



The Mau Mau Genocide: A Neo-Lemkinian Analysis

Martin Crook*

*Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Study,
University of London, UK*

Abstract: This paper attempts to analyse the colonisation of Kenya by the British colonial government and the necessary genocidal effect on the ethnic group known as the Kikuyu through the lens of genocide as understood by Raphael Lemkin, the neologist of the term, and the post-liberal tradition he inspired. The latter tradition is grounded in a sociological understanding of genocide which this paper will argue is the most appropriate methodology in the study of a phenomenon which is itself of a sociological nature. Only by applying what has come to be known as a Lemkinian analysis, infused with a Marxist analysis of social entities, (international) political economy and geo-politics can the structures of genocide not only be revealed but explained. What will be termed a neo-Lemkinian analysis, will demonstrate the critical role of the capitalist mode of production and its attendant state both globally and locally in the destruction of the group life of the Kikuyu. The relations of genocide will thus be shown to be capitalist relations of genocide.

Keywords: capitalism, genocide, neo-Lemkinian, Marx, Kikuyu, colonialism

*martincrook1871@live.co.uk

1. Introduction

'Genocide is collective homicide and not official vandalism or violation of civil liberties': It is directed against the life of man and not against his material or mental goods¹

Genocide is what Powell² has called an essentially contested term. There is no universally agreed sociological definition of what constitutes an act of genocide. Perhaps a more apt characterisation would be to see genocide as an essentially invidious term, for it arouses almost by definition heated, divisive debate, it polarises inflexible opinions and engenders intractable and partisan obstinacies. There are as many theories of genocide as there are 'cases' or instances of it. The red mist that descends among scholars of genocide seems the very opposite of dispassionate and disinterested observation and analysis that are the hallmarks of any science. But who among us can genuinely claim that when we examine the physical or social world and fix our intellectually curious gaze upon it that we are 'disinterested' in the sense of being only motivated by truth bereft of any agenda, however vague or unconscious it may be? Can any environmental scientist when documenting the destruction and breakdown of eco-systems or the melting of the earth's polar ice sheets not hope that her work may act as an intervention that induces political will to mitigate or avert the damage to the planet? Which pupil of political science or international relations, whilst aspiring to reach the highest standards of

1 Pieter Nicolaas Drost. *Genocide: United Nations Legalisation on International Criminal Law*. (Leyden: A. W. Sythoff, 1959), p.32.

2 Christopher Powell, 'What Do Genocides Kill? A relational conception of genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 9 no. 4 (2007), pp.527–547.

objectivity, doesn't also yearn for a democratic or inter-state system that ushers in peace, stability and supports human flourishing?

This is perhaps more so when examining the woeful and horrendous topic of genocide; it is after all, the crime of all crimes. Therefore our pronouncements on such an issue will (hopefully) affect those subject to its devastating and crippling effects. We must therefore adopt what Powell³ calls a 'critical sociology' and acknowledge that one is in effect taking sides – wittingly or otherwise – when conducting studies of social phenomenon as egregious as genocide. We cannot hide and skulk behind the facade of neutrality.

It is with this in mind that this study of the ethnic group known as the Kikuyu in the former British colony of Kenya was embarked upon. The thesis intends to explore the genocidal effects of British colonial policy on the largest ethnic grouping in Kenya to deepen and enrich our knowledge of genocide and the genocidal nature of colonization. It also seeks to give voice to the subaltern, to the oppressed; to strengthen the claims to justice of the victims that suffered the privations of land alienation shortly after the arrival of the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888 and the horrors of the emergency period from October 1952 to December 1959. More than this it seeks to illuminate the inner structural connections between the late capitalist phase of imperialism and genocide in order to repudiate the notion that genocide is somehow an aberration of the social and political system, a pathological breakdown of the normal functioning of our society's institutions of economy and government.

The key research question this paper will be exploring is the genocide of the Kikuyu employing a neo-Lemkinian ontological lens with some modifications to make the Kenyan colonial experience explicable in Lemkinian terms, an endeavour that as yet has not been attempted. The Lemkinian understanding of genocide draws attention to that which is arguably the critical and defining aspect of genocide, namely cultural destruction. It will be a *neo-Lemkinian* analysis because in some respects Lemkin's ontology is a product of its time in need of fresh insights that can rectify some of the theoretical weaknesses of his axioms and presuppositions.

The central thesis will consist of the charge that the genocidal practises, or techniques as Lemkin called them, enacted on behalf of the British Crown, fatally damaged the essential foundations of the Kikuyu as a viable and cohesive ethnic group, first by the policy of land alienation or theft and then the draconian measures enacted to suppress the 'Mau Mau' rebellion during the period of state emergency lasting from October 1952 to December 1959. It will be argued that the net effect of the structure of colonization was to leave the Kikuyu with no appreciable collective culture at all, ensuring that cultural destruction became cultural genocide.

To ascertain whether in fact the colonial practises were genocidal, a brief digression into an ethnographic analysis to determine the defining features or essential foundations of the Kikuyu collectivity will be necessary. This will then be used as an empirical baseline to enable an analysis of the impact of the aforementioned techniques on the collective group life of the Kikuyu.

To explicate the genocidal process in neo-Lemkinian terms, an analysis of both the question of land dispossession (a key technique cited by Lemkin) from approximately the beginning of the twentieth century up to and including the period of the Mau Mau rebellion and an analysis of the period of the rebellion and the state of emergency itself in Kenya from 1952 to 1958 will be conducted. The aim is to construct a case that the ethnic group of the Kikuyu were the victims of genocide, identifying which of the techniques articulated by Lemkin in his seminal works were employed by the colonial authorities. The crux of the paper's methodology will consist of using the Lemkinian techniques of genocide as found in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*⁴ (from here on *Axis Rule*) as a methodological tool set that will be cross-referenced with the data on the period outlined earlier. Furthermore, by employing a non-reductionist Marxist theory of imperialism, the inner connections of global capitalist economic and geo-political structures with the local Kenyan colony will be illuminated.

The central contention of this paper is that the genocide of the Kikuyu was the necessary product of the expansion and imposition of the bourgeois occupant's capitalist mode of production (MOP), a MOP inimical to the Kikuyu way of life. As Marx eloquently put it:

It [the bourgeoisie] compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.⁵

3 Christopher Powell, *Barbaric Civilization: A Critical Sociology of Genocide*. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens's University Press, 2011), ch.1.

4 Rafael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*. (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Division of International Law, 1944), pp.82–90.

5 Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p.8.

Herein lies the ultimate structural root of the cultural genocide of the Kikuyu. Thus cultural genocide here is translated and understood as capitalist genocide.

Genocide: A Neo-Lemkinian Paradigm

Due to the cold war legacy of the social construction of the genocide convention⁶ and the tardy and ponderous nature of sociology's engagement with the holocaust and the discipline of genocide studies⁷ we have been left with two competing definitions of genocide: The liberal tradition's fixation on the UN convention and its emphasis on physical and biological destruction of a group, the issue of intent *as such* and States as the principal perpetrators; and that which the post-liberal school draws from *Axis Rule In Europe* and Lemkin's unpublished magnum opus *History of Genocide*.⁸ The latter tradition tends to focus on 'culture' as the master concept and understands genocide as an objective process or structure with multiple aspects.

Post-liberals adopt a *holist* ontology analogous to that which informed Durkheim's *The Rules of Sociological Method*⁹ or Marx's introduction to *Grundrisse*.¹⁰ This is a structure-centred ontology which sees social structures as independent of individuals and their subjective impressions. Accordingly, genocide is seen as a structural process which does not depend on the exterminatory, intending agent of state officials, but is capable of conceiving of the 'social forces extant in all modernizing and colonizing societies that seek to sequester indigenous land and kill its owners if they are resisted'.¹¹ This ontological stance is alert to the possibility of genocide where social collectivities have been destroyed but where what Barta¹² described as *black letter* evidence is absent. As Barta observed 'only historians who take seriously the truth that intentions and understandings are expressed in actions as well as words can have access to the realities of the past'.¹³

This approach is aware that intention and motive in the case of colonial occupation are not one and the same and nor do they have to be. Marx reminds us that too often we seek explanation in the will of those acting and ignore the objective nature of the relationships which structure and delimit the realm of possibilities.¹⁴ Accordingly, genocidal intent as understood by the 'post-liberal school' is present in the dynamic, social, economic and political structures of society. That which Barta described as 'relations of genocide' and Wolfe as a 'logic of elimination', is invariably a function of the imposition of an inimical socio-economic system.¹⁵

Furthermore, the extant social and economic forces that are made invisible by the liberal traditions ontological blind spot, once illuminated by a post-liberal paradigm, reveal the global interconnectivity of the structure of genocide with a larger chain of global capitalist production and trade. Wolfe remarked that settler colonialism

6 For the social construction of the UN convention and the vexed question of cultural genocide see Kreiken (2004,125-51; 2008, 128–55).

7 Damien Short 'Cultural Genocide and Indigenous peoples: a sociological approach', *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 14 nos. 6–7 (2010), p.831.

8 See Michael A. McDonnell and A. Dirk Moses, 'Raphael Lemkin as Historian of Genocide in the Americas', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 7 no. 4, (2005) pp.501–529. For a fuller discussion of the ontological presuppositions of the respective schools see Powell, *What Do Genocides Kill?* pp.530–3 and Dirk Moses 'Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the "Racial Century"', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 36 no. 4, (2002) p.7–36. Sufficed to say the liberal ontology, with its focus on the individual as the perpetrator *and* subject of genocide the individualist ontology, is blind to the emergent *group* properties of social collectivities such as language, culture and kinship and cannot account for the *structural* determinants of genocide. Therefore the individualist ontology would disqualify this study of the *group* life of the Kikuyu and the effects of colonial policy on their *collective* existence. What Card described as 'social death' cannot be captured by an individualistic notion of group life. Claudia Card, 'Genocide and social death', *Hypatia*, 18 no.1 (2003), pp.63–79. It would also disqualify the many well documented cases of *colonial genocide*, such as the native Indian genocide in the Americas. See Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival*, (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); Ward Churchill, *Little Matter of Genocide* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997); David Stannard, *American Holocaust*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). This is also the case for the Aborigines in Australia. See Tony Barta, 'Relations of Genocide: Land and Lives in the Colonization of Australia', in: Isodor Walliman and Michael Dobrowski (eds.) *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); Barta "'They appear actually to vanish from the face of the Earth." Aborigines and the European project in Australia Felix', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 10 no.4, (2008) pp.519–539; Damien Short, 'Australia: A Continuing Genocide?', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 12 no.1–2 (2010), 45–68; Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8 no.4 (2006) 387–409.

