



ISSN: 0975-833X

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# THE COLONIAL CONTEXT AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF AINABKOI SETTLEMENT SCHEME IN ELDORET EAST IN THE NORTH RIFT REGION OF KENYA

\*Boit Kipchirchir John

Moi University, P. O. Box 3900-30100, Eldret, Kenya

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2015  
Received in revised form  
23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2015  
Accepted 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015  
Published online 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015

#### Key words:

Colonial Context,  
History,  
Ainabkoi Settlement Scheme,  
Eldoret East,  
Kenya.

### ABSTRACT

Ainabkoi settlement scheme, like other million-acre schemes in Kenya, was started in 1960-1967, to settle people from all parts of Rift valley. The programme was supposed to implement planned socio-economic changes, and was expected to work according to set out guidelines. However, most of these guidelines were set along the colonial agenda for land in Kenya. This paper seeks to analyse the colonial context that informed the historical foundations of Ainabkoi Settlement Scheme in Eldoret East in the North Rift region of Kenya. The data collection methods employed in the study included oral interviews, secondary data and archival sources. The analysis of data was done using both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the findings were interpreted against the framework provided by Rural Development Approach. The study revealed that the colonial conquest of Kenya after 1895 not only established alien political domination, but it also created conditions conducive to the penetration of capitalism in a more fundamental and thoroughgoing manner than in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the Kenya land regulations of 1897 empowered the government to issue new rights over unoccupied land provided they would not be prejudicial to nature interests, but only by means of certificates of occupancy and only for a period of up to twenty one years, although this period was later extended. To encourage such settlement, however, it was necessary to offer better security of tenure for settlers. To this end, the government pursued a lenient land policy designating areas to be reserved for European settlement. Nevertheless, in setting aside land for European settlements, the colonial government ignored the indigenous land claims and rights. The land policies had great repercussion on African land tenure and settlement pattern and the development and organization of agriculture. Land relations following the displacement of pastoral and agricultural communities were accompanied by many problems of human adaptation. These included famine and livestock diseases and plagues. In the case of agricultural communities, displacement led to widespread landlessness and discontent among the rural peasantry. The establishment of fixed ethnic boundaries badly disturbed the equilibrium between patterns of land use and availability of land. The consequences were enormous, a very rapid deterioration of land due to fragmentation, overstocking and soil erosion.

Copyright © 2015 Boit Kipchirchir John. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

**Citation:** Boit Kipchirchir John, 2015. "The colonial context and historical foundations of ainabkoi settlement scheme in eldoret East in the North rift region of Kenya", *International Journal of Current Research*, 7, (9), 20750-20756.

## INTRODUCTION

The colonial conquest of Kenya after 1895 not only established alien political domination, but it also created conditions conducive to the penetration of capitalism in a more fundamental and thoroughgoing manner than in the nineteenth century. As a colony of Britain, Kenya was expected to provide raw materials for industrial Britain while affording a captive market for the latter's manufactured goods (Maxon, 1992). Before and during the existence of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEACo), the possibilities of European settlement in the temperate areas of central and western Kenya had been noted and discussed.

\*Corresponding author: Boit Kipchirchir John,  
Moi University, P. O. Box 3900-30100, Eldret, Kenya.

The completion of the railway to Kisumu in 1901 offered the British government the hope that through immigrant settlement on a substantial scale, the railway could be made to pay for itself, thus enabling the government to recover the outlay of \$5.2 million spent on construction of the line (Hill, 1976). John Lonsdale points out that the reasons European settlers were invited were far more complex than producing more exports. Settlement was also justified as providing buffer zones between potentially hostile African communities; they would pin down pastoralism and separate the thorny opposites of export production and African authority (Berman and Ionsdale, 1992). With the completion of the railway line in 1901, one of governments' first preoccupations was to regulate landholding, particularly within the coastal area which at the time was

virtually the only part of the country affected by immigrant settlement. The Kenya land regulations of 1897 empowered the government to issue new rights over unoccupied land provided they would not be “prejudicial to nature interests” (Ghai and MacAslan, 1970), but only by means of certificates of occupancy and only for a period of up to twenty-one years, although this period was later extended. To encourage such settlement, however, it was necessary to offer better security of tenure for settlers. To this end, the government pursued a lenient land policy designating areas to be reserved for European settlement. Ghai and MacAslan (1970) observe that there were three cardinal policy implications to encourage European settlement. First, ensuring necessary legal powers were evolved to grant land to the White settlers on sufficiently attractive terms.

