

## **Land Alienation in Settler Colonies Compared: Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa** **By**

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### **Abstract**

This paper embarks on a comparative analysis of land alienation in three settler colonies namely Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. This article is a five-part work. The first part of this work highlights the definitions and importance of land studies in Africa. Land as a factor of production is the mother of all crises in Africa. The second part of this work outlines the history of settlers in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Dutch-East India Company, British South Africa Company and British East Africa Company were all actors in the setting up of settlers in Africa. The third part of this work examines the similarities and differences among the various settler colonies in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya in Africa. The fourth part of this work reviews the causes of land alienation in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. The causes and course revealed that disputes grew out of hostilities over land invasion. And the final part of this research is an appraisal of the colonial enterprise in settler colonies. A multidisciplinary approach to historical writing will be employed in this research to interrogate the facts and arrive at an objective conclusion.

**Keywords:** Land alienation, settler colonies, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa

### **Introduction**

African history is replete with themes ranging from settlements to state formation, group living, rise of empires, local and foreign influence as well as colonialism. In all these, one thing that is certain in most African studies is change and continuity especially as it concerns contact with Europeans. By the middle of the 17th century, a serious wave of change was instituted by the Dutch East Indian Company which set up a colony in South Africa. This singular action changed and influenced African History worldwide. This paper analyses the various dimensions of the encounter as well as their implications on the

three settler colonies. The main point of this research is to emphasize the fact that land alienation in the three settler colonies led to the pauperization and peasantization of the African people which generated hostilities with its attendant consequences. This article is therefore a contribution to the debate on land and labour history in Africa.

#### Definition and Clarification of Terms

The terms that require operational definitions are land, alienation, disputes, settlers and economy.

**Land:** Land is a free gift of nature. It consists of water, oceans, rivers, lakes, mountains, valleys, plains, mineral resources, habitable earth, vegetation and others. The land or the earth is an organic extension of society by which man/woman relates to the rest of the universe (Layiwola, in Layiwola et al (eds.), 2008). On this basis, land is held in trust by the collectivity to sustain society. In highly centralized societies of Africa, the trust is ceded to the monarch, not for profit but for purely usufructuary terms (Layiwola in Layiwola et al (eds.), 2008). That is, the right to use this property is kept in trust without diminishing, impairing or wasting its substance. As rightly pointed out by Udo (1992), any land which is no longer in use by an individual usually reverts to the community. Under customary land tenure systems in Africa, outright sale of land for profit is prohibited although land could be pledged for particular purposes. Therefore, the dead may lose their leasehold, but the living and the unborn own the land indefinitely. Against this backdrop, it is clear that the concept of the *latifundio* in Africa is a very contemporary attitude to the land as a piece of merchandise or commodity to the elite which profits by usury.

**Alienation:** In property law, alienation is the transfer of property to another person. Only that in this case, there was nothing legal about the transfer of African land to the colonizers in history. Actually, the land was forcefully taken from Africa hence the disputes and hostilities that followed.

**Disputes:** These are human conflicts occasioned by disagreements, greed, unequal distribution of wealth and substance of values. Disputes are integral parts of human existence.

**Settlers:** Simply put, these are immigrants in search of greener pastures. Most settlers are harbingers of colonialism and imperialism. The substance of imperialism, 'we must repeat, is economic exploitation of other peoples buttressed by military and political domination' (Amilcar, 1969). Colonialism is simply defined as the occupation and control of one nation by another. Colonialism is only one method by which exploitation is achieved. Britain

learned early enough that setting up formal colonial rule was not necessary initially, that is until it was absolutely necessary. Rather, she devised diverse methods of dominating sovereign nations and reaping the benefits without taking direct financial responsibility or formal colonialism. Britain used terms like “mandated territories”, “trusteeship”, and “protectorates” to avoid responsibility. These were not colonies at first but they were certainly part and parcel of the British Imperial system.

