals on the grounds that "no Governor and no amount of persuasion will move the Europeans from feelings which the passage of time has increased"²⁰ and emphasised that "neither side will give way".²¹ The Colonial Office remained recalcitrant; Devonshire continued to press for the implementation of Churchill's proposals, especially the common roll. "Responsible Government" for the Europeans was "out of the question".²² Bottomley pinpointed the reasons behind Whitehall's insistence in a minute:

I venture to think that the difficulty is not so much a lack of appreciation here of the Europeans standpoint as failure locally to realise the difficulty of the question from an Imperial standpoint.²³

Coryndon, however, remained as immune to Imperial considerations as the settlers themselves and concurred in two schemes to promote greater European immigration.

The Governor sanctioned a £1,000 grant to the Kenya Land Settlement Advisory Committee (composed of Delamere, Grogan, Powys Cobb, and the man who would become Delamere's successor as settler spokesman, Francis Scott) in a bid to attract new European settlers. The money had been given without Whitehall's permission but there was no attempt to repudiate the Governor's

20. Coryndon to Churchill, Tel., Conf., 21 Sept. 1922, C. O. 533/282.

21. Coryndon to Churchill, Tel., Pers., 23 Sept. 1922, C. O. 533/282.

22. Devonshire to Coryndon, Conf., 14 Dec. 1922, in "Coryndon Papers", Box 3/File 3, pp. 18-21.

23. Bottomley's minute, 25 Sept. 1922, on Coryndon to Churchill, Tel., Pers., 23 Sept. 1922, C. O. 533/282.

actions although Devonshire did consider it "undesirable that such a situation should arise".²⁴ At the same time a Special Committee of the Legislative Council (composed of Delamere, Powys Cobb, Capt. Coney, H. F. Ward, and three officials) unanimously endorsed the institution of a London Publicity Office and a grant of L8,000 from the colony's revenues to finance it. The Colonial Office had no doubts that the Europeans were "trying to strengthen their hands in the Indian controversy" and Bottonley was reluctant to "sign away light heartedly" such a vast amount of money, especially after the retrenchment policy of 1922.²⁵

Nonetheless, up until the end of the year the Kenyan political climate remained relatively cool. Devonshire sincerely hoped for agreement on Churchill's proposals but had refrained from any public declaration of intent. Coryndon who, while showing sympathy with the Europeans, had made no overt inflammatory remarks; the Governor's reluctance at this stage to press for local agreement obviated political agitation.

In January 1923 the issue was forced. The Secretary of State cabled Coryndon and instructed him to prolong the life

24. Coryndon to Devonshire, 9 Nov. 1922 and Bottonley's minute thereon of 28 Dec. 1922, C. O. 533/283, and Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., 22 Jan. 1923 and Devonshire's reply, 26 Jan. 1923, both in C. O. 533/292.

25. Bowring to Devonshire, 18 Nov. 1922; Memorandum, Bottonley to Read, n.d.; and Devonshire to Coryndon, Tel., 30 Dec. 1922, all in C. O. 533/283.

of the Legislative Council (the elections were set for 21 February 1923) as there seemed little hope of a settlement before then. The Governor initially agreed but requested a "free hand to consult a limited body of representatives of the European Community (possibly the conventions of associations) in strict confidence".²⁶ Coryndon's first attempts to ascertain European opinion yielded the same time-honoured arguments. The settlers expressed fear of a future Indian majority in view of the "Indian stimulus to Thuku riots in 1922 and present propaganda among natives" and endorsed Churchill's East African Dinner maxim that Kenya and Uganda should remain "characteristically and definitely white Colonies". Coryndon reiterated Northey's fears of "grave public disturbance" if the Wood-Winterton proposals were effected.²⁷ Just eight days later, the Governor was advising against the postponement of the general election since the settlers would regard it as "tampering with the constitution"²⁸ although the settlers, as yet, had not been informed of the intended extension of Council. Devonshire, however, showed more concern for the India Office:

I am convinced by Secretary of State for India that to hold the election of the Council ostensibly for three years, at a time when feeling runs high would have the very worst effect in India and would substantially increase the difficulties of the India Office and the Indian Government.

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26. Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., 11 Jan. 1923, C.O. 533/292.
 27. Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., 15 Jan. 1923, C.O. 533/292.
 28. Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., 23 Jan. 1923, Ibid.

He continued, stating that the only choice was "between a postponement of the general election and the dissolution of the new Council after its election". Devonshire preferred the former course.²⁹

On the 27 January Coryndon held a conference, which lasted three days, with the Europeans and some "moderate" Indians,³⁰ and informed them of Devonshire's proposals. On the day preceding the conference the settlers congregated, albeit in small numbers, in various districts throughout the colony. At Eldoret it was resolved to "resist by every means...the enactment or operation of any legislation in conflict with the minimum demand laid down by the Convention in June 1921"³¹ and at Kabete the settlers too supported the "Irreducible Minimum" and promised "to adhere to the principles therein enunciated".³² The fact that in January 1923 there were four nominated Indians on the Legislative Council (as well as one Executive Councillor), whereas the "June 1921" motion demanded a maximum of two, did not seem to matter.³³ The conferees were equally adamant in spurning Wood-Winterton and a protracted Council term and requested an Immigration Bill for consideration at

29. Devonshire to Coryndon, Tel., 25 Jan. 1923, C.O. 533/292.

30. The Times, 27 Jan. 1923.

31. E.A.S. 27 Jan. 1923.

32. Ibid.

33. For further resolutions see E.A.S. 27 Jan. 1923; 10 Feb. 1923; McGregor Ross Kenya pp. 362-69; enclosure in Coryndon to Devonshire, Secr., 30 Jan. 1923, C.O. 533/292 and below, Chapter 7.

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the forthcoming meeting of the Legislature. The Bill, requiring an immigrant to deposit a fee of 1,000 shillings and pass an English literacy test upon entry, gained Coryndon's approval. "I urge you to agree", the Governor telegraphed Devonshire, "to the immediate passage of this Bill and I can see no reason against this course".³⁴ Devonshire rejected the requests and Coryndon reluctantly made provisions for the postponement of the elections. A day before the introduction of the Legislative Council (Emergency) Ordinance of 1923 the East African Standard advocated an unofficial majority which would end the "subjection to a thinly disguised dictatorship in Downing Street". Ratification of the Emergency Ordinance depended upon a Government instructed official majority, something which the Standard referred to as "against all ideas of British freedom of thought and speech".³⁵

The Ordinance was laid before the Legislative Council on 8 February 1923. Delamere called it a "wanton and provocative action on the part of the Secretary of State" while Varma, the Indian member, referred to it as "a very tardy and overdue act of justice to the Indian community".³⁶ The officials and Indians combined to carry the first reading by 16 votes to 10. Coryndon, however, had not submitted and he asked Devonshire

34. Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., 1 Feb. 1923 C.O. 533/293.

35. E.A.S., 7 Feb. 1923.

36. Kenya Leg. Co., 8 Feb. 1922, pp. 112/113.

to sanction the withdrawal of the Bill on the grounds that it was "completely disregarding the rights of European voters".³⁷ The Secretary of State insisted that there was "no foundation whatever for the suggestion" and pointed out that:

His Majesty's Government's Imperial and International embarrassments at the moment are sufficiently grave in all conscience without their being complicated by Englishmen in a British Colony crying out before they are hurt.³⁸

The Governor, while accepting the rebuff as final, still pressed for stricter control of Indian immigration. "Political trouble may follow in India" if immigration legislation were adopted "but it would mean the satisfactory end of the whole question of Indian domination in Crown Colonies".³⁹ Although Devonshire rejected the proposal he did assure Coryndon that some form of immigration control would "be an essential part of any general settlement" and he asked the Governor to return to England "accompanied or not, as you or they may think fit, by one or two representatives of the Colonists in order to discuss fully and frankly all questions".⁴⁰ These new instructions followed hard on the heels of a meeting between the Colonial and India Offices on the 21 February. There was a general consensus that the fear of direct action was

37. Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., 8 Feb. 1923, C.O. 533/293.

38. Devonshire to Coryndon, Tel., Pers. and Secr., 9 Feb. 1923, Ibid.

39. Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., Secr. and Pers., 12 Feb. 1923, Ibid.

40. Devonshire to Coryndon, Tel., 23 Feb. 1923, quoted in Gregory: India, p. 227.

justified and that force in no circumstances could be used against the Europeans.⁴¹ Hence Devonshire, aware that a dictated settlement would have embarrassing consequences, invited a European delegation to Westminster. The invitation was sent on the 23 February, the same day that the Legislative Council (Emergency) Ordinance of 1923 passed its third reading. As a response to the proposal, which Coryndon outlined to the Convention in a confidential meeting, the settlers pledged to refrain from "any direct action...during the progress of negotiations in England on the Indian question ...provided that there is no attempt made by the Imperial Government to force an issue during that period".⁴² The Times, not knowing of Devonshire's telegram, reported that Coryndon's address to the Convention eased the situation "from a European aspect".⁴³ At the assembly, held in the Nairobi Railway Institute, the Governor made plain where he stood. He remarked that he was unable to take sides in the controversy but reminded the settlers he was "South African born". When Major Dutton, Coryndon's Private Secretary, prepared a report entitled 'History of the Indian Question' for presentation at the London talks, he dismissed the remark as a "cryptic statement" and added the proviso that it was "in any case...his

41. Minutes of Meeting held in the Secretary of State's room, 21 Feb. 1923, C. O. 533/293.

42. Resolution of Convention of Associations, Railway Institute, 26 Feb. 1923, in Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., 28 Feb. 1923, C. O. 533/293.