Second, provision would have to be made to regulate where the African inhabitants were allowed to cultivate land and tend their herds. Third, a decision had to be made to encourage Africans to work for the incoming Europeans. In order for these policies to be viable, the colonial system of land ownership had to be sustained by law that rigidly separated Europeans, Asians and Africans into strata of different status, rights and privileges. Moreover, the Crown Land’s Ordinance of 1902 vested all land in Kenya (other than land to which private title was established) in the British Crown as “public land” (Mungean, 1978). The crown land ordinance made provision for sale or lease of crown land for a term of up to 99 years. The commissioner (later governor) had powers under the ordinance to lease or sell land to settlers.

This allowed for the grant of leases of rural land for a term of up to 999 years (Ghai and MacAslan, 1970). This was to allow them to own land for a longer period of time. According to the 1915 Ordinance, those holding land under the 1897 and 1902 Ordinance redefined crown lands as including all lands occupied by the native tribes of the protectorate and all lands not reserved for the use of any member of any native tribe (Okoth-Okendo, 1991). The Ordinance provided for a system of registration of deeds in respect of all the leases. It is, however, important to point out from the outset that, in setting aside land for European settlements, the colonial government ignored the indigenous land claims and rights. In the eyes of Africans, all land in Kenya had always been occupied subject to the exigencies of the situation thereafter.

By 1926, the reserve demarcation process was completed and Africans were evicted to create room for European agricultural settlement. During these early days, conflict arose as a result of certain African tribal lands being taken over. These problems, together with overpopulation in certain African districts, led to an imbalance in the land situation. The problem was complicated further by the establishment of European settlement on over 3 million hectares of some of the best land in the country. The effect of this was to shut off any possible areas into which excess population could flow from those areas which were settled and occupied by the various African groups at the start of the country. Thus, the establishment of European settlement in the agricultural heartland of the country not only precipitated a land shortage, but also created a problem which became more and more acute as the population in the

surrounding African Reserves grew (Odingo, 1971). The land alienated in the highlands to Europeans was given by the Agriculture Department as 6,040, 360 acres in 1931. This acreage was distributed by the Agriculture Department as shown in the table below.

**Table 1. Land Use in the White Highlands (1931)**

Crop	Acreage
Coffee	98,704
Sisal	124,158
Maize	159,956
Wheat	43,168
Dairy, cattle raising	
Various and underdeveloped	4,495,281
Unoccupied	1,119,093

Source: Great Britain, 1934, p. 2274.

From the table above, White settlers had ample land for their future utilization referred to as ‘unoccupied land’. It may be fairly assumed that some portion of the acreage shown as “unoccupied” was held as collateral which provided a substantial portion of the fund utilized for development (Great Britain, 1934). The cash crops were allocated 425,986 acres of land which is less than the area occupied by dairy, cattle raising, various and underdeveloped land, 4,495,281 acres. Overall, it is clear that the white settlers were more privileged in terms of farming.

In the early stages, conflicts arose only in specific cases where African population had been moved and their lands taken over for European settlement. But in later periods, the dissatisfaction became so general and widespread that the Kenya Land Commission (KLC) of 1932/33 was appointed to look into the problem. The work of the Commission was to ascertain whether or not the natives had sufficient land for their purpose and the future. During the sitting at the Kenya Land Commission, the white settlers argued that Africans should not be encouraged to take up more land outside the reserves unless well controlled and they could take up land that would be in the far future (Kinyanjui, 1992).