**Colony:** A colony is a distant territory belonging to or under the control of a nation. It could also be a group of people sent out by a government to a new territory. It should be emphasized here that the colonial enterprise was based on a well-articulated ideological premise which presented the white man as superior. The African could only hope to aspire to a European status and nothing more. The colonial conquest was followed by the creation of the enabling environment by the colonizing power consistent with the goal of colonialism namely, the economic exploitation of the conquered territories (Tangban, in Akinwunmi et al (eds.), 2006)

**Economy:** A term used generally to mean the system of production, distribution and exchange of goods and services in the society. It could also mean the basic economic activities of a nation.

Elementary Economics teaches that land is a factor of production. As a matter of fact, all other factors of production revolve around land. In Africa, the concept of land covers a wide range of spectrum such as forests, grassland, mountains, plains, valleys, vegetation, rivers, oceans, habitable earth and mineral resources.

Clarence-Smith (1979) and Palmer (2002) in their studies highlighted the necessity of land studies as follows;

- (a) land connects to major studies, research and policy focus in Africa;
- (b) issues such as rural poverty, food insecurity, conflict escalation and power tussles in most nations hover around land;
- (c) land conflicts reflect the failure of development in the area of absorbing growing population into industrial model;
- (d) land study shows the failures of agricultural transition to materialize while home market remains disarticulated

In line with this thought, Tiyaambe (2003) posited that land questions in Africa connect to a number of things such as;

- (a) national struggle for land reforms and reparations;

- (b) development nexus of the continent;
- (c) global control of natural and minerals resources in general;
- (d) pursuit of foreign investments in neo-liberal framework;
- (e) incomplete decolonization process in the settlers' colonies;
- (f) working of Global Finance capital in increasing conflict areas;
- (g) decline in the value of agricultural exports and the collapse of the nascent agro-based economy; as well as
- (h) The unresolved agricultural question in the settlers ' colonies.

These outlined importance of land make the study of land alienation and land disputes a vital aspect of African history especially given its economic importance. A comprehensive review of the major conflicts in Africa revealed that land is at the centre of major crisis in Africa. From Egypt to Cape Coast, Nigeria to Eritrea even as far as Madagascar, Land disputes have taken a great toll on lives and existence of people in Africa.

#### The History of Settlers in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya

The impact of geography on historical developments can never be over-emphasized. In Bunyoro Kitara in East Africa just like other parts of Africa, 'factors of topography, vegetation, climate, soil, human and animal diseases have had, over the centuries, a tremendous impact on its demographic history, settlement patterns, methods of warfare, communications, economic history and culture (Uzoigwe in Alagoa (ed.), 1998).

It is true that by 1900, the partition of Africa among the colonizing nations of Europe, France, Britain, Germany and Portugal was practically over, but the imposition and consolidation of European presence was not without violence: a violence that was not only exhibited in the 'gun boat' politics of colonial officials in the Delta, but also in the destruction of the social fabric of society (Orji, in Ejituwu and Gabriel (eds.), 2003).

The settler community of South Africa began in 1652 when the Dutch East Indian Company took daring steps to establish a permanent post in Cape Coast. After decades of migrations via the ocean, the Dutch settled for a community of settlers in Cape Coast. The main aim of the Dutch was to create a vegetable refreshment centre for staff of Dutch East Indian Company. The action of the Dutch was necessitated by the need to increase the defensive strength of the settlers against possible attacks by the other European nations. Ever since then, the settlers' community of South Africa has been in existence.

The settler community of Zimbabwe began when the British South African Company received a Royal Charter from Britain. By this Charter, the British South African Company has a right to;

- (a) expropriate and distribute land in North and Southern Rhodesia;
- (b) Expropriate from the locales their native land for the benefit of the settlers. This was achieved in 1902;
- (c) Make huge investments in land in order to assist new settler farmers; and
- (d) Develop infrastructure in order to open the country up for markets. Indeed International markets.

