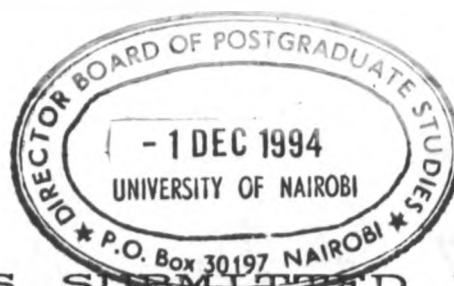


THE KEIYO OF KENYA DURING THE  
EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD,  
1902-1939

BY  
ISAAC TARUS

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

APRIL, 1994

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

*Isaac Tarus*

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ISAAC TARUS

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my knowledge as University supervisor.

*David Sperling*

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DR. DAVID SPERLING

DEDICATION

Dedication of this work is to my parents Philemon Chebiego and Evelyn Tabarno Kobilu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the many individuals who helped make this work a reality. My supervisor Dr. David Sperling patiently read through my drafts from the time of proposal to the completion of thesis. His understanding and encouragement were most invaluable.

My informants whose names are appended at the end of this thesis generously gave all the information required. Special thanks must also go to the officials of Kenya National Archives, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library and the British Institute in East Africa for availing the necessary materials.

Financial support for this thesis came from the University of Nairobi which I am very grateful. I am also greatly indebted to the members of staff of the Department of History who have always had a word of encouragement for me.

In addition, I must express my deep gratitude to my brothers and sisters and to my wife Betty for their unfailing source of encouragement and help. Finally thanks to Ms. Lucy Nyokabi for the neat typing of this thesis.

**ABSTRACT**

This study deals primarily with the manifestation, the magnitude and impact of early colonial onslaught on Keiyo society between 1902 and 1939. The entrenchment of colonialism affected the Keiyo in a very profound manner. In 1902 the area of the Keiyo was brought under the administration of the East Africa Protectorate. And by 1905 a Keiyo reserve had been created with the purpose of halting Keiyo territorial expansion into the Uasin Gishu plateau thus stalling the free movement of people and livestock.

By impinging on Keiyo social and economic institutions the colonial administration subjected the Keiyo to specific demands. These included the alienation of land, taxation, migrant labour and the appointment of chiefs. The Keiyo responded by active participation in trade, business and cash crop farming. In addition, through their own initiative, the African government school Tambach was established. The colonial presence acted as an important element in the consolidation of the once divergent Keiyo clans.

The Keiyo though severely constrained were not disheartened by colonial land alienation. Deprived of vital grazing land, they resourcefully exploited other survival opportunities in squatterdom, out-migration and the adaptation of new farming methods, such as the use of the plough and the linear planting of seeds rather than random broadcasting.

Aspects of change and continuity permeated Keiyo indigenous institutions. During the period before 1939 the Keiyo were able to maintain a considerable degree of social and economic autonomy, adapting to external pressures without antagonising the colonial government.