9 Émile Durkheim, 'The rules of sociological method', in: Lukes, S. (ed.) *Durkheim: The Rules of Sociological Method and Selected Texts on Sociology and its Method*, (New York: The Free Press, 1982)

10 Karl Marx, 'Marxist Methodology', in: Elster, J. (ed.) *Karl Marx: A Reader*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

11 Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the "Racial Century"', p.22.

12 Tony Barta, 'Three Responses to "Can There Be Genocide Without the Intent to Commit Genocide"', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 10 no.1 (2008), p.118.

13 Ibid.

14 Karl Marx, 'The Defence of the Moselle Correspondent: Economic Distress and Freedom of the Press', in: Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (eds.) *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1967) pp.144–145.

15 See Barta, 'Relations of Genocide', pp.246–247; Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism', p.387.

presupposed a global chain of command linking remote colonial frontiers to the metropolis. Behind it all lay the driving engine of international market forces, which linked Australian wool to Yorkshire mills and, complementarily, to cotton produced under different colonial conditions in India, Egypt, and the slave states of the Deep South.¹⁶

It is this global interconnectivity that will be evinced in the analysis of the Kikuyu genocide and its structural roots in the capitalist MOP and British colonialism.

Conceptual Blockages and the Marxist Bypass

As argued above the post-liberal school will be employed to analyse the *situation coloniale* found in Kenya. However, its weaknesses are twofold. Firstly, taking their cue from Lemkin's Functionalism,¹⁷ post-liberals tend to treat social collectivities as given, not rent apart by internal cleavages such as class or gender¹⁸ and are far too deterministic and reductionist in their analysis leaving scant room for agency. Secondly, the structure of the *genos* or group is invariably perceived as *static*. Marx¹⁹ on the other hand, was at pains to stress the *relational* nature of social phenomena combining both structure and agency *dialectically*. This crucially rescues human agency from a purely structure-centred ontology and allows for endogenous change in any structure, including that of a *genos*. The Marxist dialectical method perceives the social collectivity or what Elias²⁰ calls the *social figuration* as an irreducible and rich 'totality' made up of many determinations and relationships dialectically in a constant process of 'becoming', in German meaning both 'coming to be' and 'ceasing to be'.²¹ This overcomes Lemkin's static understanding of culture. Genocide is therefore the forcible disruption or interdiction of the process of cultural change or reproduction of the social figuration.²²

A further advantage of Marx's ontology is that it can explain the forcible disruption or interdiction of the process of cultural change through the principle of contradiction and his theory of the political economy of the Capitalist MOP,²³ locating the instrument of interdiction in the laws of motion of the occupant's MOP. It is this instrument that will account for the destruction of the Kikuyu's MOP and thus its entire way of life. It is for this reason that the label of capitalist genocide is apposite. Moreover, where the post-liberal school merely reveals the global interconnectivity of the structure of genocide within a larger chain of global capitalist production and trade, Marx's approach can explain it and thus Britain's annexation of Kenya and the initial imposition of the capitalist MOP, which ultimately determined the forcible disruption and interdiction of the Kikuyu figuration.

Situation Coloniale

There is one sense in which the case study in this paper is of a type that has been largely neglected in the canon of genocide scholarship. Hopefully, this paper will act as a corrective. The modality of colonization present in Kenya was one in which the native resident population were retained as a ready supply of cheap labour to work on the farms and plantations of the white colonists. In the vast majority of case studies conducted by scholars, the *situation coloniale* did not necessitate the retention of any native labour force, simply the expropriation of native land. Consequently the native population were either physically eliminated or forcibly assimilated via a whole series of gambits that preserved and extended the reconstitution of native land into a Lockean form of alienable individual freeholds.²⁴

16 Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism', p.394.

17 Informed by the anthropology of Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944)

18 See Powell, *What Do Genocides Kill?* pp.528–529.

19 Karl Marx, 'The eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in: Mark Cowling and James Martin (eds.) *Marx's 'Eighteenth Brumaire': (post) modern interpretations*. (London: Pluto Press, 2002), p.19.

20 Elias, N. *What is Sociology?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978)

21 Marx, *Marxist Methodology*.

22 Powell, 'What Do Genocides Kill?', p.538.

23 For Marx's historical materialist theory of society and class struggle as the motor of social change see the preface to Marx, (1971) *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Lawrence and Wishart). It is in Grundrisse that we first see in rough form the outlines of this theory of the laws of motion of the capitalist MOP later refined in Marx's Capital, Vol. I (New York: International Publishers, 1967).

24 Patrick Wolfe, 'Structure and Event: Settler Colonialism, Time, and the Question of Genocide', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed D. Moses (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008)

The work of Schaller²⁵ is a rare exception to the aforementioned neglect. In both articles he illustrates how Lemkin's formulation can be applied to modalities of colonization such as that in colonial Africa, which he described as African type²⁶ where the *situation coloniale* necessitated the retention of indigenous labour and not just the acquisition of land. Therefore the population would have to be preserved as a servile class or 'allowed to remain' in Lemkin's words.²⁷ This would have implications for the methods of genocide that were to be employed. Total physical extermination would be impractical and not serve the purposes of the imported land owning white elite; only those techniques that facilitate the dispossession and disable the group's ability to resist would prove suitable. But the dominant view among genocide scholars is that in order to qualify as genocide, cultural destruction must be accompanied by physical destruction.²⁸ Short repudiated this contention by arguing that upon closer examination of the travaux préparatoires of the UN convention, Lemkin's support for the original draft suggests that he considered cultural destruction to be so grave that it should be treated as a crime in its own right.²⁹ More importantly, as will be elucidated below, if we understand the *genos* holistically as an irreducible edifice with multiple facets in a dialectical relationship of symbiosis then cultural destruction would fatally cripple the entire structure of the group in question.

The Import of Lemkin

The foundation of Lemkin's holist ontology is what Brubaker³⁰ termed 'groupism'. Tribes, races and nations were understood as homogenous collective actors with interests, qualities and agency irreducible to the individuals members of the group, and crucially culture was the master concept.³¹ Furthermore, the social collectivity Lemkin called 'nation' existed as an organic edifice with biological, cultural, social and economic levels all of which symbiotically depend on each other. Consequently an attack on *any* level could fatally cripple the entire edifice of the group or cause 'social death'. This would be consistent with the *situation coloniale* of the African type as described by Schaller.³²

It is in *Axis Rule* chapter IX that Lemkin delineated the eight techniques of genocide that were employed by the Nazis during their occupation of Europe which will be employed in this study of the Kikuyu and the Mau Mau rebellion.³³ They are political, social, cultural, economic, biological, physical, religious and moral techniques, all of which can be read as statement of the multifaceted nature of social collectivities.³⁴

The crucial theoretical import of Lemkin's work for this thesis is that for him there was an insoluble nexus between genocide and colonisation. It is this key passage in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* which confirms the link:

Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group: the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and the colonization of the area by the oppressor's own nationals.³⁵

Genocide for Lemkin involves a two-fold process of destruction of the group life of the native populations and their replacement by the colonizing occupants. A careful treatment of *Axis Rule* and the *History of Genocide* shows that the structure of his two most important books is held together by the axiomatic girder that genocide and colonization are ineluctably bound up with each other. Accordingly, the central proposition in *Axis Rule* is that genocide flowed from the Nazi colonization of eastern and parts of Western Europe.³⁶

If capitalism is understood as necessarily expansionist, its *raison d'être* to accumulate, and imperialism and colonization – a continuation of accumulation and expansion in a new form – a function of structural changes during

25 See Dominik Schaller, 'Colonialism and Genocide – Raphael Lemkin's Concept of Genocide and its Application to European Rule in Africa', *Development Dialogue*, 50, (2008): 75–93; Dominik Schaller, 'From Conquest to Genocide: Colonial Rule in German Southwest Africa and German East Africa', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide*.

26 Schaller distinguishes between three colonial modalities: *New England type* colonies which entailed the expulsion and annihilation of the native population – Australia and North America being the most salient examples – *Caribbean type* colonies where slaves were imported to work on the plantations and *African type* colonies. See Schaller, *From Conquest to Genocide*, p.297.

27 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, p.79.

28 Dirk Moses, *Empire, colony, genocide: keywords and the philosophy of history*, in *Empire, Colony, Genocide*.

29 Short, 'Cultural genocide and indigenous peoples', p.838.

30 Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, in *Facing Ethnic Conflicts: Towards a New Realism*, ed Andres Wimmer, et al. (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), p.35.

31 Short, 'Cultural genocide and indigenous peoples', p.837.

32 Schaller, 'Colonialism and Genocide'; Schaller, 'From Conquest to Genocide'.

33 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, pp.82–90.

34 For the list of techniques see Annex.

35 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, p.79.

36 *Ibid*, ch. IX.

the late nineteenth century; if we also understand as Lemkin did that colonization was necessarily genocidal then we have here the inner connections that elucidate capitalist genocide.