43. The Times, 28 Feb. 1923.

[Coryndon's] first and last statement in public or in private by which any indication of his attitude was given".⁴⁴ The remark was hardly cryptic and the Governor's alliance with the European cause had been increasingly obvious since January. One Indian politician complained that "the settlers have the fullest confidence in Sir Robert Coryndon who is encouraging and helping them in every manner"⁴⁵ while the E.A.S. praised the Governor for having "won the entire confidence and trust of the people of this Colony in a way little short of marvellous".⁴⁶ The settlers had no doubts when the European delegation of DeLamere, Wood, and Archer (President of the Convention) left for London on the 25 March that the "South African born" Governor was on their side.

The months of February and March were extremely tense. The Convention of Associations met regularly to plan strategy; an economic boycott was instituted against Indian shops;⁴⁷ the East African Standard published a letter which likened Mahomet to Belial;⁴⁸ and the little known weekly paper, The Democrat, attacked the immorality of European women in an article which

⁴⁴. 'History of the Indian Question', "Coryndon Papers", Box 3/File 3, p. 34.

⁴⁵. Shans Nd Been to Polak, 31 Jan. 1923, enclosure in Indian Overseas Association (Polak) to Ormsby-Gore, 23 Mar. 1923, C. O. 533/305.

⁴⁶. E.A.S. 24 Mar. 1923.

⁴⁷. The Times 10 Feb. 1923 and McGregor Ross: Kenya, pp. 371-72.

⁴⁸. E.A.S. 3 Feb. 1923.

earned its editor, Sitarom Achariar, a deportation order.⁴⁹ When the respective publicity campaigns switched to London the emphasis changed also; both sides now seemed deeply concerned for the trusteeship of the native.⁵⁰

The European delegation, which was strengthened by the inclusion of the Rev. J. Arthur, head of the Church of Scotland Mission, and P. C. Green, a Kenyan trade unionist, first met with Devonshire on the 24 April 1923. The Indians, who had travelled via Bombay, were unable to reach London until early May. A meeting convened by the Aga Khan at the Ritz Hotel on the 3 May resolved to abide by the Wood-Minterton proposals,⁵¹ and the next day the delegation of Desai, Varma, Jeevanjee, Virji, and Wahid, accompanied by Coryndon, presented its arguments to Devonshire.

Three months of intense negotiations culminated in the promulgation of the July White Paper. The European delegation waited until the Indian reaction was ascertained before committing itself and when the Indians objected vehemently to everything except segregation the settler leaders notified the Colonial Office of their acceptance.⁵²

49. The Times 24 Feb. 1923, and McGregor Ross: Kenya, pp. 370-71. The deportation order was subsequently cancelled.

50. The Times 17 Apr. 1923; 18 Apr. 1923; 30 Apr. 1923; 4 May 1923; 7 May 1923; 9 May 1923.

51. See Gregory: India, pp. 235-36.

52. Ibid., pp. 249-65; Huxley: White Man's Country, vol. 2, pp. 140-86; Indians in Kenya (Memorandum), Cd. 1922 (1923) and its assessment above, Chapter Two, pp. 58-62.

The compromise of July 1923 substantially reduced the Europeans' minimum demands but also dismissed the Wood-Winterton scheme. The settlers were delighted at retaining the exclusiveness of the Highlands although they had to wait thirteen years for the Order-in-Council (1939) to provide legal recognition. Immigration policy was left to the discretion of the Governor but Coryndon had already advocated tougher restriction laws and there was no reason why he should go back on his word. Most significantly, the common roll franchise with its implications of Arian domination had been eliminated. On the debit side the European activists had lost segregation, responsibility of trusteeship of the native and future self government. They also had to contend with native paramountcy which the E. A. S., in echoing the sentiment that no policy should be deemed final, regarded as "a false perspective which has to be adjusted".⁵³

Coryndon ascertained the chief object of the White Paper as "that dealing with the position of the native in this country"⁵⁴ which meant giving the African a greater share in the economic life of the colony. 'Equal Policy' (essentially a convenient circumvention of the native paramountcy doctrine) turned out to be an empty principle; neither the Europeans nor the Africans were concerned about its application. The settlers were anxious to retain adequate labour without losing

53. E. A. S. 15 Sept. 1923.

54. Kenya, Leg. Co., 17 Oct. 1923, p. 2.

it to African producers; the African on the other hand was far more willing to work as a wage-labourer on European farms than stay at home and grow his own crops. African population growth and shortage of land do not fully explain this trend; one author offers three other reasons why the Africans were willing to work for European masters.⁵⁵ Firstly, the increasing capitalisation of white farming brought with it all-round advancement in housing and working conditions and higher wages than in the pre-war period. Second; the farms attracted the younger Africans who were bored with tribal life. Finally, it was not always a question of free choice since the "wish of authority was still that the natives should go out to work".⁵⁶ Hence the years following the 'adoption' of dual policy (1923-30) witnessed no advance in African production of marketable crops.

Coryndon had already supported indigenous cash-crop farming in Uganda and had shown his concern for it since his arrival in Kenya. Yet he was probably the only sincere believer. The Europeans' acceptance of complementary development did not stem from their faith in it as an economic viability but as a morally defensible political philosophy which shut out the Indians from a stake in the country. It was not only the settlers who prevented the implementation of the policy; Alex Holm, Director of Agriculture (1921-30), was

55. As expounded by C. Wrigley: "Kenya: The Patterns of Economic Life, 1902-1945" in Vincent Harlow and W. M. Chilver (eds): History of East Africa, pp. 244-45.

56. Ibid.

an advocate of the paramountcy of European farming and the District Officers and appointed chiefs continued to encourage the Africans to work. Even without these obstacles dual policy was unworkable, as McGregor Ross aptly commented:

This [dual policy] is supposed to mean that the native is to be allowed to do the impossible - feed himself and all dependents, produce crops for export, and at the same time keep all the European estates going to the satisfaction of their owners. The idea is nonsense.⁵⁷

Native paramountcy beget dual policy which beget nothing. Yet there were other aspects of the Devonshire Declaration which were at least tangible. The most important dealt with immigration control and the establishment of the communal franchise.

In November 1923 Coryndon held talks with the Governor of Uganda in an attempt to work out a common immigration policy.⁵⁸ Although the Indians objected to the proposed Bill as being "opposed to the letter and spirit of the White Paper"⁵⁹ its passage into law seemed inevitable. At the last moment, however, Devonshire, acting upon Prime Minister Baldwin's instructions, advised Coryndon on 31 December to postpone the Bill.⁶⁰ The Indians were already smarting from the Custom's Tariff Ordinance of October which increased duties on imported Indian cloth, and were considering non-co-operation over the

57. McGregor Ross, Kenya, p. 450.

58. The Times 10 Nov. 1923.

59. Ibid. 6 Dec. 1923

60. For the full story behind the decision see Gregory, India, pp. 261-63.

Immigration Bill. Despite Devonshire's objections the Indians resigned in toto from the Legislative Council. Two days later, on the 3 January 1923, the Franchise Bill passed its final reading. It was not until 1960 that the sacred common roll was introduced in Kenya and then in response to African and not Asian pressure.

The end of January 1924 witnessed the downfall of Baldwin's ministry and the advent of the first Labour Government. Ramsey MacDonald, the new Prime Minister, appointed J. H. Thomas, a former trade union leader with no interest in the Empire, as Colonial Secretary. The administration was short lived and, contrary to expectations, no radical changes occurred in Kenyan policy. Within ten months the Conservatives returned to office with Amery, Milner's deputy in the Coalition, at the helm in the Colonial Office. He was soon to espouse his scheme for a federation of East African territories; Coryndon, however, was not the man to investigate closer union. The South African Governor died on the 25 February 1925 in the middle of an operation to remove his appendix. His successor was Sir Edward Grigg, a close friend of the new Secretary of State and a follower of Milner.

Coryndon's term of office coincided with the most intense pressure ever exerted upon the Colonial Office over the Kenya Indian question. Churchill and Devonshire had both insisted on the Wood-Winterton proposals and were adamant not to allow any leeway. Coryndon was wont to push through such a settlement for fear of a European rebellion and Devonshire succumbed to the same fear. Unlike his predecessor, Coryndon was concerned

with native policy and much less opinionated in his oratory. His alliance with the Europeans was, nonetheless, still strong. Northey mooted "British European preponderance" whereas Coryndon wanted a "dual policy" whereby the interests of the African and European were "complementary not antagonistic".⁶¹ Both schemes held no place for the Indian. The Devonshire Declaration was thus satisfactory to both Northey and Coryndon. The ex-Governor actually congratulated his successor on the achievement:

I think the Indian settlement is satisfactory - it is certainly what I would have done 2 years ago where my orders were to get agreement if I cd., but as you know Europeans wouldn't agree to non-segregation, and Indians wouldn't agree to communal franchise. Now they've got to put up with it. I expect the agreement is being received by the Europeans with relief. I hope so and wish you the best of luck.⁶²

The White Paper of 1923 signified the rejection of equal rights of citizenship for the Kenyan Indians. Churchill had pressed for these rights in the last months of the Coalition Government and Devonshire, as Colonial Secretary in the ensuing Conservative Ministry, took up the campaign. It was to no avail. Coryndon was averse to imposing a settlement and, at the same time the settlers' threats of rebellion were not to be taken lightly. This threat proved to be far stronger than the India Office and the Government of India. The European cause was not infallible yet the European strategy was all powerful.