Lastly, the settlers' community of Kenya began in 1885 when Sultan Barghesh, the successor of Seyyid Said ceded his mainland to the German Emperor. Also in that year, the coastal area was also ceded to the British government in the name of Treaty. By 1887, the British and German governments reached a compromise on the administration of Kenya. On the basis of this agreement therefore, British East African Company was granted a Royal Charter to administer territory in Kenya. The settlers' community of Kenya took off in 1902, when the British government granted the private East Africa syndicate 1,300 km<sup>2</sup> of land in the Rift Valley. Between 1888-1902, the natives resisted the occupation of their ancestral lands vehemently. The British government was forced to revoke the company charter due to financial difficulties experienced in 1895. Following the revocation, direct rule was introduced. Also with the direct rule came some major changes such as;

- (a) Relocation of East Africa capital from Mombasa to Lake Kisumu in Lake Victoria;
- (b) The construction of railway lines from Mombasa to Lake Victoria.

#### Settlers Colonies: Description, Basic Facts and Operational Modalities

By settler colonies, we mean lands and regions which were annexed by European imperialists for farming, mining and other activities relating to production, distribution and exchange of goods and services in the society. These were European enclaves in Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Algeria, Mozambique and Angola used for agriculture and mining purposes. Our focus here is on Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The three selected countries, like other countries of Africa, experienced European conquest for spheres of influence during the scramble for and partition of Africa in 1884/1885. Indeed, it was the production in ever larger enterprises in the nineteenth century occasioned by the Industrial revolution that led to monopoly that needed commercial expansion outside Europe (Kums, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012). In the settler colony of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya

- (a) Agriculture was the main pre-occupation of the people; agriculture involved continuous struggle between the natives and the settlers;

- (b) Settlers operated on land acquired by conquest or manipulation of African people. In terms of administration, instruments of coercion such as the colonial army, the police, the judiciary and prison services were put in place to quell and check resistance by the indigenous people and ensure law and order (Tangban, in Akinwunmi et al (eds.), 2006);
- (c) Organizations and national governments connected to the settlers usually provided incentives and protection for the settlers;
- (d) Life at the settler community ran at the expense of the indigenous people;
- (e) Capitalism was the focus. Hence the settlers sought avenues to exploit, employ, pacify and influence with their predatory behaviors and attitudes.

Omar Cooper's description of settler community of South Africa, opined that cost was a key factor of consideration by the Dutch East India Company before the settlers community was muted. As a result, staff of the Dutch East India Company and voluntary retirees were given land on which to set up burghers. The settlers were a mixed breed of Dutch, Knetcht, Bantus from West Africa, Indonesia Muslims and some aborigines from West Africa. The settlers were men of considerable means with vineyards, cornfields, large slave establishments and farm houses beautified with Dutch gables. The settler community was a reservoir supplying labour population to the frontier areas where important development took place.

However, it is noteworthy to state that the earlier settlers were weakened by the harsh effects of wheat crop failures and borrowing. Most of these settlers were living in debt, and constant fear of attack from the Bushmen and Hottentots.

#### Growth of the Settler Colonies

The settler communities of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya grew by;

- (a) Numerical increase of white migrants;
- (b) Admission of French Huguenots refugees who were religiously persecuted;
- (c) Territorial expansion- from Cape Coast to the mainland
- (d) Adoption of valued skills within; such skills involved viniculture and wine making;
- (e) The initiation of material standard of living considerably above that of the natives;
- (f) Practice of the Calvinist religion with a stern moral code and its beliefs- predestination, division of mankind into chosen or damned;
- (g) Persuasion of natives, Masai, Kukuyu, Hottentots and Bushmen into immigrant services.

Besides, the settler colonies were indeed influenced by factors such as the flexibility policies of the Dutch East Indian Company, British East African Company, and British South African Company. Other factors were the hostilities of the natives, easy access to market, and proximity to the coast, freedom to import slaves between 1716 and 1807 from Madagascar, West Africa and Malaysia.