2. The Kikuyu

The Kikuyu were predominantly a horticultural and agricultural people, herding livestock on land they had cleared from forests in the Kikuyu plateau. The Kikuyu³⁷ as a social and ethnic group can be understood as being structured along three organising principles.³⁸ They are lineal, socio-political and economic. However, these structures or figurations³⁹ must be understood to exist in a dialectical relationship of creative tension, both symbiotically interacting and affecting each other through time so that they evolve and determine each other. Underpinning all three structures is the economic figuration or the MOP of the Kikuyu. Unlike Elias' predilection to perceive all structures as equally determining each other which ultimately leads one down a blind sociological alley, illuminating no patterns in society or history, it is the assertion of this author that the MOP shapes and delimits (but does not determine in a reductive sense) the realm of possible configurations of the other two.⁴⁰ Marx (1971) understood that it was the MOP or the economic structure of society that formed the real basis of society and thus revealed a hierarchy of determinations.⁴¹ Therefore special attention will be paid to the form of property of the Kikuyu as it developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The Lineal Structure

The basic unit of social organisation of the Kikuyu was the family or *nyumba*, consisting of the father, mother and children.⁴² This could extend into the 'joint' family if the father was wealthy enough to support another wife and furnish another hut for her to occupy with her children. Families who had the same provenance aggregated into sub-clans or *mbari*, clans or *moheregu* and ultimately the tribe as a whole.⁴³

Due to fission, growth and population dispersal, a *mbari* might encompass an entire village (*itura*), a fire unit (*mwaki*) or even a ridge (*rugongo* or *riongo*). Consequently *mbari* solidarity would be strong with disputes being resolved on a kinship basis and the village acting as the hub for social and political interaction.⁴⁴

With polygamy being the rule, the larger the clan the more sons there were, meaning in turn more livestock, wives and offspring. This was the principle measure of wealth and influence. There is dispute among scholars about the degree to which egalitarianism existed within the Kikuyu, the debate hinging on the nature and distribution of property and production relations – which will be elaborated upon below – sufficed to say that there *were* degrees of inequality.⁴⁵

The Socio-Political Figuration

The pivotal *mariika* figuration acted like a spinal column supporting the entire tribe and acting as a counterweight to what Muriuki⁴⁶ calls the 'fissiparous' force of *mbari* localism, cutting across lineage and territorial groupings.⁴⁷ This figuration is otherwise known as the age-set system, wherein members of the tribe are accorded a status according to their age, sex and parenthood⁴⁸ each stage being given a name or label. For instance *ciana* means children, *mumo* means young initiates, *anake* means warriors, which had a junior and senior stage, and *athuri* means elders, which also had

37 The Kikuyu actually further subdivide into three sub-tribes: *Metume* of Fort Hill, *Karura* in Kiambu and *Gaki* in Nyeri (Lambert, 1965, 2).

38 John A. Jackson, *Societies, Schools and Progress in Kenya*, Ph.D. thesis (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1969).

39 See Elias, 'What is Sociology?' and Powell, 'What Do Genocides Kill?'

40 Elias, *What is Sociology?* p.15–16.

41 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971)

42 Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 110, 1974).

43 Jackson, *Societies, Schools and Progress in Kenya*, p.14.

44 Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, p.112.

45 A large and wealthy clan (or particular *mbari* and in turn *nyumba* or family within it) would augment its authority by attracting non-clan or alien elements to their fold, in the fashion of a magnet, some eventually being completely absorbed and thus enlarging the clan, while others would remain *ahoi* or simply tenants of the respective property owning clan or *mbari*. See Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, 114). For further discussion on this question see Greet Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*. (Oxford: James Currey, 1997), 26-28; 61-68.

46 Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, p.16.

47 For an in-depth study of the harmonising and integrative role of age-sets in decentralised tribal societies please consult Shaul N. Eisenstadt, *African Age Groups: A Comparative Study*, *Africa*, 24 (1) (1954): 100-113; Shaul N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation, Age Groups and Social Structure* (London: Free Press, 1956).

48 Harold E. Lambert, *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.3.

two stages, judicial and a ritual.⁴⁹ By the middle of the seventeenth century the *marika* was an engrained and durable figuration of the Kikuyu. At each stage the individual members of the tribe had a role or function to perform. The most significant stage socially and politically was the stage of circumcision which symbolised the passing of the young into adulthood and the authority of the tribe. If they failed to pass the initiation they would be barred from marriage and having a family of their own. Routledge elaborates:

The festivals and rites associated with both marriage and death hold but a small place in Kikuyu imagination compared to that greatest of all ceremonies whereby the boy becomes a man and the girl a woman.⁵⁰

The young initiates would be grouped into age-sets and all given the same name which they would carry with them for the rest of their lives, remaining as they did in the same group until death. Age-sets would also be grouped together to form 'regiments' known as *riika*.⁵¹ Succession to a higher status stage, or what Jackson called 'successively socially-orientated groups', was as a group, until the stage of the elder was reached, which would require other qualifying prerequisites.⁵²

Riika as well as meaning regiment more generally means generation and it referred to the age-set charged with the responsibility of running tribal affairs including political, social and judicial functions, with a term of office and transfer of power being marked by the ceremony known as *ituika*. This took place every thirty or forty years.

Among the aforementioned functions was included security. The initiated became warriors, known as the *anake* stage with both a junior grade and senior grade and would remain together as a fighting unit, sometimes being called upon by the elders of the clan to fulfil policing functions.⁵³

Girls were not initiated as *anake* but were instead initiated into junior and senior ranks, the duty of the senior girls being to instruct the junior ranks in proper behaviour, relationships, child rearing and sex education.⁵⁴ After initiation, girls were allowed to get married and eventually have a family. Crucially, for both boys and girls, initiation was dependant on the *payment* of goats, vegetables and sometimes honey. This of course depended on the ownership or use of land, with timing of initiation being to some extent dependant on wealth and status.⁵⁵

The final and perhaps most fundamental socio-political figuration of all were the *Kiama* or councils.⁵⁶ Inclusion into the councils which existed on local *itura*, *mwaki*, *riongo* and finally clan wide basis was dependant on completion of one's military service (women being barred from the *kiama*) and marriage to a Kikuyu woman. Once again, progression to the status grade of elder was also dependant on a 'goat fee'.⁵⁷

The *Kiama* was the highest authority in Kikuyuland and was vested with judicial and executive powers. As with the warrior group, the *kiama* had an inner circle, the senior elders, which possessed predominant power within the Kikuyu. The most important function was arguably their judicial function, where matters of dispute, whether it be over theft, misconduct, transgression of behavioural rules, intra-tribal quarrels or worse still murder, were arbitrated by members of the *kiama*. If the matter concerned local families, it would be settled by the private bench of the *mbari* concerned, but if the matter was of sufficient severity or enveloped a large enough area or involved members of sufficiently elevated status, the matter would be passed over to the relevant council, be it village or larger.⁵⁸

Again we find that the judicial system hinged on the payment of a fee whether as a litigant in order to have ones case heard⁵⁹ or as compensation and recompense for the infraction paid to the plaintiff.⁶⁰ Consequently, the size of a

49 Jackson, *Societies, Schools and Progress in Kenya*, p.16. For an exhaustive delineation of all terms denoting age and status refer to Lambert, *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions*, pp.3-7.

50 William S. Routledge and Katherine P. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People, the Akikuyu of British East Africa* (London, E. Arnold, 1910), p.154.

51 Lambert, *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions*, 8; Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, p.68.

52 Jackson, *Societies, Schools and Progress in Kenya*, p.15.

53 For a comprehensive breakdown of the extensive duties and functions performed by the Kikuyu warrior group see Lambert, *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions*, pp.69-72, Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, pp.68-70 and Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, pp.119-121.

54 Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu* p.122.

55 Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, p.68.

56 For the organisation of *Kiama* see Stanley K. Gathigira, *Miikarire ya Agikuyu*, (London, Sheldon Press, 1952), 63-68; T G. Benson, Kikuyu-English Dictionary, ed T G. Benson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp.6-7; A W. McGregor (1909) Kikuyu and Its People, *Church Missionary Review*, 60, 1909), p.34; Lambert, *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions*, ch 9.

57 Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, p.126. This is perhaps underscored by the fact that the junior and senior councils were called 'council of one goat' and council of two goats' respectively. See Ibid, p.127. It was only once the eldest son of a family had been circumcised and initiated, thus discarding the period of childhood, could a man make the transition to the full status of junior elder. However, the rite of passage symbolised by the ceremony of circumcision was itself dependant on the payment of a goat.

58 For a detailed and elaborate discussion of the Kikuyu justice system see Lambert, *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions*, pp.107-142; Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu*, pp.127-131.

59 See Lambert, *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions*, p.109; Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu* p.129.

60 See Lambert, *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions*, p.113; Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu* p.131.

families holding in land and thus their ability to herd livestock and grow other foodstuffs would confer a commensurate degree of influence and power in the various *kiama* and status grades. Thus what we see is the fault lines of power and class, the seedbeds of inequity, hierarchy and oppression. This strikes a discordant note alongside what Middleton has described as chauvinistic assertions of egalitarianism so often claimed by ethnographers of the Kikuyu.⁶¹ It is to this bedrock of any society, what Marx called the 'economic base' that we now turn.

The Economic Figuration

Traditionally, the Kikuyu had employed a system of property ownership that revolved around the principle of 'first clearing' wherein ownership was decided by those who had cleared the forests first. According to Kenyatta this was not a system of private property as such.⁶² It was only with the migration south from Mount Kenya in the middle of the nineteenth century and the purchase of land from the *Dorobo* tribe that a new form of property ownership came to predominate, namely one of private property.⁶³ The *Dorobo* were primarily hunter-gatherers and thus were happy to sell the land to the Kikuyu. When the purchase was made, the Kikuyu were essentially buying the right of 'first clearing' from the *Dorobo*.⁶⁴ This system became known as *gethaka* meaning 'land' or 'estate'.⁶⁵ The one caveat to this picture is that the land was also owned by the family or *nyumba* as a whole, but this did not equate with communal or tribal land.⁶⁶ Dr. Leakey, who is one of the foremost scholars on the Kikuyu concurred in his testimony to the Kenya Land Commission, insisted that there was no tribal tenure, the Kikuyu 'sticking together' only as far as political matters were concerned.⁶⁷

Moreover, as explained earlier, given the polygamous nature of Kikuyu society, a family could be connected with many other families, and ultimately through kinship relations aggregated geographically into a homestead or *mocie*, *village* or *itura* or even a ridge or *rugongo*. Thus, a wealthy family head could spread his influence far and wide through the kinship system.⁶⁸

Thus we see that within the *kiama* system, those families with significant land holdings and thus formidable capacities to furnish cattle and other food stuffs would be accorded greater access and influence on the *kiama* councils, with of course the need to pay fees to ascend the ranks of the *kiama* system being an obligatory precondition.⁶⁹ Therefore, we have the conditioning of the *Kiama* figuration by the MOP.⁷⁰ The *kiama* system fulfils key political, social and judicial functions and therefore can perhaps be better characterised as the 'social relations of kinship'. Thus the social relations of kinship can be seen by the end of the nineteenth century to possess in embryonic form certain class characteristics. What we have here is the MOP shaped by the conditions of social production determining the social relations of kinship in the *kiama* system.