61. E.A.S., 23 Sept. 1923.

62. Northey to Coryndon, 11 Sept. 1923, "Coryndon Papers", Box 12/File 2, pp. 72/73.

CHAPTER SIX

POWER AND PRESSURE: THE SETTLER STRATEGY

It would be difficult to find in Kenya, men of eminence and distinction who are not involved in some way or other in politics, which in so small a community are almost a part of daily life.¹

Before the introduction of elections to the Legislative Council in 1920, entry into the Nairobi Government depended totally upon the patronage of the Governor. The advent of elections, however, meant that the European politicians could not rely on the Governors' sympathy alone. The "men of eminence"² now needed the settlers' mandate to continue in office and they obtained it, in spite of the rift which had developed between the large estate owners and the smaller farmers in the pre-war years. The coming of an elected assembly did not upset the all-pervasive influence of the land barons in Kenyan government. The strategy that the activists employed was a predominating factor in the retention of their

1. Perham to Huxley, 12 Aug. 1942 in E. Huxley and M. Perham: Race and Politics in Kenya (London, 1944) p. 61.

2. For biographical notes on the leading Kenyan activists see App. 2.

political hegemony.

Many of the aristocrats and men of wealth obtained large estates in the Highlands in the pre-war years at bargain prices and this irked the smaller farmers. Although the homesteaders, a majority of whom were South African, could ill afford such acreage of land they still resented the accumulation of huge estates in the hands of a few wealthy men. Robert Chamberlain, a prominent South African in the Pastoralists' Association, was a consistent opponent of Delamere, Hindlip and others who used "dummying" methods to acquire land.³ Huxley herself refers to the unscrupulous circumvention of the Crown Land Ordinance of 1902 (which limited land purchase to 1,000 acres) as "a fairly common practice" in the early years but as "no more dishonourable than obtaining whisky from a bootlegger in New York before prohibition repeal".⁴ The small farmers, however, did not think along those lines especially when the price of land rocketed as a result (as did whisky in New York) and in view of the difficulty they had in staking claims for much smaller tracts of land through the inefficient Land Office. H. Ryle Shaw, a Natalian immigrant who took up coffee planting in Ruiru in 1916, spoke out against the price of land and the power of the large landowner. In November 1917, Shaw wrote:

Some 6 to 8 years ago, great, even immense tracts of land were given away and the present owners, Lords, ex-stewards, x-missionaries etc. by reason of the rise in value are all rich... Three or four of the largest owners

3. See above Chapter One, p. 21, and Huxley: White Man's Country, vol. 2., pp. 177-78.

4. Ibid.

are particularly energetic in getting also power into their hands, which of course as a general proposition might be of the greatest service to them in staying off land taxes, special development and the like... These few men on the departure of the Fighters to the C. S. A. and Flanders were elected as an advisory 'War Council' for recruiting men and the Govt. put them as 'nominees' into the Legislative Council. They had no political mandate.⁵

When Shaw appeared as a witness before Belfield's Economic Commission he stressed "the difficulty attending the purchase of land" in the Protectorate. In Natal farms could be bought for a "trifling expense" but in East Africa "the expense and delay were serious".⁶

The South African settlers from Natal and the Transvaal formed the majority of Kenya's white population before 1910 and they dominated the Colonists' Association which had been instituted in 1905. Although they were affiliated to the Convention they conceived the purpose of the latter organisation as a temporary one to secure elective representation to the Legislative Council.⁷ When the Convention succumbed to the influence of the large landowners and looked like permanently displacing the Colonists' Association as the foremost political organisation the Association withdrew its support. On the

5. H. Pyle (Shaw to H. S. Staveley Hill (M. P.), 2 Nov. 1917, enclosure in Staveley Hill to Long, Sec. of St., 12 Dec. 1917, C. O. 533/193. Shaw's punctuation throughout.

6. Witnesses to the Economic Commission, p. 30 of addenda to Final Report of the Economic Commission (1919) enclosed in Northey to Sec. of St., 15 June 1919, C. O. 533/210

7. E. A. S. 20 July 1912.

8. Ibid. 17 June 1911; 5 Aug. 1911; 3 Aug. 1912; 17 Aug. 1912.

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Other hand the South African settlers were not well liked by the large estate owners. The demands for a white police force and a burgher militia embodied in the Morning Post petition of 1905 were too extreme for Delanere and the settler leader disassociated himself from them. Lord Cranworth felt that the Boers were a liability for they were all "pretty well destitute" and not likely to enhance the country's economic development.¹⁰

In sum the Natalians and Boers, in their struggle for economic survival, were desperate for land and labour and some of the blame lay squarely on the shoulders of the landed oligarchy. The wealthy landowners, who were concerned with economic profitability rather than survival, in turn regarded the South African settlers' contribution to the development of the Protectorate as inadequate.

After 1910 the number of South Africans in the E. A. F. declined in proportion to the other white settlers with the influx of British immigrants immediately before the war and the coming of the ex-soldier settlers in 1919. In their efforts to put the Kenyan economy on a sound footing a British East Africa Association was set up in London in 1906 to foster more white immigration. The response was "a steady flow of new settlers" from Britain whereas "previously the majority of settlers had come from South Africa".¹¹ The War Council instituted a Soldier

9. See above Chapter One, p. 23.

10. Lord Cranworth: A Colony in the Making (London, 1912) p. 82.

11. Noted by H. F. Hill: Permanent Way, vol. 1, p. 323.

Settlement scheme which:

provided for 257 small farms of 160 acres, for applicants who had not the means to buy and develop large holdings. These were to be free. In addition there were 1,053 farms to be had on purchase; on very easy terms, the whole covering about 21 million acres.

A selection board was formed in London and the soldiers, many of them ex-officers, arrived at the end of 1919. These men soon found that a lack of farming skills as well as an inadequate transportation system (they were located miles away from the railway) left them in dire straits. Initially the disabled soldiers, who had arrived under a special Disabled Officers Colony scheme (D.E.A.D.O.C.), were quite successful. They invested their money in flax cultivation which was highly lucrative at first but the world slump ruined them and by 1923 nearly all of them had deserted their farms.

The activists were determined to make the protectorate a white man's country and a prosperous one. Although the soldier settlement scheme ended in economic disaster, Britain was still regarded as a far greater source of settlers with capital than South Africa. Hence the British East Africa Association and the selection board for the soldier settlers maintained their headquarters in London. Even the Publicity Office advocated during Northey's Governorship (and vetoed by the Secretary of State) was to be set up in London. No attempts were made to induce South African immigration.

To their endeavours to promote white development in Kenya the European activists in the Convention and the Legislative

12. Annual Report 1919-1920 quoted by Ross, Kenya, p. 81.

Council had to expound a philosophy similar to the one adopted by the South African settlers. Strict control of Indian immigration, demands for the repatriation of Kenya Asians, more European immigration and white political hegemony all fomented the racialism which was an inherent part of the South African character. This is not to suggest that the land oligarchy had the unanimous support of the white settlers. The discord between the small farmers and the land barons did not disappear during the war; its dimensions, however, were diminished by the arrival of the British soldier settlers. The post-war immigrants, like many of the South Africans, were small homesteaders but they were also officers who had fought in the bitter campaigns of the Great War. These men were intensely patriotic; their loyalty to the Crown was symbolised by the motto "For King and Kenya" adopted by the rebellious movement of 1923 in which many of them took part.¹³ The Ulster Unionists in Ireland have always been strengthened by what may be termed "patriotism in exile" in their fight against union with Eire. The analogy with the Kenya situation is a valid one for, in spite of the differences in wealth, the land barons and the soldier settlers were linked by a common bond of patriotism which was strengthened by the British Government's attempts to impose settlement in favour of the Indians. Delamere, Hindlip and Cranworth might have incurred the wrath of Hyle Shaw and Chamberlain but they were not likely to stand accused

13. See below Chapter 7, passim.

of exploitation by fellow Britishers.

The activists also won the support of the small European commercial community¹⁴ most of whom were in the import-export business. Agricultural and commercial interests had sometimes clashed in the past, especially over Bourne's Committee's implementation of high tariffs on wheat and flour. By February 1923 the two communities were united in the defence of the white cause and the Nairobi commercial community entered "very heartily into the extensive economic war of pressure upon the Indians for the purpose of securing a permanent solution of the problem".¹⁵ Earlier, however, it was inclined to be apathetic.¹⁵ One European Journalist, Harold G. Robertson, who was editor of the Critic, often attacked DeLamere and the activists for acting as a self-interest group and ignoring the rights of the Indians. By early 1923, however, "the Critic completely capitulated to the settler side" and "Robertson publicly apologized for his previous sympathy for the Indians saying that close contacts with them had caused him to know them better and as a result his favourable opinion had altered".¹⁶ Robertson's volts-face came about because his

14. There were 627 Europeans engaged in commerce in Kenya according to the 1921 census. See McGregor Post, Kenya, p. 416.

15. The Times, 22 Feb. 1922.

16. Theodore Natsopoulos, "The Hon. G. Robertson: An Editor's Reversal From Settler Critic to Ally in Kenya, 1922-23," The International Journal of African Historical Studies, v. 4, (1972) pp. 610-28, referring to the Critic publication, 27 Jan. 1923.

belief in white supremacy transcended his squabble with the large landowners; the possibility of future Asian domination was as much anathema to him as it was to the activists.