### Statement of the Problem

Settlement schemes had several advantages as potential focal points of social and economic changes. Ainabkoi Settlement Scheme, like other million-acre schemes in Kenya, was started in 1960-1967 to settle people from all parts of Rift Valley. The programme was supposed to implement planned socio-economic changes, and was expected to work according to set out guidelines. One guideline, for instance, required that indigenous agriculture practiced by Africans be discouraged. Farmers were required to adopt mixed farming, which would enable the small holder to produce food and cash crops for sale (Freitzag, 1987). In essence, the scheme was supposed to assist its inhabitants to overcome challenges associated with poverty. However, the initial targeted settlers were the landless and former soldiers, but in the end these groups of people were not settled there. Was it, therefore, possible to attain the objectives of the settlement, given that the people who ended up settling there were people who had land elsewhere? The root cause of this problem lay in the very genesis of the settlement scheme.

Therefore, this paper examines the social, economic and political context that informed the formation of the settlement scheme in order to point out the root cause of and possible solutions to the problems inherent in the scheme.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study was premised on a qualitative research design. Qualitative research approaches are used by researchers who seek to describe and ascribe meaning to life experiences in a subjective manner. According to Merriam (2009), a qualitative design is appropriate when a researcher seeks to understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and the meanings they ascribe to the experiences. Thus, a qualitative design was used in this study since the study sought to explore people's perceptions of the historical phenomenon of settlement schemes, as well as the meanings they ascribed to Ainabkoi Settlement scheme in relation to socio-economic development. The study was informed by a constructivist world view; which focuses on understanding meanings and holds that a phenomenon under study can yield multiple participant meanings. In order to obtain, analyze, and interpret data, the study made use of the historical approach, which seeks to describe and examine events of the past to understand the present and anticipate potential future effects (Merriam, 2009). The data used in the study were qualitative in nature and were obtained from interviews using open-ended questions and secondary data from archival sources.

Ainabkoi Settlement Scheme is situated in the former white highlands in what was formerly Eldoret East District of Uasin Gishu County. The scheme consists of the East block, West block, North block and South block. The majority of the occupants of this scheme are from the native Kalenjin and migrant Kikuyu. The most important cash crops grown include maize, pyrethrum, tea, wheat and horticultural products such as vegetables, fruits and potatoes. The settlers also practice dairy farming. The majority of the people resettled were from the Wareng District. The climate of this region is wet and cool with an altitude of 2500mm above sea level (Republic of Kenya, 1994-1996), the amount of land allocated is estimated as 2500 hectares and each individual acquired an average of 40 acres. The size of Ainabkoi is 893 square kilometres. The area has 8 locations and 17 sub-locations. The population of the African settlers from the onset of allocation was around four hundred people but later the number increased as new people bought land from the initial settlers. The cost of administering the scheme was the responsibility of the members. Majority of the members who occupied the settlement scheme were landless, former workers of the white settlers, retired civil servants and former colonial soldiers.

The target population for the study comprised of the inhabitants of Ainabkoi Settlement scheme, both men and women, as well as officers holding administrative positions in the scheme – Chiefs, Divisional Officers, Village elders. Age was a considerable factor as it was necessary to identify those who were well-versed with the settlement schemes in order to obtain vital historical information; thus, heads of households formed the sampling unit in the study. Sampling was done purposively so as to ensure participation of people with vital

information in the study. Using this sampling technique, a total of 80 settlers were interviewed. An average of twenty African settlers per block was purposively selected based on the following criteria:

- Out of twenty, ten were categorized as progressive farmers in view of how they managed their farms in relation to acreage plated, and good housing facilities.
- The other ten were categorized as stagnated farmers. This category included those whose farms are fallow or leased to other people. Those with thatched grass houses fell into this category.
- In choosing the informants, variables such as age, sex, a good sense of maturity and command of historical knowledge were relied upon as a guide and geographical distribution where the criteria of choosing the formants and this exercise were made possible by help of chiefs, headmen, present and former leaders.

This study utilized both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data were collected by interviewing respondents in Ainabkoi settlement scheme. Secondary sources were obtained from various research libraries in Kenya, including the Margaret Thatcher Library (Moi), Kenyatta University (Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library), Kenya National Library (KNLS) Eldoret, Nairobi University (Jomo Kenyatta) and University of Eastern African Baraton (University College of Eastern Africa Library). Evidence arising from the above documents were analyzed, interpreted and proved useful in enriching those collected by the author from the respondents in the field. Archival research was carried out in KNA, Nairobi. The documents studied included Rift Valley Province and Uasin Gishu District annual reports, archival materials on post-colonial land matters as well as on land settlement. More information was gathered from the Ministry of Lands and Housing offices in Eldoret. Other useful files on land and settlement at Ainabkoi settlement office were consulted. With regard to secondary sources, archival material on post-colonial land matters as well as on land settlement was collected at the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi, and the Information was gathered from the Ministry of Lands and Housing offices in Eldoret. Other useful files on land settlement office at Ainabkoi were also examined.