As with the evolution of socio-political structures and the emergence of the *kiama* system we see the rise of a new system of land tenure and property affected by the interaction of tribes and the demographic expansion into new terrains. In other words, a dialectical interplay of exogenous and endogenous factors, both between figurations within the *kikuyu* – the socio-political figuration of the *mbari* and the economic figuration of land tenure - and between

61 John Middleton, *The Kikuyu and Kamba of Kenya*, (London, International African Institute, 1953), p.99.

62 Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya*, (London, Secker and Warburg, 1938), p.26.

63 Martin L. Kilson, 'Land and the Kikuyu: A Study of the Relationship between Land and Kikuyu Political Movements', *The Journal of Negro History*, 40 (2), (1955): 103–153, p.105.

64 Kenyatta, J. (1938) *Facing Mt. Kenya*, p.27.

65 Ibid, pp.21–22.

66 Ibid, p.31.

67 Kenya Land Commission, *Report of Kenya Land Commission: Evidence and Memoranda*, Vol. I. Colonial No. 91, (London, HMSO, 1934), p.679.

68 The significance of establishing the private nature of land tenure is that it can explain why and how some families could manage to amass greater status, wealth and influence than others. If we imagine a system of communal property, administered by a tribal council in an egalitarian fashion, possibilities for accumulating wealth are severely restricted as logically no lineage or *mbari* house can pass on land and property to successive generations. Therefore, possibilities for accumulation of power, wealth and influence are restricted to that which can be achieved in a single generation. In fact this potential was greatly expanded by the decline in power of the rival tribal group the *Masai* and the growing incursion of Arab and Swahili traders and from 1888 the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) from the eastern coast which resulted in growth and extension of trade links with the Kikuyu accumulating notables. See Bruce Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination*, (London, James Currey, 1990), p.50. Here is a clear example of cultural diffusion. The arrival of the IBEAC entailed the voluntary exchange of culture leading to changes in the Kikuyu figuration. For the growth in the differentiation of the Kikuyu and the rise of class inequalities see John F. Munro, *Colonial Rule and the Kamba: Social Change in the Kenya Highlands, 1889–1939*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975).

69 Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, pp.65–66.

70 This is not to say that the *Kiama* figuration was entirely shaped and structured by the MOP, as it in fact prefigured it by roughly two centuries, Nevertheless, the rise of a new form of property ownership and the attendant new relations of production did influence and condition the inherited *Kiama* structure.

figurations of different tribes, in this case between the Kikuyu, the Masai and the Dorobo. As argued above, the conservative and essentialist account of social structure informed by the social anthropology of Malinowski would struggle to explain such change and evolution through time. The example of the Kikuyu serves to underscore the necessity to augment Lemkin's understanding of social structures with a mechanism that can account for such change lest we mistake it for *cultural destruction*. It is here that Marx's ontology can best explain conflict, class and in a non-reductionist manner rank a hierarchy of determinations, giving it an unmatched explanatory power. By employing a Marxist methodology a clearer distinction between cultural diffusion and cultural destruction can be made in the evolution of Kikuyu figurations.

What must be understood at this stage is that if the Kikuyu suffered any attenuation, restriction or deprivation of land ownership then their ability to rear cattle and other foodstuffs is undermined. This in turn would lead to the stymieing of the ability of Kikuyu tribesmen and women to perform initiation ceremonies, progress through the various status grades, rear a family and of course ultimately enter the stage of elders and partake in the political and social organisation of their society.⁷¹ In other words it would inflict a fatal blow on their ability to practise their culture.⁷² Jackson concurred:

any significant loss of land by the Kikuyu people, in addition to threatening their basic means of subsistence would threaten a fundamental aspect of the foundation of their socio-cultural system.⁷³

3. The Unleashing of Capitalist Genocide

The genocide of the Kikuyu would not have taken place but for the operation of socio-economic and geo-political structures that extended far beyond the boundaries of Kenya itself. Therefore it is necessary to analyse those structures that led to the British government's involvement in and colonisation of Kenya and established the *situation coloniale*. Ergo an analysis that illuminates the global dimension will be outlined in order to draw attention to the larger socio-economic and political forces that conditioned the colonization of Kenya and the resultant genocidal process. This provides a mechanism that can demonstrate Lemkin's assertion that Genocide and colonization are ineluctably bound up with each other. More specifically, this latter connection will help explicate the imposition of the foreign MOP on the Kikuyu.

Once the inner connection with larger global socio-economic and geo-political forces has been established the analysis will proceed to the genocidal process itself which can be schematically divided into two phases: The first began with the alienation of Kikuyu land by the British Crown and their forced resettlement to the Highland reserves and the coeval process of marginalisation and economic disenfranchisement of those Kikuyu who became known as *squatters*. With the onset of the largely Kikuyu led resistance – dubbed as *Mau Mau* by the colonists and colonial administrators⁷⁴ – and the consequent imposition by the British colonial authorities of the emergency laws during the state of emergency, a second more concentrated and egregious phase of the genocidal process began.⁷⁵

The geo-political context

In searching for a theoretical apparatus that could explain Britain's foreign policy and imperial ambitions, none proved to be as astute and penetrating as Marxism. A Marxist theory of imperialism⁷⁶ is apposite because ontologically it can account for the laws of motion of the capitalist MOP and thus explain the drive to 'carve up the world' in the late nineteenth century not as one solely derived from the operation of interstate competition in the reductionist

71 See Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya*, p.26; William S. Routledge and Katherine P. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People*, p.154.

72 Kilson, 'Land and the Kikuyu', p.104.

73 Jackson, *Societies, Schools and Progress in Kenya*, p.103.

74 John Newsinger, *The Blood Never Dried*, (London: Bookmarks, 2006), p.186.

75 For a detailed analysis of the political economy of Kenya from the beginning of colonial rule to independence see Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*. For an analysis of the Mau Mau resistance see Donald Barnett, and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau From Within*, (London, Macgibbon & Kee, 1966). For an interpretation of the Mau Mau as Kenya's first national movement see Carl G. Rosberg and John C. Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau: Nationalism in Kenya*, (New York, Praeger, 1966). For a Marxist analysis of the Mau Mau see Maina W. Kinyatti, *Thunder from the Mountains – Mau Mau Patriotic Songs*, (London, Zed Press, 1980) and Maina W. Kinyatti, *Mau Mau: A Revolution Betrayed*, (London, Mau Mau Research Center, 2000). For the Mau Mau as a peasant war see Wunjabari O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya: An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt*, (Oxford, Indiana University Press, 1993).

76 For a discussion of the various permutations of Marxist theories of imperialism see Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009): chs.1–2.

vein of realism,⁷⁷ or commit an equally reductionist faux pas and attribute it to the realm of ideas in the manner of constructivism,⁷⁸ nor struggle to explain it at all as liberal internationalism⁷⁹ does. An ontology which is grounded in materialist axioms which is yet not reduced to them is crucial to understanding the world if we are to take seriously the assumption that the world is intelligible with discernible patterns and a hierarchy of determinations. A Marxist theory of imperialism that avoids the pitfalls of economic reductionism will be employed, taking its cue from the formulation posited by Callinicos and Harvey wherein two levels of analysis are employed.⁸⁰ There are two 'logics of power' dialectically interacting but distinct. Firstly, economic competition or the politics of production, exchange and accumulation⁸¹ and secondly, the logic of geo-political competition or what Harvey terms the territorialist logic of state. The advantage of this approach is that it avoids a reduction to either level. Furthermore, this approach as espoused by Callinicos makes a virtue of not attempting to construct an 'ahistorical', universal theory of imperialism but one that is couched in a reading of the historically specific conjuncture. In other words, one that recognises the particular phase in the development of capitalism(s). Not all capitalist powers embodied the same model of capitalism.⁸²

Between 1873 and 1896 the world economy experienced what is commonly known as the 'Great Depression'.⁸³ Arrighi compares this to what he describes as the 'long downturn' of the twentieth century, both periods characterised by intensified competition and stagnation.⁸⁴ In the last few decades of the nineteenth century Marxist economists have argued that the global economy suffered from a system-wide crisis of profitability determined by the rising organic composition of capital and a consequent deleterious effect on the rate of profit.⁸⁵ The response of Britain was distinct. Unlike the organised capitalisms of Germany and the US, where a state led process of cartelisation and rationalisation took place, Britain preserved the relatively decentralized business structures that had arisen during the industrial revolution and instead embarked on phase of overseas investment, from £700 million in 1870 to £2 billion by 1900, upwards of £4 billion by 1913.⁸⁶ Critically, the growing expansion of US manufacturing exports and increasing competition from the US and Germany in Latin America, and a consequent relative decline in Britain's competitiveness compelled Britain to abandon its 'imperialism of free trade' and foster her growing surpluses with India and the new colonies in Africa.⁸⁷ What we see here at work is the operation of the *structural logic* of a socioeconomic system shaping the world economy, forging a world division of labour that ensnared agricultural suppliers of food and raw materials.

The global economic context was set for Britain's intrusion into the West African region that would come to be known as Kenya. This was the beginning of what has become known as 'the scramble for Africa',⁸⁸ so called because it entailed the movement of the great powers of Europe to carve up Africa.⁸⁹ This began at the Congress of Berlin of 1884–1885 where the division of Africa into forty odd countries that paid no heed to ethnic groupings would later serve the template for the modern states of present day Africa. Britain would assume control of the Eastern African Protectorate in 1886 in a deal concluded with Germany and the Sultan of Zanzibar (Moon, 1973).⁹⁰ But why did Britain annex what was known at the time as the East African Protectorate, in addition to all of its other colonial dependencies? Britain at the time was concerned that French inroads into Eastern Africa towards the Nile and German encroachment south of the British foothold of Mombasa on the coast would ultimately pose a risk to their control of the Suez Canal which was pivotal to Britain's access to the trade routes to India and more specifically the captive market

77 For the classic foundational structural Realist text see Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 1979).

78 For a constructivist theory of international relations see Alexander Wendt, Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics, *International Organisation* 46, (2) 1992, pp.391–425 and Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999).