Many of the settlers remained politically apathetic; some were antipathetic towards the activists. The Colonial Office often had doubts about the local politicians' claims of universal support. Bottomley responded to the petition of 1918 which requested a Military Governor with this minute:

It is always a question of how far Lord Delamere and the other better known settlers have European sentiment behind them. When occasion arises for a general protest to the home Government they seem to have had no difficulty in collecting voices, but there is at all times a strong feeling among the rank and file of the settlers that these few are playing their own game and endeavouring to retain as much power in their own hands as possible.¹⁷

But these settlers, the rank and file, were of no consequence in politics. As Leys points out, they "are not vocal. They do not count. They attempt no influence over events".¹⁸ The European leaders appealed to the politically active; there was no need to convert the indifferent.

One aspect of that appeal was the use of Whitehall as a scapegoat. The divided power of Crown Colony Government in Kenya; that is settler hegemony in the Colony but ultimate control in Downing Street, was responsible for this. The activists were congratulated for their part in abolishing the income tax and lightening the land laws but the acute labour

17. Bottomley's minute to Fiddes, 16 Feb. 1918, on Bowring to Sec. of St., Tel., 6 Feb. 1918, P. O. 533/193.

18. N. Leys: Kenya, p. 309.

shortage and the Indian imbroglio could be blamed upon the "thinly disguised dictatorship in Downing Street".¹⁹ Delamere had complained during the first meeting of elected members on the Legislature, about the official majority and the Secretary of States veto. He was tired of debating "ineffective resolutions" and resigned as a consequence. His subsequent platform for the Reform Party rested upon the demand for a European unofficial majority on the Council. Resignation from the Legislative assembly never upset the Colonial Office; a European unofficial majority was never granted. Indeed, resignation had none effect on the Governors of the country who were anxious for a harmonious working of the Council. When in 1913 the nominated Councillors refused to continue in office unless elective representation was conceded, Balfour was quick to take up their requests. The franchise, once gained, did not satisfy Delamere or the other elected members who subsequently resigned in May, 1921. Northey, who believed in co-operation in government, allowed officials to vote according to conscience; it was not exactly the unofficial majority that the Reform Party had hoped for but it was the next best thing.

Political power in Kenya was in the hands of a few men - an oligarchy of wealth. A predominately British electorate, gubernatorial patronage and control of the East African

19. E. A. S. 7 Feb. 1923.

20. Kenya Leg. Co., 3 May 1920

Standard endured their local influence.²¹ Colonial Office control had proved a minor impediment to their aspirations.

Until the climacteric of the Indian crisis the settlers "had gone their own way, demanding and receiving and explaining to no one".²² The Kenyan activists had gained most of their demands without having to exert much direct pressure on Witchall. In 1923 the Indian problem promoted a revival of interest in Imperial affairs in Britain and the spotlights were on Kenya.

Hardly anyone, apart from a few politicians and bishops and members of the Aborigines' Protection Society had heard of Kenya. Articles with maps explaining roughly where it was began to appear in the papers and several questions were asked in the House.

Before the intense publicity campaign of Spring, 1923 there were few people in Britain who showed any interest in Imperial, least of all, Kenyan affairs.²⁴ It is interesting to note that the controversial indictments of the settlers in the books by Norman Leys and McGregor Ross were not published until after

21. The chairman of the Board of Directors of the E. A. S. was Delamere. Other members included A. C. Hoey, E. S. Grogan, P. H. Clarke, A. A. Baillie and W. Northrup Mac Gillan amongst others; see E. A. S. 5 Jan. 1918. Bowring describes the Board as "including Lord Delamere, three other unofficial members of the Legislative Council, five members of the War Council and other prominent local personalities", Bowring to Sec. of St., 11 Mar. 1918, C. O. 533/194. The activists gained complete control of the press in 1922 when the Leader of British East Africa ceased publication after sixteen years and merged with the E. A. S.; see The Times 29 Dec. 1922.

22. M. Dilley: British Policy, pp. 280-81.

23. E. Huxley: White Man's, vol. 2., p. 141.

24. See L. H. Gann and P. Duignan: White Settlers in Tropical Africa (London, 1962), p. 102.

the Devonshire compromise.

Nonetheless, the activists were determined not to stand alone against the Indians; just as the Asian community looked towards the Government of India for guidance and support, the Kenya politicians turned to South Africa. A delegation of three settlers, including E. Powys Cobb (a large landowner in the Highlands) and two lesser known men, Captain Anderson and a Mr. Montagu, sailed for the Cape in August 1921. This was a month after the publication of the Report by the specially appointed Commons' Committee on Indian affairs which contained the resolution "that there is no justification for assigning to Indians in Kenya a status in any way inferior to that of any other class of His Majesty's subjects".²⁵ The settlers sought the advice of General Smuts, not only because of the Committee's statement but in view of the ambiguous resolutions passed by the Imperial Conference which had been convened during the summer months. One resolution upheld the principle of "complete control" by each community of the British Commonwealth "of the composition of its own population by means of restriction of immigration from any of the other communities". The other affirmed "an incongruity between the position of India as an equal member of the British Empire and the existence of disabilities upon British Indians lawfully domiciled in some parts of the Empire".²⁶ The adoption of

25. Third Report by the Standing Joint Committee on Indian Affairs (London, 1921), H.C. 177, pp. 3-4, quoted in Gregory: India p. 199. See also above Chapter Four, p. 109.

26. Quoted in The Times, 21 Aug. 1921

these two resolutions led to a certain "incongruity" in the settlers' position and so the delegation to the Cape sought the help of Smuts.

The South African Prime Minister, however, was unable to receive the three settlers formally for "reasons of policy" but he did counsel "strict adherence to constitutional methods" in resistance to the Indian claims. "Unconstitutional forms of agitation", he added, "must alienate the sympathy of the homeland".²⁷ In Huxley's view "the deputation came away with the conviction that they had won the genuine sympathy of a powerful ally".²⁸ Yet the same author remarked in reference to the departure of the European delegation for London in March 1923:

Against the colonists was pitted the Cabinet's decision, Colonial Office timidity and the weight of the Government of India, behind them lay only an apparently rather ludicrous threat of force and the misty shadow of South Africa.

What was South Africa? A powerful ally or a misty shadow? Certainly the Kenya settlers had an awesome respect for the South African Union; she epitomised the future hopes for their own country. After all she was the strongest white man's country in Africa with self-governing Dominion status, vast mineral wealth and a population of 11 million whites. It is not difficult to understand why the Kenya settlers desired closer relations with the Union for the position of the East

27. Ibid, 17 Sept. 1921.

28. Huxley: White Man's; vol. 2, p. 126.

29. Ibid, p. 142.

African whites was inherently weak. They were outnumbered by the Asian community two to one (in South Africa to ratio favoured the whites ten to one) and the nearest white man's country was Southern Rhodesia which was over 1,000 miles south west of her border. If the Kenya politicians could gain the support of General Smuts then surely his representations to the Imperial Government on their behalf would carry greater weight than their own? Delamere was dissatisfied with the outcome of the first mission to South Africa and so he sailed for Pretoria, accompanied by two other settlers, on his way to England in December 1921. The deputation was unable to gain an audience with the South African Prime Minister who was engaged in conference in Natal. In a letter written on board the Arundel Castle the settler leader revealed his own thoughts as to why South African intervention in the Kenya crisis was a dim prospect:

I was very sorry that we did not see Smuts but it was quite impossible under the circumstances. I think he is very anxious not to press the Indian issue to the point because of the difficulties of the Imperial Government in India and the East. He is afraid that Natal could easily be stirred up on the question and this might force his hand, as if he outwardly showed any reluctance to backle the question the Nationalists would use it for party purposes; therefore he does not want the matter raised.³⁰

After Delamere's fruitless endeavours the activists tried only once more to solicit South African support, in April 1923. The fact that only one delegate was sent on that

30. Delamere's letter, probably to the Convention, although Huxley is not explicit, Ibid, p. 120.

occasion seemed to confirm³¹ South Africa's status as a misty shadow.

Meanwhile back in Kenya the settlers' wives were entering the fray for the first time. A mass meeting of women in Nairobi was convened in August, 1921 and the resulting petition implored the Queen "to protect us and our children from the terrible Asiatic menace which threatens to overwhelm us".³² The participation of women in Kenya politics was not an isolated incident. An East African Women's League comprising the wives of retired settlers, missionaries and officials was formed in London in the late twenties with Lady Eleanor Cole as President. Meetings were held which were attended by M.P.'s, noted authors and other authorities on East Africa and the League was called upon to give evidence to the Joint Select Committee in 1931.³³ In the Colony, however, the settlers' wives had recourse only to petitioning, a method of pressure unlikely to alter the course of politics.

Before the concession of the elective principle the activists had no alternative but to resort to petitions to make their voice heard in Westminster but as a method of political pressure it had proved singularly unsuccessful. By 1912, three petitions had been sent to the Colonial Office

31. The Times, 1 May 1923.

32. Motley, Acting Governor, to Churchill, Tel., 17 Aug. 1921, C.O. 533/262.

33. Minutes of Evidence, Joint Parliamentary Committee on Closer Union in East Africa H. C. 156, (1931), pp. 594-641.

asking for elective representation for Europeans and as many had been refused on the grounds that the demands were premature.³⁴ In 1913 a fourth petition was sent and to add force to their requests three out of the four nominated Councillors resigned from the Legislature. The subsequent submission of the Secretary of State in 1917 was the result of the representations of Governor Belfield and the exigencies of war time, not the settlers' actions.³⁵ In January 1918 the activists petitioned for the return of Sir Percy Girouard as Governor but Hithell chose to appoint Sir Edward Northey instead. The utility of petitioning was obvious and there was really no need to resort to it again after the election of unofficials to the Legislative Council since the Europeans' views were made known to the Colonial Office through the private despatches of the Governors. Two petitions were sent in 1921, not to the British Government but to the King and Queen, one being the women's appeal to Queen Mary to protect them from the "terrible Asiatic menace". The other was presented in December, purportedly signed by 3,060 European residents, informing King George "that the suggested alteration of Indian status would be distasteful to the African Native tribes".³⁶ George V was a much beloved King; he was both close to the people and deeply interested in the affairs of

34. N. A. S. 17 Mar. 1921.

35. See above Chapter Two, p. 33.

36. Petition presented to Lord Stamfordham, Private Secretary to the King, by R. Haselwood, Secretary to the Convention of Associations, 13 Dec. 1921, C. O. 533/272.