Oral interviews were conducted in the settlement scheme. A total of eighty informants were interviewed. An interview schedule consisting of open-ended questions was used as much information as possible from the informant obtained. The economic and family background of the informants was investigated, specifically their experiences in relation to such historical events as the declaration of emergency, the land consolidation programme and their perceptions of variety of social and economic issues. During the oral interviews, the informants were given ample time to talk freely over the issues under study. Information was also gathered from one of the religious gathering seminar organized for the local community. Open-ended questions were asked and respondents were given time to give as much information as possible. The interviews were conducted in Kalenjin and Kiswahili languages because most of the informants as well as the researcher could speak these two languages.

During the interview session, tape-recording and note-taking were used simultaneously. Information recorded in tapes was transcribed and interpreted at the end of the working day and later synthesized with the set themes of the study objectives. The interviews centred on socio-economic changes in the pre-settlement and settlement schemes. In order to obtain more information about the initial setup of the settlement scheme, leading personalities at the time of inception of the settlement scheme were also interviewed. This group comprised former officials of the scheme, chiefs and assistant chiefs, former managers, and headmen, among others. Further information on the settlement scheme was obtained from archival material on Ainabkoi settlement scheme. The study also used the non-participant observation method in examining socio-economic activities of the settlers. The farmers' activities, social interactions and practices were observed. This method was useful in accessing information that the farmers were reluctant to give verbally. Detailed hand-written notes were also taken in the course of the interviews and the observation of community life.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Impact of Colonial Policies on African Land use

The land policies had great repercussion on African land tenure and settlement pattern and the development and organization of agriculture. Land relations following the displacement of pastoral and agricultural communities were accompanied by many problems of human adaptation. These included famine and livestock diseases and plagues. In the case of agricultural communities, displacement led to widespread landlessness and discontent among the rural peasantry. The establishment of fixed ethnic boundaries badly disturbed the equilibrium between patterns of land use and availability of land.

The consequences were enormous; a very rapid deterioration of land due to fragmentation, overstocking and soil erosion. There was also rapid disintegration of those aspects of social and cultural institutions relating to land use control, and emigration by those who could no longer find enough land to subsist on. As Maxon contends, the establishment of colonial settlements created the process of proletarianisation in Kenya as an increasing number of men and the households they headed became entirely dependent on wage employment for their subsistence and reproduction. The process of proletarianisation arose, first of all, as a result of the decision to encourage European settlement in the Kenya highlands. Moreover, the colonial state adapted a variety of other means to provide labour for settler ranches, farm and estates. Taxation was the major way in which proletarianisation was fostered (Maxon, 1992).

The hut tax first collected in 1902 was not meant merely to raise revenue or even to spur peasant production but it was seen as a means of forcing Africans to seek work away from their homes on Europeans farms. Taxation was insufficient to provide the amount of labour demanded by the European settlers and the state itself, as the settler production was not well developed during the early periods; neither was it able to offer wages and conditions of services attractive enough to

retain labour. With the peasant option available to many, Africans did not need to sell their labour in order to survive and as a result, the colonial state fell back on coercion as the most reliable way to obtain labour. Chiefs and headmen on orders from the colonial administration forced men out to work for the European settlers and the state (Maxon, 1992).

In 1926, when the boundaries of the African Reserves were defined, it became impossible for the Africans to move to the reserves in search of land for cultivation. Despite confinement on limited land, people continued to base their use and tenure practices on the old pattern until it became too small for their needs (Zwanenberg, 1973). The other reason that forced Africans out of the reserves was the need for employment. In the reserves, jobs were scarce and there was little if any income from the small plots of lands for who still had any (Lucy Kiritu, Personal Communication, September 20, 2009). Another dimension of change which pre-occupied the peasant agriculture was the transformation from purely production for consumption to the production for market. This marked the introduction of a monetary or cash system of production as opposed to economies of affection or subsistence. In Uasin Gishu District, the African farmer was not allowed to grow crops such as pyrethrum, maize, wheat and dairy rearing. He had *inter alia* to adjust himself to a new medium of change.