79 Liberal internationalism cannot capture the distinct laws of motion of the capitalist MOP, given its dependence on a Smithsonian or neo-Ricardian political economy and what the great historian E.H. Carr called its 'wishful vision of universal free trade' with its alleged but empirically unsubstantiated harmonising and pacifying effects. See Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: an Introduction to the study of International Relations*, (London, Macmillan, 1946). It has thus struggled to account for the failure of 'free trade' and liberal democracy to banish economic crises, wars and geo-political competition. For a collection of essays on the theory of Liberal Internationalism see Michael W. Doyle, *Liberal Peace: Selected Essays*, (New York, Routledge, 2011).

80 Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*; David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003).

81 For the laws of motion of the capitalist MOP see Marx, *Capital* Vol 1; Ben Fine, *Marx's Capital*, 3rd ed, (London, MacMillan Press, 1989).

82 Callinicos expounds on the various models of capitalisms embodied by the various capitalist powers and proceeds to delineate a periodization of imperialism. Imperialism therefore exhibited a variety of structures and dynamics both within and across temporal phases. See *Ibid*, ch 45.

83 *Ibid*, 153.

84 Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing: lineages of the twenty-first century*, (London, Verso, 2007), pp.116–120.

85 Chris Harman, *Explaining the Crisis*, (London, Bookmarks, 1984), pp.51–54.

86 Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*, p.153.

87 John Gallagher, and Ronald Robinson, The Imperialism of Free Trade, *Economic History Review*, 6 (1) (1953): 1–15.

88 Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876–1912*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1991).

89 See Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*, (London, Jonathan Cape, 2005): 5; Derwent Whittlesey, Kenya, The Land and Mau Mau, *Foreign Affairs*, 32 (1) (1953): 80–90, p.81.

90 Parker T. Moon, *Imperialism and World Politics*, (Lincoln, Garland Publishers, 1973).

for British industrial goods that India represented.⁹¹ If the Suez was choked off or worse still annexed by a rival power, then access to the markets of India and the Far East would be cut off. In an effort to keep hold of this territory, the British government would encourage immigration, namely white settlers and thus wittingly or otherwise, set in train a series of events that would lead to the formation and imposition of a foreign or 'settler/estate' MOP.

And so we see the intersection of economic and geo-political competition in the context of a global economy that by the last third of the nineteenth century may not have been fully capitalist but nonetheless was knitted together through an interlocking nexus of trade and investment under the hegemonic sway of the capitalist MOP⁹² located in the western hemisphere with Britain standing at its apex.⁹³ This was facilitated by the rise of key technologies such as rail and steam power and most importantly driven by the ceaseless and insatiable, competitive drive to accumulate – which Marx observed was the *raison d'être* of capitalism.⁹⁴ It is at this intersection that we find the global mechanisms that conditioned Britain's intervention in Kenya which would have disastrous genocidal consequences for the Kikuyu.

Phase 1: Land and Labour

The formation of the colonial state in Kenya was a volatile, contradictory and haphazard one⁹⁵ but in its essence it involved the drive to link European capital with indigenous societies and seize effective control of African labour and production.⁹⁶ This process has been described by Marxists as a process of *articulation* where two different and often inimical and incompatible MOPs are weaved together leading to the uprooting, dislocation, transformation and paradoxically destruction and preservation of the figurations of indigenous societies.

In its attempts to forge these linkages the colonial state faced a dilemma; a veritable imbroglio. It had to contend with and manage the contradictory pressures of settler and peasant production, the demands of the metropole and the need to secure both a material base for its continued reproduction and a degree of legitimation amongst all those within its territory. It was a fundamental doctrine of British colonial policy that colonial possessions remain economically and fiscally self-sufficient.⁹⁷ It therefore had to both foster the development of a political economy that could raise the necessary revenue to secure its continued material reproduction and meet metropolitan demands to integrate into the chain of world trade and thus reap dividends for the metropolitan treasury. The latter pressure was a manifestation of what was earlier referred to as the structural logic of the global socioeconomic system. Furthermore it had to secure legitimation amongst the subject population. These demands would prove not to be compatible. After initially sponsoring the development of indigenous peasant production, given the latter's initial success in reaping significant agricultural product for export and thus provision of a significant proportion of tax revenue as well serving the second objective of securing legitimation among some sections of the native population⁹⁸ for a colonial state that was groping for some permanent material basis to furnish its continued reproduction.⁹⁹ It also served the state's second fundamental objective which was to secure legitimation.¹⁰⁰

However, with the continued arrival of white settlers and metropolitan concessionaires, the political pressure that mounted 'progressively undermined the colonial state's control over the terms of development'.¹⁰¹ What would ensue was the pernicious penetration of the Kikuyu MOP by settler production leading to the fatal crippling of the former and its ability to reproduce itself. In other words the end of what Berman called the '*autarky* of precapitalist production [emphasis added]' via the monetization of some parts of the production process.¹⁰² Nevertheless, given the importance

91 P. J. Cain, and G. A. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914*, (London, Longman, 1993): p.334.

92 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975).

93 S. B. Saul, *Studies in British Overseas Trade, 1870-1914*, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1960)

94 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, ch.25.

95 Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*, chs.1-2.

96 *Ibid.*, 34-35.

97 See Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p.7; Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*, p.52.

98 It is a fundamental Marxist precept that a colonial or capitalist state cannot be seen to act in the exclusive or corporate interest of one class lest it risk being exposed as an instrument of class oppression and thus provokes rebellion and sedition. See Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*, ch.1.

99 *Ibid.*, p.54.

100 Fostering indigenous peasant production helped the colonial state carve out political support by giving favourable economic terms and positions of political power to the more powerful accumulating notable families within the Kikuyu, those known as 'chiefs and headmen'. See John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman, 'Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya', 1895-1914, *The Journal of African History*, 20 (4) (1979): p.497.

101 Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*, p.37.

102 *Ibid.*, p.37. It must be stressed at this point that the destruction of the Kikuyu MOP was not uniform and that in fact some elements were transformed into nascent centres of commodity production for the market and thus the imposition of a foreign MOP led to the emergence of an internal transition towards capitalism, unleashing yet another contradiction between two competing capitalist MOPs with Kenya. See *Ibid.*, ch.9.

of the need to secure legitimation and the fact that the Kikuyu MOP was still an important adjunct to the continued reproduction of the settler MOP through the medium of articulation – as will be shown below – this meant that there were limits to how far the Kikuyu MOP could be ‘transformed’ before the structures of articulation began to decay and thus undermine the continued reproduction of settler MOP. Therefore the colonial state ‘laboured under a palimpsest of contradictions of accumulation and control’.¹⁰³

In order to furnish the need for land and cheap labour that settler production so desperately required, the colonial state embarked on a form of what Marx described as primitive accumulation.¹⁰⁴ To achieve these aims the colonial state introduced a complex set of laws and regulations. Firstly, the colonial state embarked on a massive programme of land alienation and the *forcible* relocation of the dispossessed Kikuyu as well as all other ethnic groups to ‘labour reserves’, equivalent to the homelands in South Africa under apartheid or the Native American reserves in the United States.¹⁰⁵ The laws alienating huge swathes of Kikuyu land which were *forcibly* imposed on the Kikuyu were varied and complex, ultimately culminating after eight years of bitter and protracted negotiation in the *Crown Lands Ordinance* in 1915.¹⁰⁶ The latter completely nullified Kikuyu land rights and created a free market in land in the ‘White Highlands’ as they now became known. Previous laws had paid lip service to protecting the rights of Kikuyu to ‘occupy’ their land¹⁰⁷ but ultimately the decisive influence in the shift to total land expropriation was the influence of ‘big capital’ from Europe and the key financial role it would play in stimulating land purchases and development.¹⁰⁸ Again we see the larger global structures at play. Given the precarious state of the colonial states finances this was financial leverage that it could not afford to resist. Ultimately the Kikuyu would lose upwards of sixty thousand acres to the settlers (Elkins, 2005, p.12).¹⁰⁹ In *Axis Rule* Lemkin described this as the *political* technique of genocide, in that it imposed the national pattern of the colonisers by way of removing the occupied peoples and their property – in this case the land of the Kikuyu – and allocating it to the settlers.¹¹⁰

The reserves, which were the natural corollary of the ‘land grab’, were located in the Central Province districts of Kiambu, Fort Hill, and Nyeri. Over time the conditions in the reserves deteriorated due to severe overcrowding, to such an extent that a Kikuyu family would struggle to meet their basic subsistence needs. Commenting on the degree of overpopulation in the reserves Professor Buell observed:

A District Commissioner testified in 1919 that the density of population in Kikuyu reserve land between Nairobi and Limoru was about four hundred to the square mile and that population was increasing there. ‘This density of population is from five to seven times as great as in the South African Reserves where they are increasing the native holdings...’ In Nyeri and Fort Hall reserves the population is about two hundred and twelve per square mile.¹¹¹

In a memorandum submitted to the Kenya Land Commission the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) were moved to comment on the abject state of land provision for the Kikuyu

some of the districts in our province break the record of the density of the world population of any agricultural people and occupy perhaps third place in the record of the density of the world population notwithstanding the fact that our country is a purely agricultural country...¹¹²

Meek added that in 1944 ‘density figures of 1,100 and even 1,800 to the square mile have been reported’.¹¹³

It is inconceivable that under such deleterious conditions the Kikuyu could furnish the necessary livestock to support the various cultural practises detailed above, let alone support their respective progression through initiation and the various status grades, which was so critical to the Kikuyu way of Life. Kilson succinctly observed:

Kikuyu society would be well-nigh impossible without an adequate supply of land upon which these animals could graze. And, if one would couple this with the fact that extensive farming is another major aspect of

103 Lonsdale and Berman, *Coping with the Contradictions*, p.491.

104 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, ch 26–27.

105 Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag*, p.15.