Government. The Kenya settlers obviously thought the King might dissuade Churchill from implementing the rather rash course of action he was contemplating. This was, of course, only a remote possibility.

What other channels of political pressure outside Kenya were open to the activists? The attempt to influence public opinion has always been the least rewarding activity of any lobby and while admitting that the power of the press, before the advent of radio and television, was greater than it is now, a letter to The Times was really of no consequence. As already noted the British public was simply not interested in Imperial matters and it "was not going to lose its sleep over the fate of a handful of farmers".³⁷

Two other channels of more direct pressure were the Houses of Parliament. Lord Windlin had warned the Colonial Office in 1905 that he had a "ready-made form" in the House of Lords.³⁸ The threat was more significant when the Upper House was an effective watchdog on Commons' legislation but after the passage of the Parliament Act in 1911 the Lords sank into impotence. Delahere did not address his fellow Peers in the chamber until July 1923 and then it was a pathetic, fumbling speech on the relatively minor question of the Voi-Taveta railway link between Kenya and Tanganyika. The settler spokesman actually withdrew his question after admitting that

37. R. Huxley: White Man's Country, vol. 2., p. 143.

38. G. Bennett: Kenya, p. 20.

to "put it so badly".³⁹

The Commons was not so accessible to the activists and pressure was necessarily indirect. There were a few M.P.s interested in the plight of the Kenya Europeans but their most notable achievement was the formation of a Committee, under Col. Walter Guinness, which was "of the opinion that restrictions should be put on the immigration of Indians" in Kenya.⁴⁰ In fact the Commons was more of a bulwark against the settlers' objects. Fiddes of the East African Department advised "great circumspection" in dealing with Girouard's mismanagement of the Masai move to Laikipia in 1910. It was a matter "which might easily give rise to a tornado in the House of Commons".⁴¹ Ten years later Milner was apprehensive about the Labour Circulars which sought to explain Ainsworth's initial Circular. He wrote to Northey saying they were not satisfactory enough to "please Parliament".⁴² The M.P.s that had to be placated were those concerned with the disabilities of the Indians and the position of the African. In Milner's term of office the most notable opponents of the settlers were Josiah Wedgwood

³⁹. Hansard 5th series, v. 54, c. 1834, Lords, 5 July 1923.

⁴⁰. The Times 8 Aug. 1922.

⁴¹. Minute by Fiddes, 14 Apr. 1910, on Girouard to Crewe, 7 Mar. 1910, C. O. 533/72, quoted by G. H. Mungeam: British Rule, p. 261.

⁴². Milner to Northey, 25 May 1920, "Elspeth Huxley Papers", Box 1/File 4, p. 62.

(Lab.) and Ormsby-Gore (Cons.).⁴³ Even so Parliament remained relatively quiet and colonial issues were usually debated before an empty House of Commons.⁴⁴

Political pressure, in order to be effective, had to focus upon the inner sanctum of British Government. The Cabinet was where the decisions were made and the fate of Kenya lay in the hands of the Secretary of State and the Colonial Office.

On one occasion the recommendation of Northey was sufficient to allow Major Grogan an audience with the Colonial Office. The Governor wrote to Leopold Amery, the Under-Secretary of State, in 1919:

I am asking Major Grogan, one of the oldest settlers and leading men in the Protectorate, and Chairman of the local Convention of Associations to come and talk to you about our Exchange and Currency Question here, a vitally important factor in the development of the country.⁴⁵

The Major never saw Amery and he had to be content with an audience with Pottomey. Nonetheless the incident showed that a settler politician could penetrate the echelons of administration while his Indian counterparts could not.

The resolutions of the Standing Joint Committee on Indian

43. Wedgwood was the champion of the Indian cause. See Hansard 5th series, v. 110, c. 1453, 30 Oct. 1918; v. 110, c. 688, 6 Nov. 1918; v. 113, c. 1262, 12 Mar. 1919; v. 132, c. 1395 and 1425, 28 July 1920; v. 144, c. 1576, 14 July 1921; v. 146, c. 446, 10 Aug. 1921; v. 156, c. 251, 4 July 1922; v. 161, c. 32, 5 Mar. 1923; v. 167, c. 540-43, 25 July 1923. For Ormsby-Gore see v. 131, c. 2632, 15 July 1920; v. 156, c. 254, 4 July 1922; v. 157, c. 694, 27 July 1922; v. 161, c. 1315, 15 Mar. 1923. All Commons.

44. L. Gané and P. Duignan: White Settlers, p. 102.

45. Northey to Amery, 15 Apr. 1919, C. O. 533/206.

affairs and the Imperial Conference of 1921 with the Montagu-Churchill détente spurred the Convention on to action. Not only was a small delegation sent to South Africa but £1,500 was raised to send Lord Delamere, Major Crowdy (both of whom took part in the 1923 negotiations), and Colonel Griffiths to see Churchill. The unofficials tried in vain to receive unanimous support in the Legislative Council for the delegation but several officials abstained and two (including McGregor Ross) voted against the delegation.⁴⁶ The deputation left Kenya in December 1921 and sailed for London after visiting Pretoria in the hope of seeing Smuts. The South African Prime Minister was not available and so the three settlers headed for London and on 11 January 1922 they saw Churchill.⁴⁷ Two weeks later the Secretary of State was the guest of honour at the annual East Africa and Uganda Dinner arranged by the settlers and he delivered his famous speech describing Kenya as "a characteristically and distinctly British Colony". The statement turned out to be just a temporary vacillation in policy but it was instrumental in Montagu's resignation from the Ministry.⁴⁸ The activists' protestations to Churchill set back the rapprochement between the India and the Colonial Office — something which letters to The Times had failed to do.

Apart from deputations there were three extra-governmental

46. McGregor Ross: Kenya, p. 353.

47. The Times 12 Jan. 1922.

48. See above Chapter Four, p. 113.

groups based in London that acted on behalf of the settlers, namely the Associated Producers of East Africa, the East African Section of the London Chamber of Commerce, and the Joint East African Board.

The Associated Producers of East Africa superseded the British East Africa Association which was instituted in 1906 to foster white development in the Protectorate. The Producers' association, headed by Lord Cranworth and Major William Horse Crowdy, became active in sending letters and deputations to the Colonial Office.⁴⁹ After the setbacks of 1921 the body became much more political in nature. Like its predecessor it was anxious to promote white immigration but this long term aim became subsidiary to immediate resistance to Indian claims. According to a Memorandum signed in 1922 the object of the Associated Producers was "to act as authorised agents for the Convention of Associations in Kenya Colony...it has been the sole agent since the flare up of the Indian question working with the Convention to prevent the Indian claims from being successful. It is now the only link between the unofficial community of Kenya and England."⁵⁰

Representations were also made to the Colonial Office by

49. See various letters from the Associated Producers to the Under-Secretary of State: 10 Feb. 1921 and 15 Feb. 1921 in C. O. 533/271; 6 and 11 Apr. 1921 in C. O. 533/272; 19 Dec. 1922 in C. O. 533/290. Also refer to R. Gregory: Sidney Webb, p. 119.

50. Memorandum signed by Crowdy and Cranworth in B. Haselwood, Secretary of the Convention of Associations, to Major Dutton, Private Secretary to the Governor of Uganda (Coryndon), in "Coryndon Papers", Box 1/111-5, p. 60.

the West African Section of the London Chamber of Commerce. The activists, however, were dissatisfied with Sir Humphrey Leggett's chairmanship of the Section and its preponderantly commercial, as opposed to agricultural, interests. As a consequence a Joint West African Board was set up in 1923 under the auspices of Sidney Mann, M.P., later to be an exponent of closer union in West Africa. The inaugural meeting took place on 26 June 1923 and the nominated members included the humanitarian Leggett, Major Grogan and Lord Granworth. The Board obviously hoped that it could be of assistance to the Colonial Office:

The Board will be ready to confer with you [Ormsby-Gore] at any time on matters upon which the Secretary of State may wish to know of its opinion and will from time to time suggest subjects for verbal discussion; and for the rest it will immediately take up the study of certain particular questions in regard to which it will in due course ask you for a conference at the Colonial Office.⁵¹

The Board was conceived rather too late to affect the outcome of the 1923 negotiations substantially but by the time of Passfield's 'Black Papers' in 1930 it was the most formidable of the settlers' Westminster lobbies and of much greater significance than either the Associated Producers or the Chamber of Commerce West African Section.

Although the latter bodies were important in deluging the Colonial Office with letters and deputations it is essential not to overestimate their effect. In July 1920 the Colonial

⁵¹. Joint West African Board to Ormsby-Gore, 23 July 1923 in C. O. 533/305.