### Change of Attitude 1939-1960

There had been two conflicting schools of thought among colonial administrators concerning the retention of commercial African tenure working within the precincts of customary law on the one hand and, on the other, the recognition of individual tenure regulated by statutory law and free from traditional community controls. This dilemma was summed by the East Africa Royal Commission (EARC) (1955) which noted:

It is undoubtedly true that the majority of East African tribal communities today still believe that their security of land tenure has been in the maintenance of their rights as a community or as individuals protected by a local customary tenure (p. 32).

However, later the Commission in its report reversed its approach to African customary land rights. It noted that the policy of leaving African land tenure to continue unguided for most part under customary influence had not led to the individual security demanded by modern economic conditions. Later in the report, however, the Commission observed, the policy of leaving African land to continue unguarded for the most part under customary influence has not led to the individual security demanded by modern economic conditions (Brwn, 1968). The concern in the period preceding and after World War II led to a remarkable change in agrarian policy. The emphasis on agriculture during the war, 1939-45, to meet food requirements for the war effort led to the encouragement of Africans production of grains such as maize to feed the soldiers. To boost production to meet war needs, the Department of Agriculture and veterinary laid down policy guidelines on research and extension services for white settler farms. However, little progress was made or there were no funds to pay for the implementation (Brown, 1968, p. 29).

Post-war period saw colonial administration taking into cognizance African production. In 1947 African land utilization and settlement Board (ALUS) was established to help improve land utilization in African areas. ALUS hereafter renamed African Land and Development Board (ALDEV) was changed with the responsibility for availing credit facilities to Africans to improve African agriculture. The formation of ALDEV ushered a new phase as appertains to the resettlement of landless people. An African settlement Board was set up in 1945 to execute and coordinate the necessary action. Earlier settlements were started in Taveta and Makueni, Itembe and Molindiki (ALDEV, 1964-62). But many of these settlement schemes were badly conceived and had to be abandoned fairly early.

Attention shifted towards reconditioning and preservation of land, the so called betterment schemes. There was also need to settle the ex-servicemen. The settler population was boosted by an influx of British ex-soldiers who had served in the Second World War. The European Agricultural Settlement Board was created in 1946 to assist ex-soldiers to settle in Trans-Nzoia and Uasin-Gishu. The board gave loans to assist owners to develop their farms. Tenant farmers were leased land bought by the Board and given loans with which they could develop their land (Brett, 1973).

However, stiff rules were made under the Crown Lands Ordinance to deal with settlement schemes. These rules stipulated, among other things, to obey all reasonable orders as may from time to time be used by a settlement officer for the welfare and good discipline of the inhabitants of the area (Kanogo, 1987). One of the rules stated:

Except with permission of the settlement officer (or in some cases that of the native commissioner), no person was allowed to cultivate and depasture stock other than cattle or sheep (the maximum number not exceeding an equivalent to one head of cattle), to fell any timber, to admit anybody other than his wife or dependent into residence on his plot or to bequeath his interest in the sound plot to any person. Breach of this rule could lead to a fine (Kanogo, 1987, p. 122). Thus, this programme was not a genuine attempt to solve the African land problem as the settlement on a scheme did not entitle one to ownership but as mere squatters. Most of these schemes were ill-conceived and failed to take root. Moreover, it was disappointing that in most of the ALDEV schemes, productivity of the programme was not emphasized as large sums were spent on the soil control measures and digging of boreholes with minimal economic returns. In addition, schemes planned to eradicate tsetse fly did not achieve their aim and in terms of the total number (C. 11,000), ALDEV schemes hardly came anywhere near solving the population problem (Odingo, 1971, p. 167).