106 See Kilson, Land and the Kikuyu, p.114 and Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*, p.56.

107 Kilson, Land and the Kikuyu, pp.111–113.

108 Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*, pp.56–57.

109 Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag*, p.12.

110 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, p.83.

111 Raymond L. Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, Vol. I, (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p.323.

112 Kenya Land Commission, p.200.

113 Charles K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1949), p.77.

Kikuyu society, one might conclude that to alienate land from the Kikuyus would be tantamount to setting their socio-cultural system on the road to total disintegration.¹¹⁴

This would be compounded to egregious and tragic levels when during the second world war, the colonial government ordered the local administration in the reserves to force an increase in peasant production for the war effort, a complete volte face on the aggressive discouragement of peasant production in previous decades. The consequence was to subject the land to such a strain as to threaten ecological meltdown and thus imperil the existence of all who lived off the reserves.¹¹⁵ Thus we observe the technique of the destruction of the foundation of economic existence. The effects of the British land policy eerily chime with Lemkin's observation in *Axis Rule*:

The destruction of the foundations of the economic existence of a national group necessarily brings about a crippling of its development, even retrogression. The lowering of the standards of living creates difficulties in fulfilling cultural-spiritual requirements. Furthermore, a daily fight literally for bread and for physical survival may handicap thinking in both general and national terms.¹¹⁶

That the land policy exhibited *forcible* dimensions is again manifestly undeniable, given that at no point were the Kikuyu given a genuinely democratic opportunity to challenge the process of land alienation. What they were given was a feeble and ineffectual platform to voice their opposition at the Kenya Land Commission (known popularly as the Carter Commission).¹¹⁷ This eventuated in the granting of an additional 30.5 square miles of territory and 350 square miles for future use. Alas, the land offered was agriculturally arid, barren and unfertile.¹¹⁸ The reason for this was that the colonial secretary instructed the Carter Commission to not provide any fertile land from the 'White' Highlands.¹¹⁹ These measures prosecuted by the colonial government cannot be taken to be what Short described as sufficient measures to assist the transition from one socio-economic and political figuration to another.¹²⁰ Clearly we have evidence for the social decay and pathological dissolution of the Kikuyu economic foundation that could only eventuate in the destruction of the socio-political figuration. Therefore, these physical conditions could only lead to the ruination of the social life of the Kikuyu and amount to cultural and physical genocide.

Secondly, the colonial government imposed a hugely burdensome 'hut tax' and 'poll tax' collectively equivalent to two months wages at the local rate.¹²¹ The combined effect of the land and tax policy was to force Kikuyu migration in search of work and land. This conditioned the rise of what had become known as the *squatter* community, and the dispersal of tens of thousands of Kikuyu tribesman in search of living on settler farms and plantations.¹²² By 1945 there were 200,000 registered squatters in the White Highlands, the vast majority of whom were Kikuyu.¹²³ The effect was to further disintegrate the tribal figuration with all the attendant genocidal effects that would accompany it.¹²⁴ In a submission to the Kenya Land Commission Jomo Kenyatta, who would later become the first post-independence Kenyan president, remarked on the effect of the land policy and the consequent Kikuyu migration:

We find we have not only lost land, but we have also lost tribesmen, because some of the Kikuyu ran away when their land was taken, and they have become squatters... We consider that this is a matter which [has] been a great disadvantage to the Kikuyu people because it has *disorganized* the tribe.¹²⁵

Thirdly, in an effort to combat the initial success of those Kikuyu who were resourceful enough to escape the draconian strictures of the new settler colonial economy or who were among the fortunate few to have enough land in the central province reserves to produce a surplus of agricultural goods which they sold on the expanding internal markets, the colonial government imposed a prohibition on the growing of the most profitable crops. Other crops like

114 Kilson, *Land and the Kikuyu*, p.120.

115 Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p.23.

116 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, p.85.

117 Kenya Land Commission, pp.71–77.

118 N Leys, Report of the Kenya Land Commission, *New Statesman and Nation*, July 28, 1934, p.116.

119 Kilson, *Land and the Kikuyu*, p.126.

120 Short, *Cultural Genocide and Indigenous peoples*, p.839.

121 Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p.23.

122 For a detailed analysis of the all the prohibitive and destructive strategies implemented by the colonial administration in order to cripple the squatter MOP see Tabitha Tanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905–63*, (London, James Currey, 1987), ch.1–4.

123 See Mark Curtis, *The Web of Deceit: Britain's Real Role in the World*, (London, Vintage, 2003), p.319 and Tanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, p.126.

124 Kilson, *Land and the Kikuyu*, p.121.

125 Kenya Land Commission, p.430.

maize would be controlled and restricted by marketing boards established after the Second World War retarding African agriculture. This of course turned the screw further on the Kikuyu way of life.

The final screw in the first phase, before the advent of the Mau Mau insurrection itself, would come with the advent of the compulsory labour policy brought into being by the 'Northey Circular' in 1919, so named after General Northey the colonial governor at the time; although this merely obliged the district commissioners to force through what the land and tax policy had compelled most of the Kikuyu on the reserves to do out of material necessity. Nevertheless, in this telling remark in the Kenya Gazette, the Governor revealed not only the racist contempt for the Kikuyu that was common among colonial administrators and the settler classes but also the inner connections between global political-economic structures, British capitalism more specifically and the settler MOP:

Is it our duty to allow these natives to remain in uneducated and unproductive idleness in their so-called Reserves? I think not. I believe that our duty is to encourage the energies of all communities to produce from these rich lands the raw products and foodstuffs that the world at large, *and the British Empire in particular, require* [emphasis added]. This can only be done by encouragement of the thousands of able-bodied natives to work with the European settler for the cultivation of the land.¹²⁶

In political-economic terms, the net effect of the articulation of the indigenous peasant and settler MOPs on the Kikuyu – embodied in the land, tax and labour policy – was to ensure that 'the material conditions of reproduction in the reserves were insufficient to meet the needs of simple *reproduction*, commodity purchases, and tax payments [emphasis added]'.¹²⁷ These were the mechanisms that forced the Kikuyu onto the labour market. But given the paltry nature of the wages paid on the settler farms plus the meagre prices paid for the surplus product sold by the Kikuyu peasants – due to the aforementioned marketing boards – it was necessary to stop short of completely annihilating the Kikuyu MOP and thus allow the latter to make up the shortfall in what Berman described as the resulting 'reproductive gap'. This allowed the Kikuyu to be paid below the value of commodity labour power and their cash crops.¹²⁸

Tragically, the 'reproductive gap' was, as has been revealed above, far from adequately filled. As Barta reminded us in his analysis of another example of colonial settler society, Australia, colonization established two 'incompatible forms of society and economy', in its quest to forcibly incorporate indigenous society in to the orbit of the global capitalist economy.¹²⁹ The alienation of land had genocidal consequences for the Aboriginal peoples. Barta thus understood genocidal intent as inherent in the policy of the metropolitan government, the local colonial authorities – in Kenya both the colonial governor all the way down to the district commissioners – and the settlers themselves to take the land even when the horrific human consequences – the crippling poverty, the breakdown of their culture and the dissolution of the Kikuyu group – were foreseeable. Thus the inner connections that elucidate capitalist genocide have been revealed in the corrosive articulation of two inimical MOPs, conditioned by the laws of motion of the global capitalist MOP and geo-political competition specific to capitalism at the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. With the rise of the Mau Mau rebellion, the genocide would enter its second phase.

Phase 2: The Concentrated Shock of Genocide Behind the Wire

By the early 1950s popular discontent on the reserves, in the White Highlands and in the urban centres, particularly Nairobi, now filled with dispossessed squatters and impoverished peasants from the reserves looking for work, was reaching fever pitch. The growth in popularity of the the main nationalist political group opposed to British rule, the Kenya Africa Union (KAU), and its leader Jomo Kenyatta and the extension of the influence of radical trade unions caused great consternation for the colonial authorities.¹³⁰ Governor Baring in a letter to London was moved to state that in declaring a state of emergency the colonial government was not overacting because 'Kenyatta has succeeded building up right under the nose of authority a powerful organisation affecting all sides of life among the Kikuyu'.¹³¹ Consequently in the early months of 1953, Governor Baring empowered his government with a wide range of extreme and draconian laws, known as 'emergency regulations'. These included everything from communal punishment, control of individual and mass movements, control and disposition of labour, confiscation of property and land, the censorship

126 Kenya Gazette, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council of East Africa*. First Sess., 1917, p.2.

127 Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*, p.37.

128 Ibid.

129 Barta, *Relations of Genocide*, pp.237–41.

130 For the critical role of trade unions in the Mau Mau rebellion see F D. Corfield, *Origins and Growth of Mau Mau: An Historical Survey*, (Nairobi, Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1960), 255–258; Sharon B. Stichter, *Workers, Trade Unions and the Mau Mau*, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 9 (2) (1975), 259–275.

131 Baring, 1952 cited in Curtis, *The Web of Deceit*, p.322.

of all kikuyu publications, disbanding of all kikuyu opposition parties, suspension of due process¹³² and detention without trial.¹³³ The last six would all be candidates for Lemkin's genocidal techniques: equating with economic, cultural and social. Given the limitations on the scope of this paper, three outstanding genocidal techniques have been focussed on due to their pivotal role in waging war against Kikuyu society in its entirety and its efficaciousness in ensuring that 'the colonised had no appreciable collective life at all'.¹³⁴

The concentrated form of genocide made possible by the autocratic and tyrannical power unleashed by the state of emergency can be schematically broken down into the colonial strategy of *repatriation*, *detention* and *villageization*: all amounted to forcing the Kikuyu population into a condition of virtual isolation and severance, behind the wire as Elkins so aptly described it, from the Mau Mau guerrillas. This form of warfare was a logical correlate of waging a war against an entire people. With almost the entire Kikuyu population of 1.5 million having taken the Mau Mau oath which united the Kikuyu in a bond of solidarity and a solemn pledge to defeat the injustices of British colonial rule, the assessment and fear of the colonial authorities that they were in fact contending with the resistance of an entire community was an understandable one.¹³⁵

The only way to defeat a movement organically and insolubly woven into the fabric of a society is to bring about the dissolution of that society. Sartre echoed this sentiment when he argued that with the mobilisation of an entire people and the inevitable breakdown in the traditional distinction between civilians and combatants, the only way a colonial power could defeat a guerrilla army was to wage a war against that society in its entirety.¹³⁶ Ironically, in the same essay he made the pertinent distinction between this scenario and colonial modalities where it was necessary to retain the native population as a pliant and cheap source of labour. In the case of Kenya we have both modalities embodied in the two phases respectively. The last phase was to be the most brutal and most destructive.