The agricultural components of the settlers economy was revealing. It was a combination of complex interactions of physical, human geography, history and political economy. Settler farmers adapted to the economic variations and conditions of the soil. There was a consortium of land usage. Indeed the farmers knew how to manipulate and exploit their respective ecosystems each of which demanded different forms of land management. Basic parameters for agricultural practices set by the settlers in the three countries included but not limited to;

(a) soil formation; (b) adherence to patterns of rainfall; (c) knowledge of nature and range of crop grown; (d) the existence of drainage system; as well as (e) harnessing the benefits of natural climate. In later years, agricultural development in the settler colony was affected by factors such as division of labor, market structure, revenue base of the state, rules governing land tenure systems; the society incorporation into regional and international markets. Indeed, colonial regimes abolished slavery, but they replaced it with other forced labour schemes (Frankema and Waijenburg, 2012) which were intensified in the settler colonies generating discontent and disputes.

The Similarities among Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa Settler Colonies

Were there similarities and differences in the settler colonies of these three nations? If yes, what were these differences? Over the years these questions have reverberated among scholars. Indeed, the main outlines of their stories were the same.

However, the similarities that existed among the three settler colonies were:

- (a) Land was a factor in the history of the liberation of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. In Kenya, Europeans had exclusive rights over land. Through various means of land acquisition in the Kenyan Highlands, large acres of land were alienated to individual European to cultivate and prospect for minerals. For instance, two syndicates and four individuals were allocated about 50 percent of land in the Rift Valley (Nabudere, 1981). Neither Africans nor Asians were permitted to hold land in the Highlands and Europeans were allowed to hold it on lease for 999 years (Brett, 1977). Africans who lived on this land were called squatters. It was a repeat of the land policy of the South African apartheid government. A Reserve was set up by the

colonial government for the indigenous Kikuyu who own the Highlands, hence their agitations against such injustice that led to the formation of Mau Mau activities which culminated in their independence;

- (b) Zimbabwe's socio-political and economic practices bear some similarities with Kenya and South Africa because of white occupation and segregation resulting from dispossession of land, which also made their independence bloody. The process of decolonization in Africa assumed different dimensions. While some got it on a 'platter of gold', others had to fiercely fight the colonial powers to wrest independence from them (Ker, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012). For Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, they fought fiercely for their freedom because of the presence of white settlers who refused to let go of the land without a fight. For instance, in 1952 and 1953, the British colonial government in Kenya arrested the entire leadership of Kenya African Union and proscribed the party. The aim of the colonizers was to discourage any form of nationalism among the colonized. The action of the British angered the Kenyans and many of them went into the forests to embark on armed struggle against the colonizers under the auspices of the Mau Mau Movement (Ker, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012);
- (c) Military conquests were used to annex land in the three countries;
- (d) Missionary movement and activities provided ideological support for colonialism in Africa in the three countries. It was not so much agriculture that the missionaries considered the civilizing mission but rather the commerce that resulted from it. Agriculture was recommended to the African as a way of producing the legitimate articles of the trade that would link him with Christian Europe (Ajayi, 1969);
- (e) African peasants were located into units by the various settler governments on natural reserves, African reserves, Tribal Trust and Communal Areas;
- (f) The settlers' resources in these three countries degenerated as a result of over-population;
- (g) Most schemes in these settler colonies were started from above-they were not real priorities of the colonies;
- (h) Individual and group contributions were recognized through token rewards such as badges;
- (i) Wage labour was manipulated by the capitalists in Southern Rhodesia, Kenyan Highlands, North-Western Zimbabwe and in South African Mines to work against the Africans. They deliberately discouraged permanent town settlement by African workers, preferring short work contracts so as to maintain a perpetually unskilled workforce. An unskilled workforce kept overhead costs low and all workers benefits and allowances are ignored;