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Office received a letter from the London Chamber of Commerce requesting the withdrawal of the Kenya Income Tax Bill. A. C. S. Parkinson of the East African Department treated the request with contempt for he felt that "administration becomes very difficult if there are to be two Colonial Offices wh. must consider all E. African proposals".⁵² Similarly, when the Associated Producers wanted to know "whether there is any intention to grant larger rights to Indian subjects in Kenya Colony", the hon. Ormsby-Gore remained tight lipped:

...it is not possible in negotiations of high Imperial importance in which H. B. Govt. as a whole is concerned, to give away information in advance as to the lines on which those negotiations are proceeding.⁵³

In the final analysis it was the events of 1921 which activated the Westminster lobby. Before Churchill's assumption of office as Colonial Secretary and the ensuing détente with the India Office the Kenya politicians had no need to extend their local influence. That influence was sufficient for white preponderance in government and strengthened by the introduction of elections to the Legislative Council. The leadership of Delamere and the activists was endorsed by the British electorate. The electoral defeat of Grogan in 1920 was an exception to the rule but that

52. Parkinson's minute (and punctuation) of 31 July 1920 on London Chamber of Commerce (East African Section) to Under-Secretary of State, 14 July 1920, C. O. 533/249.

53. Associated Producers of East Africa to Under-Sec. of State, 19 Dec. 1922 and reply of 10 Jan. 1923, C. O. 533/290.

defeat did not put paid to his political career for he was still Chairman of the Convention and still prominent in the nominated bodies appointed by the Governor.

It was when a favourable settlement for the Indians looked possible in 1921 that political pressure outside Kenya, as well as political power within, became necessary. The Convention sent delegations to South Africa and to England; the Associated Producers and the East African Section of the London Chamber of Commerce pressed the Colonial Office and an intense publicity campaign ran concurrently with the London negotiations of 1923. Despite the political pressure, the activists knew by January 1923 that they were fighting a losing cause. The Imperial Conference, the Standing Joint Committee on Indian Affairs, the Montagu-Churchill proposals, Northey's recall, Devonshire's insistence on the Wood-Winterton plan, and the extension of the Legislative Council all firmly indicated that arguments alone were inadequate; the impending settlement would definitely give the Indians equal rights of citizenship with the Europeans. The Westminster lobby was ailing. The threat of direct action not only salvaged the settler position but reversed the scales.

CHAPTER XVIII

"FOR KING AND KENYA": THE REBELLION THAT NEVER WAS

Reading the Report, you would imagine the conclusion came to by the Government had been come to after earnest consideration of what was right. Not a bit of it. It was to come after earnest consideration of the possibility of sending the Guards to Nairobi.

Josiah Wedgwood on the 1983 White Paper.

The activists were deadly serious in their determination to resist by every means any settlement favourable to the Indians. Plans for rebellion were drawn up as early as the summer of 1921 but they had remained dormant until Devonshire proposed definitely to settle the Indian question in January 1923. It was then that the Convention politicians solicited the support of the many ex-soldiers resident in Kenya and proclaimed that their seditious activities were inspired by a deep sense of loyalty to the Crown. The enemy was not the Empire but the misinformed Ministers who governed it. The example of Ulster resistance to Home rule was used as a justification for the prospective 1923 rebellion; in Kenya the

1. Hansard 5th series, v. 167, c. 543; Commons, 25 July 1923.

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white politicians' 'Ulster' was being threatened by the potential domination of the Indians. As in Ireland minority safeguards were not enough and the Kenya 'Ulstermen' wanted complete control of their own country. The battle between a handful of settlers and the mighty Imperial Government might, superficially, seem somewhat comical. In actuality circumstances favoured the settlers, not because they were capable of resisting an invasion of British troops but because the home Government was loathe to resort to suppression. The Conservative Ministry was in a delicate position and in the end Devonshire had no choice but to appease the settlers.

In August 1921, when Northey was at home in England, the Convention set up a Vigilance Committee of five members (including Delamere) whose sole object was to ensure that the 'irreducible minimum', formulated six weeks previously, was not reduced. It was essential that the British Government should know that this 'secret' organisation was in existence otherwise as a potential threat it would be meaningless. A public meeting was convened in Nairobi on 2 August and several speeches outlining the objects of the new Vigilance Committee were delivered. Six days later The Times reported:

The Indian situation has reached a very acute stage and it is understood that an organisation has been completed by the settlers with the object of resisting Indian claims by every means.

The activists wasted no time in informing Northey on his

2. The Times 8 Aug. 1921

return to the Colony that inistence on anything less than the
minimal demands would mean rebellion. Northey, of course, was
already adamant in his contention that a Colonial Office
dictated settlement would be impossible to implement. He
informed Churchill that the settlers had "an organisation
complete for resistance as last resource".³ It was not until
the middle of January 1923 that the activists called upon this
"last resource".

On 14 January 1923 Coryndon told the Convention that
Devonshire was determined to push through the Good-Intention
proposals. Two weeks later the news came through that the
elections to the Legislative Council would be postponed in
order to accommodate a settlement. The time was ripe for
Vigilance.

The instigators of the direct action campaign were
Delamere, Powys Cobb (both Legislative Councillors), and
Archer, the President of the Convention. After the Governor's
address on 14 January, Powys Cobb called upon Brigadier
General Philip Wheatley "to tour the country and set it
alight".⁴ Wheatley, who was a year younger than Delamere, was
a veteran of the South African War (1899-1901) and the First
World War. This ex-soldier settler from West Kenya was to
become the Commanding Officer of the so-called Loyalist

3. Northey to Churchill, Tel., 29 Nov. 1921, C. O. 533/
265.

4. Wheatley to his father, Lieut. Col. P. Wheatley,
17 Jan. 1923 in "Letters From and To Philip Wheatley:
Correspondence as a Settler in Kenya, 1919-23" (3 vols.,
Manuscript, Rhodes House Library), vol. 2., p. 96.

Similar motions were passed in many other districts⁶ and the activists' determination to resist was strengthened by Coryndon's announcement on 27 January that the current session of the Legislative Council would be extended. When the Bill was introduced two weeks later Delamere felt that such an "act was unwarranted by the precedents of the British constitution as laid down and was, in fact, illegal for that reason". He added that "it was nothing but direct action on the part of the Secretary of State and there was no doubt that direct action inevitably bred direct action".⁷

A week after the announcement of the prolongation of the Council, Wheatley had completed his lightning tour of the Colony and had covered over one thousand miles in the process. He wrote to his father indicating that the "pot will boil over in a few days". The "military preparations", he confided, were "practically complete" and it would be "a stiff fight if the Home Govt. pushes the insane course of action it has embarked upon".⁸ After the departure of the London delegation in March, Wheatley enlisted the support of two other ex-soldiers, namely Major C. G. Risley, a former Indian army officer, and Commander Lawford. These three formulated the plan of action should the impending settlement be unfavourable

6. All resolutions are enclosed in Coryndon to Devonshire, Secr., 30 Jan. 1923, C. O. 533/292.

7. Kenya Leg. Co., 8 Feb. 1923, p. 112.

8. Wheatley to his father, 4 Feb. 1923, "Letters", vol. 2., p. 98.

to the Europeans. If the necessity arose, a number of settlers would take over the administrative posts at Fort Hall while another party would proceed to Nairobi, kidnap the Acting Governor, and await instructions from Vigilance H. C. as to further procedure. It might seem ironic that one of the informants who divulged the plans to the Kenya Police was described as a man "who strongly supports the movement"; the activists had no intention of taking anyone by surprise.

The plotters of 1923 adopted the motto "For King and Kenya" which implied a loyalty to both the Crown and the Colony but not to the "short sighted ministers who were betraying the true interests of the King and Empire".¹⁰ Wheatley wrote that "the chief enemy is the Home Govt." and "every sop that is thrown to the Indian extremists only whets their appetite for more". He compared the situation of the Kenya settlers to the Orangemen in Ireland:

The problem before us in many aspects resembles that of the Ulster people though there are several differences. Broadly speaking both communities are fighting to remain in the British Empire and to maintain its integrity.¹¹

The resolution adopted by the Convention in February echoed the same sentiments. It was the "ill considered advice of His

9. See Confidential Report of W. K. Batchelor, Assistant Superintendent of Police at Fort Hall, to Commissioner of Police, Nairobi, 17 Apr. 1923, enclosure in Downing to Sec. of State, Secr., 25 Apr. 1923, C. O. 533/204.

10. E. Huxley: White Man's Country, vol. 2., p. 138.

11. Wheatley to his father, 4 Feb. 1923, "Letters", vol. 2., p. 98.

"His Majesty's Ministers" which was "calculated ultimately to endanger the integrity of His Majesty's Empire" and the Crown's loyal subjects would "be forced in action, prejudicial to His Majesty's peace". Coryndon referred to the resolution as having:

certain vigour since its wording was largely adapted from the wording of the petition of the Ulstermen in 1914 when Mr. Bonar Law was leader of the Opposition and largely responsible for Ulster's attitude and at the time the Convention resolution was passed Mr. Bonar Law was Prime Minister of England.¹²

The Ulster example gave the obviously seditious movement a modicum of moral defensibility. The activists were not betraying the Empire, they were fighting for its integrity. The British Government's "short sighted ministers" were the traitors.

The strength of the loyalist plotters derived from the weakness of the British Government. Although three Royal Navy ships patrolled the East African coast for weeks on end, the home Government felt that to resort to suppression was not only highly undesirable but impossible. At a joint Colonial and India Office meeting on the 21 February 1923 it was agreed that "the fear of direct action was justified to the full" but "force in no circumstance could be employed against the Europeans".¹³ As far as the local militia were concerned the

12. Resolution and Coryndon's comments thereon in "Coryndon Papers", Box 3/File 5, p. 35. Bonar Law resigned his office in May 1923 because of failing health and Baldwin took over as Prime Minister.