### Land Reform

In his discussion on the agricultural changes that took place in Kenya between 1945 and 1960, L.H Brown, chief agriculturalist, has classified agricultural changes into the following periods: 1945-1950, the recovery phase during which efforts were directed towards repairing the damage

caused by the policy of maximum production for war effort; 1951-1955, the planning phase when plans were made for long term agricultural development, including the well known Swynnerton Plan; 1956-1960 the phases of rapid development in which farm enterprises were greatly accelerated and which witnessed an agricultural revolution in some parts of the country (Brown, 1968). It is also important to note that by 1940, land scarcity in the reserves had become so critical that the demand for the restoration of "stolen lands" had become widespread with the outbreak of Mau Mau revolt in 1952. Accentuated by political agitation, it became clear that the land issue could no longer be ignored. The failure of the early settlement schemes and betterment schemes led to the discovery of a new kind of panacea for bad land use. The colonial experts show that the problematic factor in African land relations was tenure.

So the solution was to reform the tenure system. They argued that African tenure was predominantly communal in nature, and therefore inimical to proper land use. Clayton (1966) summarizes some of the arguments by saying, *inter alia*:

It is often impossible to tend land properly where a farm is made of scattered strips. It will obviously inhibit sound manuring policy and the proper use of resting land is made impracticable. It increases the difficulties of soil conservation (p. 12). The Swynnerton Plan of 1954 was launched with an objective of tackling the African land problems. This Plan aimed at changing the African land tenure system which it was argued was an obstacle to development in the reserves. Swynnerton was of the view that in order to achieve the objectives, the farmer needed security of tenure through granting of individual title deeds. This was to be done by consolidation of fragmented holdings into the parcel and then registering the parcel of land under individual ownership. These plans also envisaged new marketing boards to provide finance and expertise for pineapple, coffee, tea and pyrethrum growing in the African reserves. Swynnerton reasoned that in the process of individualizing land titles, some landlessness among Africans would undoubtedly be created as able and energetic, or rich, Africans would be able to acquire more land and bad or poor farmers less. This, according to Swynnerton, was a "normal step in the evolution of a country" (Great Britain, 1955).

This Plan had a marked impact on Kenya's agrarian policy. First, it was a policy shift from the conventional believes by the colonial state that the real problem with the Native Reserves lay in the use of land which caused soil erosion but rather the problem required fundamental reforms in the land tenure system. The second issue that can be noted from the Plan was that it ushered in the peasantization of the indigenous producer, a process which was to end with the creation of settlement schemes (Swynnerton, 1954). Many writers on the Kenyan economy have argued that the plan institutionalized a small peasant producer in the reserves and permanently and legally incorporated him into the capitalist state through loans and farm input necessary for the survival of a small scale producer. And yet according to Leys (1975), such a person could not become a full fledged farmer, since the size of his holding could not allow it.

However, the measures taken to promote commercial farming by Africans and the increase of commercial peasant farms were no solution for solving the problem of land shortage. Therefore, the solution was sought in another direction, namely the establishment of settlement schemes in the white highlands on land bought from European settlers. As Sorrenson contends, reform, comprising changes in land tenure in the African reserves, and the removal of racial barriers in commodity production marked the end of official limitation of agricultural development dependent upon the country's handful large European estates (Sorenson, 1968). As a result, between 1959 and 1963, the racial barriers to African land ownership in the white highlands were removed. The question then was, what prospects lay ahead for Africans as they underwent this transformation? Answers to such a question can only be fathomed when we assess the impact of the colonial agrarian policies on Africans.

### **African Response to the Land Problem**

Africans were dissatisfied with the colonial government for keeping them in the background in the government policies. They were deeply aggrieved by land alienation that had accelerated landlessness (Bogonko, 1980, p. 4) thus resulting in a sense of insecurity. Although before the First World War, Africans were determined to get adequate compensation for their land, the scarcity of land had not yet been acutely felt by them. Furthermore, before 1926 when the boundaries of the African Reserves were gazetted, Africans could cultivate or herd their livestock on land needed for public use (Sorenson, 1968, p. 19). In subsequent years, they were not allowed to cultivate outside their own reserves, thereby hardening their land grievances. Moreover, once the resources were marked for Africans they began to feel the full effect of population pressure (Kanogo, 1987, p. 11).