- (j) The most important function of the labour recruiting agencies in these settlements was to frustrate the independent geographical mobility of Africans in the labour market;
- (k) There were State interventions by way of Legislations- Tomlinson Commission (1948) in South Africa, Swynnerton Plan (1955) in Kenya and the Morris Cater Land Commission (1925) in Zimbabwe. There were also negotiated peace settlements such as the Lancaster Constitution in Kenya and the Lancaster House Agreement in Zimbabwe. However, the peace settlements just like the state interventions had clauses that called for the protection of property rights and this entrenched the inequalities of this era (Makaye, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012).
- (l) State interventions in the settler communities of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa engendered resistance where chiefs, herdsmen and white land development officers were attacked by Africans. African chiefs who had been granted delegated extensive powers to rule their own people on behalf of the British became more like village despots and 'citizens' empowered by legal means to govern the 'subjects' (Mamdani, 1996, Machiavelli, 1996, Lonsdale, 1979). The chiefs subjected their people to repressive and humiliating treatment that ranged from forced labour, unfair tax assessment and collection, corruptive tendencies, discrimination based on religion and later political party differences (Ogola, 1993, Pratt, 1965, Karugire, 1980). Being appointed from above, they worked hard to safeguard their security of Tenure, thereby resorting to coercive and uncooperative methods of tax collection (Mamdani, 1999);
- (m) Legislations were used to control labor activities in the reserves;
- (n) Lack of access and taxation were used to compel Africans to seek employment or become resident labourers. The people were compelled to succumb to commodity production for export. Cotton was the major cash crop which was used to transform Africa as a whole into peasants and workers (Odoi-Tanga, 1992; Lonsdale, 1981, Ogola, 1993). The money obtained from the sale of cotton was used to buy manufactured goods, pay fees for their children and wards, and to pay taxes ;
- (o) In these three settler colonies, policy makers were well informed by the logic of market. The colonization of Africa by European powers including Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal brought Africa into the world economic system as a major target for exploitation. Africa not only provided Europeans with a source of raw materials but it also provided them with what they viewed as raw, uncivilized people (Maddox, 1993);
- (p) In all three countries, colonialism not only failed to solve the many problems that inhibited economic growth in their pre-colonial history, but created new sets of difficulties. These difficulties came in the form of discontent which began to be

organized into movements that soon demanded political equality and ultimately independence (Collins and Burns, 2014).

- (q) In all three settler colonies, there was a calculated and systematic pauperization and peasantization of the African people through various colonial economic policies. These included but not limited to: monetization; taxation; wage labour; introduction of European goods; and the insistence on the cultivation of cash crops in favour of food crops.
- (r) The similarities notwithstanding, there were incontrovertible differences among the three countries because colonialism manifested in different ways using different methods in Africa.

## **Differences**

### **Zimbabwe**

The people of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa and by extension Africa generally, either resisted or collaborated with new invaders. This decision was often determined by the zero-sum and non-zero-sum game theories. Whereas the zero-sum game theory was the direct resistance approach, the non-zero-sum game theory was the collaboration approach (Kums, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012). However, in the long run, even the collaborators became resisters in one way or the other for obvious reasons.

Zimbabwe differs from the others in that land alienation was carried out for over 55 years 1910-1965. For most of the period of colonialism, the major employers of labour in North-Western Zimbabwe were the Wankie Colliery Company, the Kamativi Tin Mines, the Rhodesia Native Timber Concessions and the Rhodesian Railways which were all concentrated in the Wankie District (Ncube, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012). When the Shangwe were faced with the option to earn money in the cash-based market economy, they already had a thriving tobacco business among the Ndebeli. In addition to the traditional Ndebeli market, colonialism initially aided the development and expansion of the Shangwe tobacco industry by increasing its market due to the establishment of mines and towns in the Wankie, Bubi, Gwelo and Hartley districts. As a result, they had no need or desire for wage labour to meet their tax obligations until much later. The whole of North-Western Zimbabwe was a low wage area and could not attract labour for its mines and farms; even the largest employer of labour in the region, the Wankie Colliery had to rely on the labour recruiting system that Southern Rhodesian government introduced in 1903 at some point. However, many independent 'high-wage migrants' from Northern Rhodesia soon realized that it was dangerous to travel along the main routes to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa because of fear of being intercepted by the Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) agents. The RNLB was formed in 1903 as a response of the

Southern Rhodesian government to curtail the labour shortages in the low-wage areas. Besides, the ownership of land drastically changed after independence in Zimbabwe. Land became the rallying point of peasants' 'conscientization'. Thus, liberation movement became elevated to personal and local discontents of local peasants to national level. In Zimbabwe land settlement programs were seen as key role in land reforms.