13. Minutes of meeting held in the Secretary of State's room, 21 Feb. 1923, C. O. 533/293.

activists felt sure that the officers of the King's African Rifles would resign their commissions before calling out the troops.¹⁴ It was a belief reiterated by Coryndon in a despatch to Devonshire:

I doubt if it will be possible to call out...the British Native Troops but it is most probable that if I were compelled to do so they would refuse to come out. The Native Police will of course be quite ineffective. Reading the Riot Act and declaration of martial law will be meaningless...¹⁵

An additional difficulty which the Governor emphasised in an earlier letter was that it would not only "be impossible for Government to gain information necessary to apprehend the whole of the persons concerned" but "that any persons so apprehended could only be tried by jury, and no jury under present conditions in Kenya would convict".¹⁶

Devonshire was thus placed in an unenviable predicament. On the one hand he could not retract all the promises made in good faith to the Government of India and on the other he could not cut down the irreducible minimum to the extent of provoking a rebellion. Yet to submit completely to the European threats of force was as much a sign of weakness as calling out the troops. The result was a compromise which substantially reduced the activists' minimum demands but denied the Indians equal rights of citizenship. The European delegates in London, while admitting that the White Paper was

14. J. Huxley: White Man's, vol. 2, p. 138.

15. Coryndon to Devonshire, Tel., For. and Secr., 3 Feb. 1923, C. O. 533/293.

16. Coryndon to Devonshire, Secr., 30 Jan. 1923, C. O. 533/290.

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not entirely satisfactory, regarded the settlement as a moral victory. The only problem was would it be accepted by the Vigilance Committee?

When the delegates left Nairobi in March they promised to accept nothing less than the 'irreducible minimum'. In February the East African Standard felt that "a settlement agreeable to both parties will never be reached".¹⁷ Wheatley was just as adamant for in a letter to his father he pointed out:

No settlement satisfactory to both sides can be arrived at whatever politicians and newspaper correspondents may say. One side or the other must climb down. We dont intend to. Nor shall we.¹⁸

By accepting the White Paper wholesale it did appear as if Delamere, Archer, and Wood had climbed down. Back in the Colony the Vigilance Committee threw out a resolution of immediate acceptance by sixteen votes to seven. But Delamere averred to the futility of protracting a controversy which had already been settled in the Europeans' favour¹⁹ and when the delegation arrived in Kenya on 1 September the moderate view had prevailed.

Meanwhile the Indian delegates cabled the Government of India stating that "this definitely anti-Indian statement made under the threat of violence by white settlers places premium

17. W. A. S. 9 Feb. 1923

18. Wheatley to his father, 16 Feb. 1923, "Letters", vol. 2., p. 99. Wheatley's underlining.

19. E. Huxley: White Man's Country, vol. 2., p. 160.

on methods of violence".²⁰ The Commons' champion of Indian rights, Josiah Wedgwood, expanded on this in a speech to the House.

...it was the threat of direct action...that made the Government reconsider their position. They were effectively brought to their knees by 9,000 settlers and there is not a word about that in the Report which we are now discussing. Reading the Report you would imagine that the conclusion come to by the Government had been come to after earnest consideration of what was right. Not a bit of it. It was come to after earnest consideration of the possibility of sending the Guards to Nairobi.²¹

From the activists' point of view the White Paper represented the virtual demolition of the Good-Winton proposals which had seemed so imminent only six months before. Even if the minimum demands had been diluted there was the consolation of the denial of the common roll. And even if Kenya was declared now to be primarily an African territory there was the assurance on p. 10 of Devonshire's Declaration that:

...there will be no drastic action or reversal of measures already introduced...the result of which might be to destroy or impair the existing interests of those who have already settled in Kenya.

Until January 1923 the representations of the Governors alone had been sufficient to counterweigh the might of the Government of India. In January, however, Devonshire had waited long enough for local agreement and, in view of the continuing co-operation between the Colonial and India Offices, was

20. The Times, 27 July 1923.

21. Hansard, series, v. 167, c. 543, Commons, 25 July 1923.

required to force the issue. Devonshire stood firm when Churchill had wavered and the activists realized they could bide their time no longer. The Westminster lobby was ineffectual but the threat of direct action coupled with a sympathetic Governor pushed Devonshire into a reluctant compromise.

Colonial Office officials had often intimated that the settlers were unable to appreciate their situation from an Imperial standpoint. By this they meant that the existence of Indian disabilities had connotations for the rest of the Empire. In the final analysis there was a far greater Imperial consideration, that of suppressing a loyalist insurrection with British troops. The Governor and the activists won through in the end. The integrity of the Empire was maintained. The hopes of the Indians were crushed.

CONCLUSION

For eight years after the Devonshire Declaration the Indian community in Kenya boycotted the elections to the Legislative Council. In 1931 five Indians were elected to the Council but they pledged to take no part in the proceedings until the common electoral roll had been conceded. Three years later the policy of non-co-operation was abandoned. It was not until 1960 that the common roll was introduced and then as a response to the emergent African nationalism.

After the growing détente between the Government of India and the Colonial Office the Indians had cause for disappointment at the outcome of the 1923 negotiations. They had been denied the equality laid down by the Good-Intention agreement and had good reason to believe that they had been thwarted by the representations of Northey and Coryndon and the European threats of force. Devonshire had affirmed European hegemony by intimating that there would be no reversal of measures already introduced. The 1923 White Paper signified a victory for the activists even though the minimum demands propounded at the Convention meeting of June 1921 had been reduced. The greatest fear of the white community was that of being swamped by an Asiatic flood and Devonshire, by eliminating the

contentious common roll, allayed that fear. To this all other matters were subsidiary. The Highlands was an academic question - one of sentiment rather than practical utility. As for education the Indians maintained that "the natural inclination to live apart should be allowed to take its own course and the stigma of racial segregation ought not to be imposed by law". It might be argued that even the common roll was a question of dignity for the Indians since the alternative communal franchise implied racial inferiority.

To the Europeans the concession of an integrated voting register would have had dire consequences for the future. When Devonshire proposed to prolong the Legislative Council session in January 1923 in order to reach a settlement the European colonists united against the common enemy. The large landowners, who had dominated unofficial channels ever since the grant of a Legislative Council, received the support of the soldier-settlers and the handful of European commercial men. Kenya as a white man's country was threatened.

The activists tried several methods of bringing pressure upon the Home Government. They turned to South Africa for moral support but the appeal to Brits proved fruitless. They endeavoured to influence British public opinion and a necessary prerequisite was to rid themselves of the image of an oppressive oligarchy of racial bigots. Segregation was "not

1. The Times 16 May 1923

2. Ibid. 20 May 1923

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necessarily to say that one class is above the line and the other below" but that these classes, Europeans and Indians, "are on different sides of the line".³ The hackneyed arguments - the most prolific being the professed concern for the welfare of the "natives" - were not taken seriously by the Colonial Office. Bottomley of the East African Department once remarked that "there is a large body of opinion here which would ridicule the idea of a Kenya European taking any interest whatsoever in the native except as regards the labour which he can get out of him".⁴ The lack of a convincing philosophy only weakened the Europeans' Westminster lobby - why should the Colonial Office act upon arguments regarded as fallacious? As a last resort the activists threatened rebellion and the Colonial Office at once became more amenable to the European point of view.

The reason for the British Government's submission in 1923 must be seen in the context of Kenya in an Imperial setting. In Kenya the West African and South African methods of government were equally untenable. Direct rule was impossible because the European population was too small to warrant it. Yet the existence of a white community obviated indirect rule or government through appointed chiefs. The result was an artificial compromise. The Europeans were allowed much say in local government but an unofficial majority and self-

3. Ibid. 25 Apr. 1923

4. Bottomley's minute of 4 Jan. 1922 on a Convention of Association pamphlet in O. O. 533/271.

government were out of the question. Similarly, use was made of governing African societies through appointed "chiefs" although the "chiefs" themselves were, in reality, alien officials among peoples traditionally led by councils of elders. The existence of a third party, the Indians, merely complicated the situation.

In practical terms the Kenya experience approximated more to a system of direct rule since political power essentially lay in the hands of the European activists. Devonshire surrendered the Wood-Interton proposals in 1923 because of the machinations of this small group of men. The victory of the 1923 White Paper, nonetheless, owed as much to the Governors' reluctance to impose a settlement as it did to the threat of rebellion. Northey's belief in "British European preponderance in government" meant that Indians had no part to play in the development of the country. Similarly, Coryndon's concern for the complementary roles of the Europeans and Africans in the economy in consequence, obviated Indian participation. Both Governors sincerely believed in white hegemony in government and the concession of equal rights of citizenship to the Indians was conceived as the biggest threat to white domination.

Churchill and Devonshire not only encountered the reluctance of the activists to accept anything less than the 'irreducible minimum' but the problem of finding a Governor willing to carry through an equitable settlement. Churchill replaced Northey but Coryndon proved just as obstinate. Devonshire's insistence on the Wood-Interton scheme culminated

In the bold fortification of the February elections to the Council. The upshot was the European threat of armed rebellion. The Secretary of State found it impossible to dictate a settlement favourable to the Indians and so he had to produce a White Paper which did not appear to be a submission to violence. The result was a compromise which indicated the Europeans' minimum demands but more significantly referred to Kenya as being an African territory where the native interest was 'paramount'.

The activists regarded this as a "false perspective which had to be adjusted"⁵ and Curzon's Dual Policy provided a convenient interpretation of the paramountcy clause. Although the Devonshire Declaration must not be regarded as the final statement in policy it was significant in that it preserved white hegemony and simultaneously took the heat out of the Indo-European hostility. The paramountcy clause was ostensibly an indelible mark which could not easily be erased by any pretence of a Dual Policy.