The problem of land shortage among Africans became worse after the Second World War. While the colonial Government opened the highlands for European ex-servicemen, it was not prepared to do so for African ex-servicemen, who were expected to get employment on European farms or be absorbed into reserves (Sorenson, 1968, p. 19). The Second World War had more far-reaching effects than the First World War. For the first time, African leaders united and founded the Kenya African Union to champion their demands (Bogonko, 1980). African grievances were strongly presented in one united voice rather than many different ethnic groups of the 1920s. By the end of the Second World War, the land problem was unsolved. The causes of the problem were regarded as population growth which had resulted in erosion (Zwanenberg, 1973).

To solve the problem, a ten-year plan was drawn up in 1946 (Zwanenberg, 1973, p. 22). It was intended to prevent erosion and enhance development but it did not succeed. The men who had participated in the Second World War had an effect on changing attitudes. The war had enlightened them on world affairs, and they wished to see justice done in their own country. From the 1920s the claims assumed more significance as officials like Harry Thuku became important stimulants to political action. They no longer wanted compensation, but the return of the land itself. The government appointed the

Swynnerton Committee to probe into the African land problem and recommend measures for improving African agriculture (Zwanenberg, 1973, p. 22). The Swynnerton Plan recommended the survey and enclosure of all high quality African land, the change of the traditional form of land tenure, the consolidation and enclosure of fragmented pieces of land and the opening up of cash crop market to Africans. The implementation of the Committee's recommendation of consolidation and registration intensified landlessness and poverty; many of the people were displaced (ibid.). The programme broke the Kikuyu land ownership system because it emphasized individual rather than clan ownership. The Kikuyu Ahoi (Muriuki, 1975, p. 35) and those who could not prove rightful ownership of land ended up being landless. In a parallel attempt to solve the Asian land problem, in 1953 the East Africa Royal Commission was appointed (Muriuki, 1975, p. 50). This commission, unlike the Kenya Land Commission (Coroy, 1973, p. v), recommended the removal of all racial and political barriers which in any way inhibited the free movement of land, labour and capital (Zwanenberg and King, 1975, p. 50) in the Kenya colony. The Commission recommended changes that would have brought in government policy in the colony.

Earlier, in 1960, the Kenya African Union (KAU) had written to the Secretary of State for the colonies, Ian Mcleod, describing the consequences of land alienation. It argued that the severe overcrowding in the African Reserves and mass exodus of Africans to towns and European farms to serve as cheap labour had increased poverty, malnutrition, crime and moral degradation among the Africans (Carey, 1966, p. 151). Mbiyu Koinange, an executive member of KAU, Ochieng Oneko, the Chairman of the Kisumu branch in their article, 'Land Hunger in Kenya', stressed the urgency with which the Africans wanted back their land and constitutional rights. Their argument was that "land in Africa is life and whatever economy people practiced, land is the basis of society or organization. Progress and development, therefore, starts when security land tenure is granted" (KNA, 1/50, 1951-52). But as long as the Africans remained tenants of the Crown, it was impossible for them to participate in development (ibid. P. 12). By the end of the 1950s, Africans were determined to have their land back while the European settlers were determined to keep it.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper has attempted to evaluate the administration and consequences of the colonial agrarian policy on the Africans. It has indicated how the established alien political domination created conditions conducive to the penetration of capitalism in the nineteenth century. Colonial agrarian law and institution articulated the peasant mode of production. It has also had a historical background to the colonial land policies and regulations that were implemented to displace the Africans from their land. It has also shown processes through which Africans were integrated into a capitalist economy. The alienation of African land and the subsequent encouragement of white settlers in the Kenyan highlands created what was termed the 'white highlands'.

L and alienation, therefore, became a major reason for African grievance against colonial government. Using constitutional means, and through various political associations, beginning in the 1920s, they demanded the return of their land. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the colonial government began African land settlement schemes to cater for the increased population and to clear some areas of tsetse fly, but these early settlement schemes did not solve the pressing land problem. The year 1960 was significant in the history of Kenya for two reasons. First, the Land Ordinance in Council that had previously segregated the Kenya Highlands for white settlers was repealed. Secondly, the state of emergency was brought to an end, and colonial rule in Kenya took a new turn as independent majority rule became imminent.