The nettle of contradictions that the colonial state wrestled with were to reach their most volatile expression during the state of emergency. The struggle to both secure the reproduction of the settler MOP and legitimation was to prove beyond the reach of the colonial authorities. With the rise of resistance which ultimately stemmed from the imposition of the foreign MOP, the state dispensed with the pretence of neutrality and waged a total social war on Kikuyu society.

Repatriation

The first broadside against the Kikuyu tribe in the genocidal war, otherwise described as a 'counter-insurgency operation' by the colonial authorities, was to forcibly repatriate most of the Kikuyu population living outside the reserves, particularly Kikuyu squatters, back to the Kikuyu districts.¹³⁷ The deportations began in December 1952. They were largely packed into railcars and lorries and shipped back to the overcrowded reserves, thus compounding the problem of land shortages and aggravating conditions of existence already crippling by any reasonable measure. By May of 1953 over 100,000 had been forcibly removed from their homes on the predicate that in amongst the gargantuan volume of humanity coerced into leaving what little was left of their life, some may in fact be Mau Mau.¹³⁸ In a half-hearted attempt to cope with the flow of human traffic, the colonial government established 'transit camps' to help process the internally displaced as they had now become. The conditions in the camps were squalid and overcrowded with threadbare sanitation, no clean water and little in the way of food. To exacerbate the problem, the Kikuyu could not afford to purchase any food as they had lost all their livestock or not been compensated their lost wages as a result of forced deportation. Malnutrition, starvation and disease were the inevitable outcome.¹³⁹ Instead the colonial government leaned heavily on the Red Cross for medical assistance and food. Many languished in the

132 For the most authoritative study of the suspension of due process and the attendant human rights abuses see David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005).

133 For further emergency regulations see Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 70-72. For a thorough analysis of all the emergency laws see Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*.

134 It is in no way suggested that the other genocidal techniques were not important in bringing about the dissolution of the collective and social life of the Kikuyu. They were all part and parcel of what Moses called a "total social practise". See Dirk Moses, 'Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide', in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. Donald Bloxham, and Dirk Moses, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), p.34.

135 Caroline Elkins, *Detention, Rehabilitation and the Destruction of Kikuyu Society*, in *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, ed. Atieno Odhiambo, and John Lonsdale, (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), p.192.

136 Jean-Paul Sartre and Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, *On genocide: And a summary of the evidence and the judgments of the International War Crimes Tribunal*, (Boston, Beacon Press, 1968), p.17.

137 There were four emergency regulations enacted in 1952-1953 that granted the colonial government absolute power to move Kikuyu regardless of circumstances. These were Emergency Regulation 2 (1952); Emergency (Movement of Kikuyu) Regulations (1953); Emergency (Amendment No.4) Regulations (1953); Emergency (Control of Kikuyu Labour) Regulations (1953).

138 Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p.57.

139 Ibid.

transit camps for months because there simply was not enough land on the reserves to accommodate them, land which was on the verge of ecological collapse.

In a telling admission Governor Baring and his ministers admitted that the reserves could not accommodate any more Kikuyu as the reserves were 'saturated'. During a debate on the Kenya Legislative Council, a representative body made up mostly of white settlers with a third of the seats left over for Indians and Arabs and no seats for Africans – it was made quite clear that the forced deportations and repatriations to the reserves were seen as punishment for the rebellion precisely because they were overcrowded and lacked food.¹⁴⁰ These admissions and outright declamatory protestations are suggestive of *intent* in the narrow legal sense.

Both in the transit camps and the reserves the 'repatriates' were forced to contend with conditions of existence that would foreseeably lead to their physical ruination. Lemkin observed that one technique for the prosecution of physical genocide was engineering environmental conditions that would *endanger health*. Lemkin elaborated: 'undesired national groups... are deprived of elemental necessities for preserving health and life'.¹⁴¹ Arguably the conditions in the transit camps and those in the reserves that were further exacerbated by the policy of repatriation qualify as conditions that endanger health and can thus be seen as genocidal.

Detention, Screening and the 'Pipeline'

In an effort to weed out those who were considered sympathetic to the Mau Mau the colonial state engineered a policy of 'screening' where tens of thousands of suspects were detained without trial and interrogated to 'extract' intelligence and identify loyalists who would later be allowed to return to the reserves. By the end of 1953 eight screening camps were set up throughout the Rift Valley province.¹⁴² However most of the screening took place on temporary interrogation sites by roving interrogation teams in farms or police stations. Just fourteen months into the emergency and 153,000 arrests had already been made.¹⁴³ This egregious abuse of power and human rights was made unspeakable by the methods of interrogation employed. 'Techniques' of interrogation 'included slicing ears off, boring holes in ears drums, flogging until death, pouring paraffin over suspects who were then set alight, and burning ear drums with lit cigarettes' as well as castration and rape.¹⁴⁴ In the screening camps themselves the techniques differed very little: torture and death by beatings was commonplace.¹⁴⁵

The governments drive to liquidate the Kikuyu leadership and its organisation would step up a gear with the passing of further emergency regulations designed to give the government *carte blanche* in the arrest and detention of suspects without trial.¹⁴⁶ The government was permitted to detain any individual in the interests of public order for up to 28 days and, with the governor's approval, for the duration of the emergency. With 100,000 suspects by July 1953, the government began trying suspects on masse. In the wake of the Lari massacre and further murders of European settlers by the Mau Mau, the governor extended capital punishments to include any assistance of terrorists in criminal activities, so vague as to make an offence of passing food or housing a Mau Mau militant.¹⁴⁷ By the end of the emergency over 1000 Kikuyu would meet their end on the gallows. However, even the emergency justice system could not cope with the large numbers and so the government increasingly relied on the use of detention orders (GDOs) for those who could not be prosecuted even under emergency legislation.¹⁴⁸

The system of screening would go through one more mutation in the form of what was euphemistically called 'rehabilitation centres' or the 'pipeline'. Ostensibly touted as camps for the reconstruction of the Kikuyu into civilised and governable citizens, they were in fact concentration camps for Mau Mau sympathisers considered 'high risk'. Within the camp walls the inmates would be categorised into *Blacks* if they were Mau Mau officials or supporters, *Greys* if they were sympathisers and *Whites* if they were loyal to the colonial regime.¹⁴⁹ The latter would soon be released, with 'irredeemable' blacks sent to labour camps to work punishing and insufferable work details. In the words of Elkins, these were Britain's 'gulags'.¹⁵⁰ Indiscriminate brutality and violence was the norm in the camps but it was not to be systematized until the approach known as the 'dilution technique' was introduced.¹⁵¹ It was introduced as a measure

140 Kenya Legislative Council, *Legislative Council Debates*, 1956, 55 (7).

141 Lemkin, R. (1944) *Axis Rule*, 88.

142 Elkins, 'Detention, Rehabilitation and the Destruction', 194.

143 Curtis, *The Web of Deceit*, 324.

144 Ibid.

145 Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p.57.

146 Emergency Regulation 2 (1952)

147 For an analysis of the Lari massacre and the official and unofficial reprisals see David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, ch 4.

148 Elkins, 'Detention, Rehabilitation and the Destruction', p.197.

149 See Curtis, *The Web of Deceit*, p.327 and Elkins, 'Detention, Rehabilitation and the Destruction', 197–198.

150 Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, ch.5.

151 Elkins, 'Detention, Rehabilitation and the Destruction', p.213.

to combat the incredible resilience and defiance that the Kikuyu and other ethnic groups showed in the detention camps. It involved the ordering of a detainee to perform a routine task. When they refused, which they invariably did, a preponderance of camp warders would isolate and then force the detainee into submission, coercing and haranguing him until he finally confessed his oath. This technique would later be introduced system wide as 'operation progress' with official Nairobi approval. Force and brutality would no longer rely on the caprice of camp guards but be officially sanctioned as government policy. Tellingly, the Historian V.G Kiernan likened the detention camps to any under the management of the Japanese or the Nazis during the Second World War.¹⁵²

This strategy to crush the rebellion and dissolve the Kikuyu leadership would not only qualify as a form of psychological and cultural genocide and thus arguably constitute a form of mental harm prohibited by the UN convention, in particular article two,¹⁵³ but also equate with Lemkin's social and political techniques of genocide. With regard to the political technique Lemkin said that 'In order further to disrupt national unity... Other *political parties* were dissolved' [emphasis added].¹⁵⁴ He went on to argue that to affect *social* genocide the destruction of the national pattern in the social field must be brought about by the abolition of the indigenous system of law and social justice and the imposition of the occupants, which, as revealed above, took on a particularly flagrant form after the Lari massacre during the emergency period. Furthermore, in order to debilitate the social structure of the occupied it would be necessary to destroy the intelligentsia 'because this group largely provides the national leadership and organizes resistance'.¹⁵⁵ We see the characteristics of both the social and political techniques of genocide in the screening and the pipeline camp system. Some detractors may argue that the Mau Mau did not equate with the national leadership of all the Kikuyu tribe, but if you consider that under emergency regulations all other opposition parties and groups had been disbanded, the Mau Mau became the only source of mobilisation and political expression left for the Kikuyu people.