The causes of land disputes in Zimbabwe could be located in the Royal Charter the British South African Company secured in 1889. By implications, the natives were expropriated from their land in North and Southern Rhodesia, more settlers were welcomed with incentives, provision for infrastructure was also made for the new settler communities. The Zimbabwean disputes were further accentuated by:

- i. the creation of the African reserves in 1890 in Metabele;
- ii. laws and legislations such as the Southern Rhodesia Crown Council 1888, Land Appropriation Act of 1903, Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and Land Tenure Act of 1969; and
- iii. Inequity in Land distribution.

Tiyambe (2003) argued succinctly that the causes of land dispute in Zimbabwe were traceable to a number of factors such as: (i) settlers land expropriation, tribute nature of African societies, private property relations in a number of countries, land concentration and inequity, land holding monopoly of semi-feudal lords and "financialization" of capital. This dimension lends credence to capitalism and all its ills. Zimbabwe was a free holding society until the settlers arrived. The people operated a peasant economy of subsistent agriculture. Labour was a function of communal efforts. Remuneration was based on needs rather than money. The arrival of the settlers drastically changed the focus of the society, hence the land disputes.

### **South Africa**

South African differences were such that the ownership of arable lands was consecrated in the hands of estimated 60,000 white capitalist farmers. 70% of the rural population lived in poverty. Land sentiments later helped to define the scope and pattern of nationalism in South Africa. Land reform in south Africa was hinged on the three principles namely restitution, re-distribution and reforms. Most labour studies over the years have concluded that the entire Central and Southern Africa during the colonial period could be seen as a single labour market divided into more central, high wage areas (mainly located in South Africa and the major towns of Southern Rhodesia), and the more peripheral low-wage areas. And that in the territorial competition for labour, the high-wage areas drew labour away from the low-wage areas, which consequently experienced scarcities (Stichter, 1985).

The land disputes of South Africa began gradually from the point of contact among the races. Suddenly, the white settlers began to imbibe the teachings and doctrines of the Calvinist church - some are chosen while others are damned. God became demystified as a sentimental God. Class and social stratification became the order of the day. The affinity and bond that existed between the natives and settlers waned. Material acquisition consciousness grew. The white had suddenly realized that Africa is the periphery of the Dutch metropolis. According to Turner (1981), the officials of the comprador state merges with the local commercial class who are content with idle exploitation rather than creative cultural practice. This class, in the words of Bauer (1954), would rather strengthen foreign monopoly to displace indigenous entrepreneurship and initiative.

Omar Cooper opined that South African land alienation and the resultant disputes were caused by population growth, invasion of ancestral lands of the natives by white settlers, war between the settlers and the natives, the introduction of slave trade in 1716, physical confrontation between the natives and the settlers, capitalist drives of the settlers; as well as the introduction of the Commando system by the white. It is common knowledge that economic factors usually produce hostility between the in-group and out-group in situations of international migration (Albert in Layiwola et al (eds.), 2008).

Before the arrival of the settlers, South Africa was composed of Hottentots, Bushmen, Bantus and a few other tribes. Hottentots were herdsmen who had no definite settlement. As far as they were concerned the whole land estates were theirs. But their cousins the Bushmen were farmers with strong aggression and unrefined behaviors. Farming was their pre-occupation even as they lived in remote villages. The invasion of their ancestral lands especially across the mountain was a huge insult on the tradition they inherited.

Land disputes as stated earlier are human conflicts or crises occasioned by greed, disagreements, unequal distribution of wealth or substance of values. Disputes are integral parts of human existence. It is on record that before the land disputes in these settler communities, the settlers and the natives co-existed, shared common sense of belonging and inter-married. (Anne and Brown, 1968) recorded that a settler surgeon was married to a Christian Hottentot woman called Evra in a colorful ceremony. In addition, freed Negro slaves had the privilege of acquiring burghers and capitalist status among the settlers of South Africa. Besides, the children of white settlers produced by intermarriage were readily accepted as members of the white communities.