The advent of political change in Kenya was not welcomed by the white settlers, who subsequently wished to move out of Kenya. While the settlers were thinking of moving out, Kenyan ethnic groups were suspicious of each other, particularly regarding the issue of land. The various ethnic groups wanted to proclaim land they thought they had originally occupied prior to colonial rule. In the face of these circumstances, the colonial government sought a way of bringing about an orderly transfer of land from the white settlers to Africans. Therefore, in 1961, the Regional Boundaries Commission was set up to determine what land was to be handed to which ethnic group.

## REFERENCES

- ALDEV, 1964-62. *Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources*. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- Berman, B. and Ionsdale, J. (1992). *Unhappy Valley Conflict in Kenya and Africa*. London: James Carrey, p. 185.
- Bogonko, S. N. 1980. Kenya 1945-1963. *A study in Africa National Movement*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, p. 4.
- Brett, E. A. 1973. *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa the Politics of Economic Change, 1919- 1939*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., pp. 200-210.
- Brown, L. H. 1968. *Agricultural Change in Kenya 1945-1960*. Standard Food Research Institute, pp. 1-15.
- Brown, L. H. 1968. *Agricultural change in Kenya, 1945-1960*. Standard Food Research Institute, p. 4.
- Carey, J. N. S. 1966. *The Anatomy of Uhuru: An Essay on Kenya's Independence*. London: Manchester University Press, p. 151.
- Clayton, E. S. 1966. *Agricultural Development in Peasant Economies*. London: Macmillan, p. 12.
- Coroy S. M. 1973. *Kenya Land Commission, 1932-34 and the Kikuyu* (PhD Dissertation). University of California, Santa Barbara, p. v.
- East Africa Royal Commission 1953-1955 (1955). *KNA Report* (cmd). p. 32.
- Ghai, V. P. and MacAslan, J. P. 1970. *Public Law: a Political Change in Kenya*. Nairobi: UOP, pp. 8-15.
- Great Britain, 1934. *Kenya Land Commission Evidence and Memoranda, Vol. III*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, pp. 2271-2272.
- Hill, M. F. 1976. *Permanent Way. The Story of the Kenya Uganda Railway and Nairobi*. Nairobi: East Africa Literature Bureau, pp. 240-243.
- Kanogo, T. 1987. *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau 1705-1805*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, pp. 79-124.
- Kinyanjui, S. S. 1992. European Settlers Agriculture. In W. R. Ochieng and R. M. Maxon, *An Economic History of Kenya* (pp. 114-115). Nairobi: EAEP Ltd.
- KNA, 1/50, Ministry, K.A.U. 1/50 1951-52. *Prayer for Restoration of our Land*. 1.
- Leys, C. 1975. *Underdevelopment in Kenya. The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism*. London: Heinemann, pp. 177-178.
- Maxon, R. M. 1992. The establishment of the colonial economy. In W. R. Ochieng, and R. M. Maxon, (Ed.). *An economic History of Kenya* (pp. 63-91). Nairobi: EAEP Ltd.
- Mungean, G. H. 1978. *Kenya Selected Historical Documents 1884-1923*. Nairobi: East African publishing House, pp. 262-263.
- Muriuki, G. 1975. *A History of the Kikuyu. 1500-1900*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, p. 35.
- Odingo, R. S. 1971. Land settlement and Rural Development in Kenya. In S. H. Ominde (Ed.). *Studies in East African Geography and Development* (pp. 162-165). Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Okoth-Ogendo, H. W. O. 1991. *Tenants of the Crown. Evolution of Agrarian Law and Institution in Kenyan*. Nairobi: Acts Press, pp. 25-30.
- Sorenson, M. P. K. 1968. *Land Reform in Kikuyu Country*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press. pp. 1-154.
- Swynnerton, J. W. 1954. *Plan to Intensity for the Development of African Agriculture in Kenya*. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- Zwanenberg, R. M. A. 1973. *The Land Question in Kenya from the Nineteenth century to the Present Day*. Paper Presented at the Third International Congress of Africanists, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Dec. 9-19, p. 16.
- Zwanenberg, R. M. A. 1973. *The Land Question in Kenya: from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day*. Unknown Binding, p. 6.
- Zwanenberg, R. M. A., and King, A. 1975. *An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda, 1800-1970*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 50.

\*\*\*\*\*