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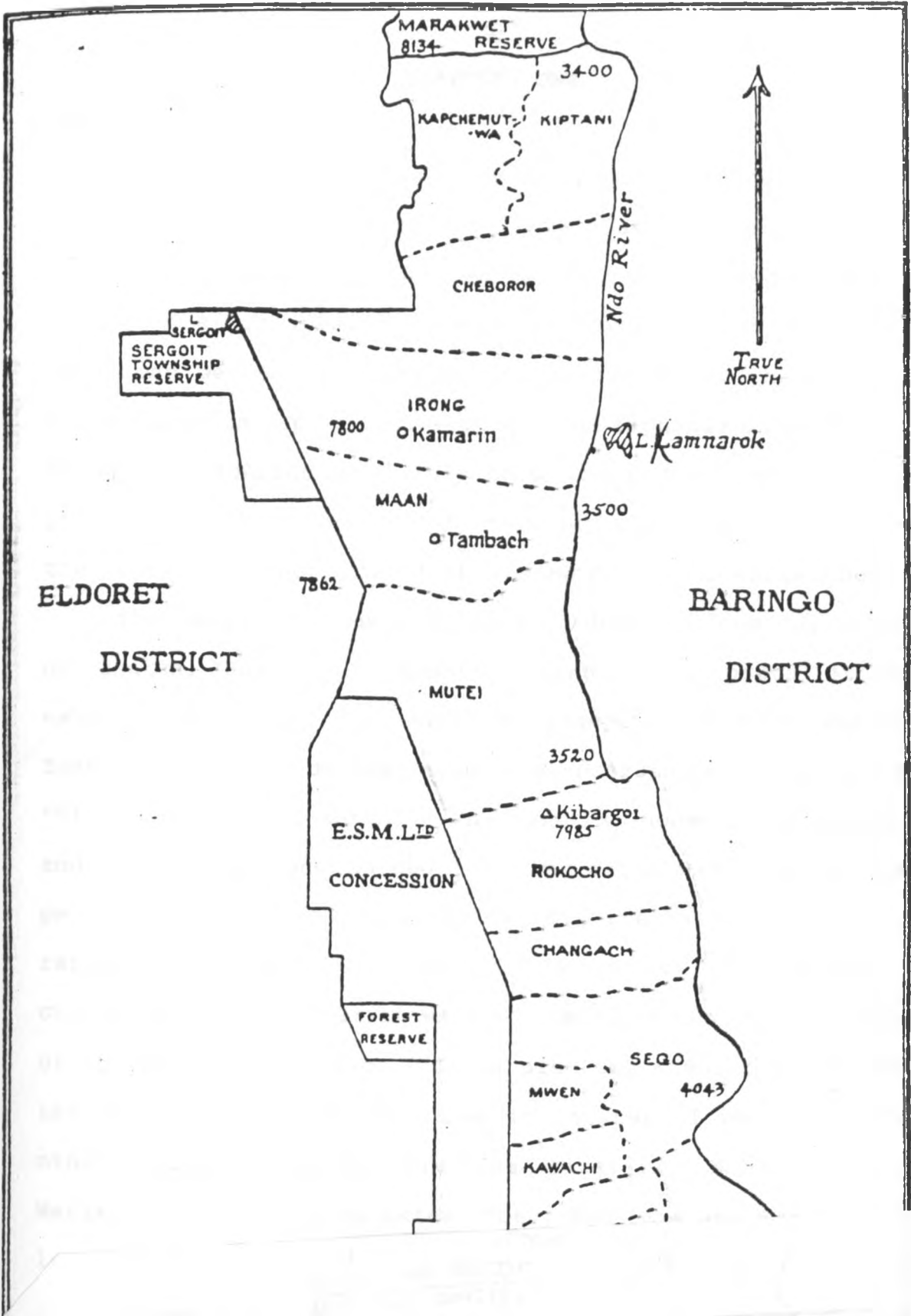
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ABBREVIATIONS

A.I.M.	African Inland Mission
Bar	Baringo
D.C.	District Commissioner
E.L.G.M.	Elgeyo Marakwet
I.B.E.A.	Imperial British East Africa
K.N.A.	Kenya National Archives
L.B.E.A.	Leader of British East Africa
L.N.C.	Local Native Council
N.I.T.D.	Native Industrial Training Depot
O.I.	Oral Interview
RS	Rupees
R.V.P.	Rift Valley Province
P.W.D.	Public Works Department
Tamb.	Tambach
U.G.	Uasin Gishu
£	Pounds



MAP SHOWING VARIOUS KEIYO LOCATIONS(1927)



## CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Few in-depth studies have been done on the impact of colonial rule on Keiyo society. This study aims at filling the gaps by analysing the manifestation, the magnitude and direction of colonial influence. It examines in detail the relations between the Keiyo, the settlers and the colonial administration, up to 1939 with special emphasis on aspects of change and continuity. This chapter is concerned with the physical and human setting of the study and an appreciation of the conceptual and structural framework of the whole thesis.

The name Keiyo has been used to describe the collection of Central Kalenjin communities inhabiting parts of the eastern Uasin Gishu plateau, the Elgeyo Escarpment and the Tambach Shelf.<sup>1</sup> They are known in ethnographic circles as the "Cliff-Dwellers of Kenya". The term is, however, a misnomer and J.A. Massam who coined the expression was inimical and pejorative. For the purposes of this thesis the name Keiyo rather than Elgeyo is used. This is not only aimed at consistency but also an attempt to adhere to the current usage of the people themselves. It is also important to note that the Keiyo are one of the Kalenjin cluster of peoples. The other Kalenjin groups are the Kipsigis, Nandi, Tugen, Marakwet, Terik, Pokot, Okiek, Kony, Bongomek and Sebei. The last three have been grouped together as the Sabaot. There are historical, cultural and linguistic connections between

all these groups.<sup>2</sup>

The origin of the term Keiyo is not fully known. Informants gave two meanings of the term. The third is provided by J.A. Massam in his book, The Cliff-Dwellers of Kenya. One school of thought argues that the name Keiyo was given to them by Nandi women because those Nandi women who were sterile were able to conceive only when they migrated to Keiyo-land. Hence they referred to Keiyo-land as the place of the Kip-Keiyo (a place where one goes to give birth). A second school of thought contends that the people we now know as the Keiyo were a self-centred people living singly on the escarpment ledges. As a result their neighbours, the Tugen and Nandi referred to them as the Kip-Keiyo (singular) or Kipkeini (plural), (solitary people). In the course of time, the above references were corrupted to read Keiyo.<sup>3</sup> And finally, J.A. Massam has argued that the term Keiyo arose among the Maasai. The Maasai people who during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries inhabited the Uasin Gishu Plateau, termed the inhabitants of the Kerio valley floor as the "Il-Keyu". This was later corrupted by the Swahili traders to read Elgeyo.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Human and Physical Setting

Keiyo-Marakwet is one of the thirteen districts of the Rift-Valley Province.<sup>5</sup> It is a long and narrow strip of land situated between 35° 8' and 35° 45' east longitude and between

0° 10' and 1° 20' north latitude. On the north it is bounded by West Pokot and Trans Nzoia District. On the east is Baringo district. The Kerio river flowing north to Lake Turkana forms the natural boundary of the district with Baringo district.