## Kenya

In Kenya, the differences could be seen through the Crown Land Ordinance of 1902. Land ownership was skewed in favor of the settlers. This thus resulted in the Mau Mau Kenya land freedom army. The Mau Mau revolt formed the basis of Kenya nascent land reform program and transition to independence.

Kenya has a history of violence owing to the collaboration of British and Arab Muslims to unseat Seyyid Said of Omani Empire. Arab contacts had infused in the people a culture of violence and intolerance. This same attitude was carried out when the British East African Company took over 1,300km<sup>2</sup> of their land for tea cultivation. Kenya is named after Mount Kenya which is derived from the Kikuyu word "*KereNyanga*", meaning, "mountain of whiteness" (Anene and Brown (eds.), 1966). Although the first white men to arrive Kenya were the German agents of the Anglican Church Missionary Society namely Johann Kraft and the Reverend Johannes Rebmann, it was the British who encouraged white settlement and eventually colonized the country when the British traveller, Joseph Thompson first reached Kenya and aroused British interest in the area in 1883. Thus, British and German competition for control of Kenya led to the agreement in 1890 to divide the hinterland into Britain and German spheres of influence (Ingham, 1962). Thereafter, Britain entrusted her area of influence to the Imperial British East African Company which had been given a royal charter to operate in East Africa. In July 1895, it was declared a protectorate and ruled from Zanzibar by the British foreign office. In 1896, 1897 and 1905, a series of British expeditions subdued the Kenyans to surrender especially the Naandi resisters in the interior for the strategic factor of securing Britain's access to the Indian Ocean through Uganda (Kums, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012). In Kenya, British forces guided by Africa collaborators like the Kamba, pushed their way into the interior from the East African coast slowly overcoming resistance from one ethnic group to another (Kums, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012). But here, unlike other parts of East Africa, the British encouraged white settlement especially on the Kenyan highlands, which was the fertile area traditionally farmed by the Kukuyu. It was now named White Highlands and they declared the territory a British colony. In 1920, Britain declared the protectorate a British colony and named it Kenya. More European settlers later arrived from South Africa in 1904. Other settlers came in from Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. As a result, a legislative council was created to enable the settlers influence government policy in their favour. This enabled them to acquire more land for themselves by pushing the Kukuyu to the reserves. The Africans were restricted from growing profitable crops like coffee. Kenya had a lot of white settlers on the Kenyan highlands and as a result, a system known as *Kipande* was introduced. This was a system whereby every farmer moved around with an identity card. This was most effective among the Kukuyu and Masai where most whites

settled. It was among them that the nationalist movement known as Mau Mau arose as a form of resistance to white settlements and their anger against loss of their fertile land in the highlands.

The Mau Mau were those who mixed their blood with coffee and ate for special powers especially in times of wars (Oliver and Atmore, 1968). In an attempt to effectively exploit East Africa, the British attempted at federating the three East African countries of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania in 1924. This idea was initiated by Sir L. S. Amery, the colonial secretary in 1925 who appointed Lord Edward Griggs as governor of Kenya to carry out the possibility of establishing this federation (Anene and Brown (eds.), 1966), for purely exploitative reasons which revolved around the particular interests of colonialism. However, this did not happen until after the Second World War when it became expedient to have a central administrative body to co-ordinate the East African territories under Britain. This led to the formation of the East African Commission in 1947 with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya (Anene and Brown (eds.), 1966). Nevertheless, by 1952 and early 1953, the British colonial government in Kenya arrested the entire leadership of Kenyan African Union and proscribed the party (Ker, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012). This party was formed because the discontent over the seizure of Kenyan fertile lands was heightened and this indeed led to the formation of the Kenyan African Union. The proscription angered the Kenyans and many of them went into the forests and embarked on armed struggle against the British colonizers in the form of a secret society known as Mau Mau with the main aim of recapturing African land by force (Anene and Brown (eds.), 1966). The British administration suspected that Jomo Kenyatta was responsible for this. He was arrested and imprisoned for seven years. After his release, he led a delegation to London in November, 1961 to negotiate the independence of Kenya. Consequently, on December 12, 1963, Kenya became independent with Jomo Kenyatta as its first president and Oginga Odinga as the vice president and the ruling party was the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), which won against the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU) formed by Ronald Ngala and Masindo Muliro (Benneth, 1963). It is clear that the social, economic and political experiences that were engendered by colonial Africa have produced tremendous contradictions and conflicts that culminated into bloody wars, such as the Mau Mau wars and the Maji Maji Uprising.