In effect the activists never did adjust the "false perspective". A year after the promulgation of the White Paper, the Legislative Council was removed from the corrugated iron shack which had been its venue since inception. With the expanding membership and the increasing sophistication of government the old meeting place was becoming too ramshackle and cramped. The new premises were located at Memorial Hall

5. M. A. S. 15 Sept. 1923

on Sixth Avenue, Nairobi. As a tribute to the settler leader the road was later renamed Delamere Avenue. Today that "false perspective" has been adjusted and the Memorial Hall, now the Bank of India, stands in the shadow of a line of trees on the pavement of Kenyatta Avenue. By June 1963 Kenya's African peoples were undoubtedly part of it.

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Rhodes House Library, Oxford, provides a wealth of private papers, the most significant being Sir Robert Coryndon's. Elspeth Huxley's notes to her White Man's Country and various novels offer good biographical details on prominent Kenyan activists and Governors. General Northey, much to the disadvantage of this thesis, left no private papers or reminiscences.

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Box LII, on the Indian question.

Boxes X-XV, for biographical material.

(iii) Letters from and to Philip Cheateley 21 Dec. 1918-28 Feb. 1923. (2 volumes), vol II, Correspondence as a settler in Kenya, 1919-23, Mss. Afr. s.799.

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Chilver.

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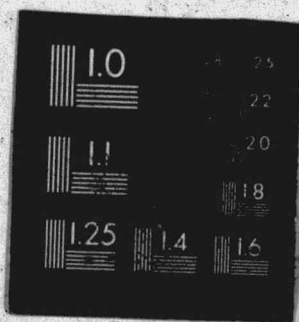
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APPENDIX IMINISTERS, PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS AND GOVERNORS RESPONSIBLE FOR
EAST AFRICAN AFFAIRS 1895-1931A. Commissioners and Governors of the East Africa Protectorate and Kenya(i) Commissioners

1895-1900 Arthur Hardinge (Consul-General of Zanzibar until 1896)
 1900-1904 Sir Charles Eliot
 1904-1905 Sir Donald Stewart

(ii) Governors

1905-1909 Sir James Hayes Sadler (Commissioner until 1906)
 1909-1912 Sir Percy Girouard
 1912-1917 Sir Henry Belfield
 1917-1918 Charles Bowring (Acting Governor)
 1918-1922 Major-General Sir Edward Northey
 1922-1925 Sir Robert Coryndon
 1925-1931 Sir Edward Grigg

B. Secretaries of State for the Colonies

Until April 1905 the Protectorate was under the Foreign Office, and the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs since 1895 were the Marquess of Salisbury (1895-1900) and Lord Lansdowne (1900-1905). Thereafter the Colonial Secretaries were:

Oct. 1903 Alfred Lyttelton

Dec. 1905	Earl of Elgin
Apr. 1908	Earl of Crewe
Nov. 1910	Lewis Harcourt
May 1915	A. Bonar Law
Dec. 1916	W. H. Long
Jan. 1919	Viscount Milner
Feb. 1921	W. S. Churchill
Oct. 1922	Duke of Devonshire
Jan. 1924	J. H. Thomas
Nov. 1924	L. S. Amery
Jan. 1929	Lord Passfield (Sidney Webb)
Aug. 1931	Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister (later Viscount Swinton)

C. Changes in the Colonial Office hierarchy 1918-23

1918

Sec. of State	Walter H. Long
Parl. Under-Sec.	W. A. S. Hewins
Perm. Under-Sec.	Sir George Fiddes

Jan. 1919- Feb. 1921

Sec. of State	Viscount Milner*
Parl. Under-Sec.	L. S. Amery
Perm. Under-Sec.	Sir George Fiddes

* Amery was Secretary of State from November 1919 until March 1920 during Milner's absence in Egypt

Feb. 1921- Oct. 1922

Sec. of State Winston Churchill
Parl. Under-Sec. E. F. L. Wood
Perm. Under-Sec. Sir James Masterton-Smith

Oct. 1922- Jan. 1924

Sec. of State Duke of Devonshire
Parl. Under-Sec. W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore
Perm. Under-Sec. Sir James Masterton-Smith

The Assistant Under-Secretaries of State (Crown Colonies Division) throughout these years were Sir H. J. Read and G. E. Grindle. The chief official dealing with Kenya in the East African Department was E. C. Bottonley.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE LEADING SETTLER POLITICIANS

The following pen-portraits of the prominent European politicians offers some insight into their background and position in Kenyan society. The list is arranged alphabetically.

E. Powys Cobb: Arrived in the E. A. F. at the turn of the century and immediately purchased 12,000 acres of land in the Rift Valley and by 1906 had acquired another 30,000 acres on the Mau Plateau. Cobb was a leading figure in the plans for rebellion in 1923 but was well ensconced in local politics before that, being a long standing member of the Legislative Council and one of Belfield's Economic Commissioners.

R. Berkeley Cole: Son of the Earl of Mansfield. Cole was Delamere's brother-in-law and a prominent Legislative Councillor. He was a member of Northey's Land Tenure Commission.

P. H. Clarke: One of the few men who represented commercial interests in the Kenyan legislature. Like T. A. Wood, the most renowned commercial man in the Local Government, he often adopted a hard line. Clarke, a merchant, was the elected member for Mombasa.

Baron Delamere: Born Hugh Cholmondeley (pronounced Chumley) in 1870. At the age of 21 he inherited his father's estate at Vale Royal in Cheshire on becoming the third Baron Delamere. The financial resources of the estate were drained to the limit to support Delamere's pioneering ventures in East Africa. His Equator Ranch at Ujori encompassed over 100,000 acres. In 1910 he purchased 10,000 acres of land at Soysambu near Lake Elmenteita for stock farming purposes and within four years had bought the land surrounding it from other settlers. By 1914 Delamere held 150,000 acres.

Delamere was the undisputed leader of the Europeans until his death in 1931. He was practically a permanent member of the Legislative Council and only illness, suspension, and resignation interrupted his attendance. The Baron was the first nominee appointed to the Executive Council and he was a ubiquitous member of the Government's delegated bodies. Delamere was prominent on the War Council, Belfield's Economic Commission, and Bowring's 'Geddes' Committee of 1921. He founded Kenya's first political party - the Reform Party - in 1920, having tired of debating "ineffective resolutions" in the legislative chamber.

E. Scott Grogan: Born 1874, England. Educated at Winchester and Cambridge where he studied law. After being sent down Grogan set out on a life of adventure in Africa and first went to the Cape where he met Rhodes. According to his biographer (Norman Wymers: The Man from the Cape (London, 1959) p. 134.) Rhodes told Grogan to give himself to Africa. Grogan,

however, chose to see it first and spent two-and-a-half years (1898-1900) trekking from the Cape to Cairo. Apart from the guns, porters, quinine and permanganate of potash necessary for such a trip, he also took along three Union Jacks. He then returned to South Africa where he served on the Johannesburg Town Council but the attraction of 64,000 acres of timber concessions in the E. A. P. proved too much for him; he arrived in the Protectorate in 1904.

Captain Grogan soon established himself in local politics and was regarded as Delamere's biggest rival for the settler leadership. His extreme views and violent speeches did not endear him to the majority of the settlers who voted overwhelmingly against him in the 1920 elections. Grogan, nonetheless, remained a leading spokesman and was prominent on the 1917 Economic Commission and Bowring's 1921 Committee. Morthey once sent him to meet the Under-Secretary of State to discuss the currency question.

As President of the Colonists' Association Captain (later Major) Grogan was in line for nomination to the first Legislative Council session arranged for August 1907. In March 1907, however, he took a leading part in the public flogging of three Kikuyu servants outside the Nairobi Court House. The incident cost him his place on the Legislature. Grogan's failure to enter Government may be attributed to his limited appeal to the whole white community which resulted from his identification with the more extreme South African settlers. His wealth and his friendship with the other politicians ensured him a place in public life.

A. C. Hoey: A farmer from Uasin Gishu. Captain Hoey was the spokesman on the Legislative Council for the ex-soldier settlers. He arrived in the Protectorate in 1919. Hoey was on the Land Tenure Commission which recommended large scale alienation of land without the prior approval of the Secretary of State.

W. C. Hunter: Grogan's brother-in-law was a long standing member of the Legislative Council and an appointee on Belfield's Economic Commission.

Northrup McMillan: Born in St. Louis, U. S. A.. Arrived in the Protectorate in the early years and bought 15,000 acres in the Rift Valley. In 1909 he purchased a further 14,000 acres. McMillan was an elected member of the Legislative Council from 1920 onwards and on one occasion took a seat on the Executive Council.

W. McLellan Wilson: Arrived in East Africa in 1897 and soon built up a vast estate in Kiambu which he devoted to coffee planting and dairy farming. He was elected for his district in the 1920 elections although he had already replaced Delamere in the Executive Council on 18 November 1919. Wilson was a member of the Land Tenure Commission appointed by Northey in August 1920.

T. A. Wood: An exception to the rule of large landowners in politics; he was a hardware dealer and auctioneer. He built

the first hotel in Nairobi (1900) which soon became known as the House of Lords for so many of the aristocrats stayed there. Wood later became Mayor of Nairobi. His political career is comparable to Delamere's since he was seemingly omnipresent at the Legislative Council meetings and was one of the first nominees on the Executive Council. Wood was also a member of Belfield's Economic Commission.

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