Villageization

Perhaps the most punitive measure applied by the colonial government in their efforts to defeat the Mau Mau and subdue the Kikuyu was the policy of *villageization* – the compulsory resettlement of people from their scattered homesteads, which were destroyed, onto centralised villages surrounded by barbed wire and strategically situated on the road network. The Kikuyu had all their livestock confiscated, their homesteads burned, and in the ensuing chaos families were often separated. In the camps themselves the Kikuyu were subjected to forced labour, the first several months of which was simply to build the huts they were to live in. The policy had been initiated in earnest in June 1954. By the end of 1955, over a million Kikuyu had been herded into over eighty 'protected' villages.¹⁵⁶

In essence the villages were designed to sever the entire community from the Mau Mau guerrillas. According to Sorrenson it was the policy of villageisation that inflicted the *coup de grâce* on the Mau Mau.¹⁵⁷ It was also a method of punishing the recalcitrant women and even children who had taken the Mau Mau oath to fight the injustices of British rule. What normally awaited the arriving Kikuyu was 'nothing save a cordon of armed loyalists and a nearby Home Guard post'.¹⁵⁸ There was no shelter, food, water, sanitation facilities, or medical supplies: 'It was a site of absolute suffering'.¹⁵⁹ The policy of villageisation was characterised very often by twenty-three hour curfews with conditions so deleterious to human well being that famine and death was widespread. Death became so routine that the Home Guards would order the villagers to dig trenches for the dead in readiness for the inevitable.¹⁶⁰ Of the 150,000 Kikuyu who died as result of the war, the vast majority died in the protected villages.¹⁶¹

Torture was as widespread and common as it was in the detention camps; beatings and rape were rampant throughout the villages. The Home Guard Posts were the central nodes of torture, Kikuyu being sent to receive their cruel and often deadly treatment if a 'woman was too late for communal labor role call, if she walked too slowly or failed to fulfil her daily work quota, if she was suspected of harbouring Mau Mau sympathies – or worse, if she was caught trying to supply the remaining forest fighters'.¹⁶² As Elkins has argued, the actions of the Home Guard cannot

152 Victor G. Kiernan *European Empires from Conquest to Collapse, 1815–1960*, (London, Fontana, 1982), p.221.

153 Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Defining Genocide*, in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone, (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.14.

154 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, p.83.

155 Ibid.

156 See Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, p.294 and Elkins, *Detention, Rehabilitation and the Destruction*, p.207.

157 Mikael K Sorenson, *Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country: A Study in Government Policy*, (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1967), pp.110–111.

158 The Home Guard were made up of Loyalist Kikuyu.

159 Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p.240.

160 Ibid, p.243.

161 Kiernan, *European Empires*.

162 Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p.243.

be understood unless we understand their training in the philosophy of the British Security forces, who were known by the detained villagers as *haraka*, 'the fast ones' due to the speed with which they could wreak carnage on the local population. Among some of the more common techniques of torture inflicted by the British security forces were rape, beating by clubs and rifles butts, hanging, excrement based torture, captured Mau Mau fighters tied to the back of land rovers and driven around villages until their bodies had become dismembered and finally perhaps the most shocking: 'children slaughtered and their remains skewered and paraded around the villages'.¹⁶³ This again demonstrates the sheer brutality and inhumanity of villageization. It also must, as the conditions in the detention camps did, qualify as psychological terror and mental harm as prohibited under the UN convention.

But most critically, the villageization programme, with its forced removals, destruction of homesteads and confiscation of their property in addition to the dissolution of their family units, inflicted on almost the entire Kikuyu population, affected the most traumatic severance of the Kikuyu from their traditional way of life. The villageization programme intended to break the Kikuyu both psychologically and physically, exhausting what Lemkin called the 'spiritual resources'¹⁶⁴ of the nation in order to force the Kikuyu to confess their oath and thus dissolve the bonds of solidarity with the Mau Mau movement, a movement which had become the only hope of salvaging some dignity and community quite apart from the issue of land alienation. It would take the complete 'obliteration of the Kikuyu domestic landscape' to achieve this aim.¹⁶⁵ The concentrated shock of genocide would reach its highest pitch in the villages, affecting the total annihilation of the Kikuyu way of life, decimating their economic, social, political and cultural figurations.

4. Conclusion

It has been argued in this paper that the dominant conception of genocide as defined by the UN convention is not fit for purpose, purged of the 'offensive' elements that threatened to corroborate the culpability of colonial powers in genocidal episodes both east and west of the Iron Curtain. The ripples of this legacy bifurcated the long overdue emergence of a scholarly tradition dedicated to the study of genocide. On one side stands the Liberal tradition with its individualist ontology which leaves accusations of colonial genocide beyond the reach of the very western liberal states from which many of the liberal scholars come.

On the other side stands the post-liberal school with its holist ontology focussing instead on the structures of genocide and the structures of the subjects of genocide, namely groups. This approach recognises that social structures and economic systems which do not possess intention in the manner recognised by the UN convention are not amenable to cross examination. Unfortunately, not just for lack of space, political institutions, modes of production and colonial rivalries cannot be put in the dock.

We have seen that a post-liberal approach can begin to illuminate the hidden socio-economic and political structures of genocide and its inner connections with colonisation. Furthermore, this tradition is more consistent with the ontological axioms of the founder of the sociology of genocide, Raphael Lemkin. Lemkin understood that 'genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, *not in their individual capacity*, but as members of the national group' [emphasis added].¹⁶⁶ Therefore the efficacy of any genocidal practise must be appraised according to the extent to which it cripples the structures of any targeted entity or social figuration.

This tradition is thus equipped to deconstruct the relations of genocide, as they occurred under the Kenyan protectorate during Britain's colonial reign and their genocidal effects on the Kikuyu tribe. However, we have seen that although just such an ontological approach may be suited it suffers weaknesses that can be rectified with an infusion of a Marxist ontology into the cannon of post-liberal literature. Firstly, a Marxist ontology corrects the reductionist and 'static' bias of Lemkin's and the post-liberal school's functionalism, thus treating social collectivities as dynamic figurations capable of organic change and cultural adaptation. Such an approach helps us to better distinguish cultural diffusion from cultural destruction. This is important because as was shown the Kikuyu underwent cultural evolution on a voluntary basis which should not be confused with the forcible dimensions that attend any genocidal practise. Furthermore, a Marxist approach is better equipped to elucidate the determinants behind the inner connections between the broader global structures of the world economy and geo-political competition and the localised forces of a colonial economy and its attendant colonial state, however oblique and contradictory they may be. What Wolfe

163 Ibid.

164 Lemkin p.84.

165 Elkins, 'Detention, Rehabilitation and the Destruction', p.217.

166 Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, p.79.

described as the 'global dimension to the frenzy for native land' is critically located in the laws of motion of the capitalist MOP and its corollary capitalist imperialism.¹⁶⁷

On the local level of the Kenyan colony the dialectical interplay between the settler MOP, which has been identified as the genocidal instrument for the interdiction of the process of cultural change or reproduction, and the Kikuyu figuration p.is an interaction which is better explicated by the application of a Marx's historical materialist method of analysis. Therefore, it is the contention of this author that colonial genocide can be better understood as capitalist genocide.

With these modifications, what is thus called a neo-Lemkinian lens once applied to the Kikuyu has revealed the operation of a number of key genocidal techniques schematically divided across two phases. In phase one the policies of land alienation and forced labour affected the crippling of the economic foundations of the Kikuyu, inflicting conditions of appalling depravation eventuating in cultural destruction. In the second more concentrated and acute phase of the genocidal process, three techniques were employed: repatriation, detention and villageization. The effect of these policies was to realise the liquidation of the social leadership of the Kikuyu, the subjection of the Kikuyu to physical conditions designed to bring about their physical ruination and ultimately, a furtherance and intensification of the destruction of the social life of the Kikuyu.

Given the scope of the paper a few important areas of research were unfortunately not given the treatment they were due. The nature of the Mau Mau resistance was only touched upon as and when it informed the genocidal process from the point of view of the genocidists, i.e. the colonists, their loyalist supporters and the colonial state. Too often in genocide scholarship the victims are treated as passive and powerless objects of genocide. This was far from the truth in the case of the Kikuyu, who demonstrated unbounded courage and determination against a modern state machine with all the trappings of mechanised military hardware and the backing of a hegemonic power.

Further research on the legacy of the genocidal process is needed: Firstly in terms of whether and how the Kikuyu as a collective entity survived and managed to rebuild their figurations. Secondly, the role played by the genocidal process in shaping the post-emergency settlement of the land question and its role in integrating the Kenyan economy into the modern structures of the global economy. Thirdly, in a connected issue, research into what effects the balance of *global* economic and geo-political forces played beyond the first phase of the genocidal process, which witnessed the decline in influence and global reach of the British power. How did the period of decolonization affect the genocidal process in Kenya and what were the effects of regional African politics in the unfolding of the events during the period under study in this paper? Fourthly, what were the effects of the genocidal practises administered by the colonial authorities on the other major ethnic groups in Kenya, namely the Kamba, the Masai and the Embu. On a methodological level, insufficient emphasis was placed on analysing the role of agency within the colonial state apparatus and the settler community. All these questions were beyond the scope of this paper but must be addressed in future research to furnish a richer understanding of the genocidal process.

The lens of genocide, as understood from a Lemkinian perspective, is a sociological approach that is far too neglected by scholars of history and post-colonial studies to name just two disciplines; this is after all the first paper to apply the genocide lens to the period of colonisation of Kenya and the effects it had on the Kikuyu. The point of this approach is not to pour scorn on the colonial crimes of the past and pick at old wounds but to gain a fuller understanding of the gravity of the effects that colonial policies had and *neo-colonial* policies do have on the life of indigenous groups around world, not just to expose them but to ensure they never happen again.

Appendix

Lemkin's 8 techniques of Genocide (Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 82-90):

- *Political*: involves the cessation of self-government and destruction of political institutions followed by the imposition of administration by the colonial occupants; all local political organisations are dissolved and imposition of parties of the occupant originating from the colonising power.
- *Social*: involves the annihilation of national leadership abolition of local courts and the imposition of the legal system of the occupant.
- *Cultural*: ban on the use of native language, imposition of colonial education and the rigid control or restriction/prohibition of cultural activities, e.g. art, theatre, music etc.

¹⁶⁷ Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism', p.392.

- *Economic*: destruction of the foundation of economic existence.
- *Biological*: interdiction of the reproduction of the group by decreasing the birth rate or the apprehension of the children and their assimilation into the group of the occupant.
- *Physical*: mass murder and endangering of health.
- *Religious*: disruption of religious influence, destruction of religious leadership.
- *Moral*: creation of an atmosphere of moral debasement