### **British Settler Colonies: An Appraisal**

The European colonization of Africa is a hotly debated issue. From the plethora of literature available on this subject, three schools of thought have emerged. The first school of thought represented by imperial proconsuls like Perham, Lloyd, Duignam and Gann claims that in the event of a balanced sheet being drawn, colonialism was either a blessing

or, at worst, not harmful (Duignam and Gann, 1967, Perham, 1970, Lloyd, 1972). The second school of thought comes from liberal-nationalist, dependency and Marxist scholars who see nothing positive about colonialism. In fact, one of the proponents of this school, Walter Rodney said that:

The argument suggests that, on the one hand, there was exploitation and oppression, but, on the other hand, colonial governments did much for the benefits of Africans and they developed Africa. It is our contention that this is completely false. Colonialism had only one hand-it was a one-armed bandit (Rodney, 1972).

A third school emerged in a bid to have a more balanced view as opposed to the two "extremist" views. Their aim was to view in totality the multi-dimensional effects of colonialism. Indeed as Boahen posits, "many of the so-called benefits of colonialism were, by and large, accidental by-products of activities or measures intended to promote the interests of the colonizers" (Boahen, 1985). These positive efforts can, therefore, be seen as "defaults of the iron law of unintended consequences" (Mazuri, 1980). Consequently, the infrastructures, political structures, lingua franca, fiscal and monetary policies, religion and basic education they introduced were designed primarily to facilitate the exploitation that occasioned colonialism, not in the interest of the colonized people (Ochefu, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012). Furthermore, because the colonizers did not see the development of the colonised as a priority at all, they stand condemned (Ochefu, in Mangut and Wuam (eds.), 2012).

From our study of land alienation and land disputes in the three African countries of Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, and by extension Africa, the position of the third school whose balance sheet of colonialism shows more deficit than credit, if any, is glaring. The observations of Orr (1965) and Lord Lugard (1922) are clear testimonies to this contention.

Settler colonies and land alienation in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya revealed the importance of land study in Africa. Major conflicts in Africa were precipitated by land. Land as a factor of production has relevance for food security, private entrepreneurship and market development.

The history of settler communities/economies/colonies in these three countries revealed that Africa lands were annexed by conquest, persuasion and inducement. The British and Dutch Companies were used by European imperialists to further the course of capitalism

in Africa. Using the Calvinist religion as a tool, settlers demystified the existence of God even as racial superiority was fostered.

The causes of land disputes in these countries revealed that simple hostility of the natives because of invasion of their ancestral lands spilled over to open confrontation and wars. The post war-effect of this clash resulted in restitution, re-distribution and reform in Zimbabwe; even as it furthered the course of Apartheid in South Africa. The climax of land alienation in Kenya, led to the rise of Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya and the Mau Mau movement. Kenyatta was imprisoned and released before he became the first elected president of Kenya.

### **Conclusion**

The daunting challenges in the form of fiscal, monetary and labour policies deliberately and consciously instituted by the colonizers to compel the colonized to play the roles designed for them by the colonial authorities exacerbated the social and economic conditions of the people. Given these institutional and systematic exploitation occasioned by colonialism, these three countries of Africa had to wage multi-dimensional struggles to retain considerable measure of their socio-economic identity and eventual independence. These events, though separated in time and space, affirm a certain emotional and somewhat organic attachment to the land as an occupational and livelihood symbol especially in Africa. The process of life generally proceeds from a thorough historical awareness and that is what this research has generated- awareness borne out of historical research. This awareness should galvanize and propel the leaders and followers alike into actions capable of changing the narrative. Because if this colonial legacy is not demystified and confronted in every ramification, its attendant problems which we are still grappling with will be passed on to future generations and development will remain elusive.

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