For administrative convenience, the district is divided into four divisions, namely, Tot, Northern, Central and Southern. The divisions are sub-divided into seventeen locations, which are further sub-divided into ninety-nine sub-locations. The present administrative structure is the outcome of a process that started in the beginning of this century. In 1902, the area of the Keiyo and the Marakwet was brought under the administration of the East Africa Protectorate. The Keiyo were administered from Eldama Ravine in 1894 and from Eldoret in 1913. In 1912, Marakwet station had been established at Kapsowar. From here the Marakwet area was administered. In 1919, a station was established at Kamariny for the sole purpose of administering the Keiyo. The station was moved to Tambach in 1927 and it was here that a decision was taken by the colonial government to administer both the Keiyo and Marakwet together, hence the joint name of the district. In 1976 the headquarters of Keiyo and Marakwet was once more moved to Iten.

The Keiyo-Marakwet district falls into three physical regions that run parallel to each other in a north-south direction. These are from west to east; the Highland Plateau,



the Elgeyo Escarpment and the Kerio Valley. The highland plateau rises gradually from an altitude of 2,700m on the Metkei ridges in the south to the north culminating in the Cherangany mountains which reach heights of 3,350m at the northern boundary. To the east of the plateau, the land falls precipitously in a series of steep uplands and flat plateaus that comprise the Elgeyo escarpment. Thereafter, it terminates in the Kerio Valley that averages 1,000m above sea level. The Kerio Valley is narrow, averaging 6.4 kilometres in width and runs some 150 km from north to south.

The Elgeyo escarpment is characterised by rugged hills, deep valleys, rock outcrops and incised gullies which form seasonal streams that drain into the Kerio river. The Kerio Valley and the escarpment ledge are not easily accessible except through a limited number of passes. There are only three roads. There is a north-south road from Cheptebo to Kimwarer. And then there are two roads going through the Kerio Valley, through the Elgeyo Escarpment. Both roads converge at Eldoret.

Rainfall varies with altitude between 1,000 to 1,500mm in the highlands to about 500mm in the lowlands. The rainy season ranges from March to September with the peak rains in May and the driest period between December and March. The vegetation in the Kerio Valley is mainly acacia trees and shrubs with very poor ground cover. The escarpment is covered by dense tropical forests, while the highland plateau is mainly made up

of bamboo forest.

Topography more than anything else has contributed to the varying mode of subsistence and contact with outsiders. The hills and the ridges influenced the pattern of settlement of the Keiyo. Virtually all Keiyo clans owned strips of land running from the highlands down to the escarpment into the Kerio Valley floor. Such strips were often demarcated by a row of stones or a certain type of vegetation. The Kerio river apart from providing water for animals and for domestic use has always been an important boundary between the Keiyo and the Tugen. The river was also the venue for social functions such as cleansing ceremonies and oath taking. It was also here that many Keiyo and the Tugen lost their lives during the hectic days of cattle raiding in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Keiyo exploitation of the three varying ecological zones, therefore, took into account the difficult ecological and environmental character. The Kerio Valley floor was basically used for grazing, although cultivation was done along the flood plains of the Kerio river. The yearly floods of the Kerio river were always a welcome relief for they brought fresh fertile soil and moisture for planting and the growth of grass for livestock grazing. Hunting and honey collection were possible in the open woodlands of the Kerio-Valley. Cultivation was practised on the upper slopes of the Kerio-Valley and the foothills of the escarpment. It was here that

villages and hamlets were established. There were two reasons for this. The escarpment was cooler than the valley floor and free from mosquitoes and tsetse flies. Secondly, the zone was more defensible and therefore secure from attack. Habitation of the highland plateau began in the early part of the twentieth century, this was the region most affected by colonial rule because of its proximity to the European settlers in the Uasin Gishu plateau.

According to the Labour Commission report of 1912/13 the population of Keiyo was estimated at 10,075. While the Elgeyo-Marakwet annual report of 1915/16 estimated the population of Keiyo at 16,279.<sup>6</sup> The 1948 population census of both Keiyo and Marakwet estimated their population to be around 60,000.<sup>7</sup> According to the population census undertaken in 1979 the population of Keiyo and Marakwet District was 148,868, the Keiyo population being estimated at 69,541.<sup>8</sup>

It will be evident in the thesis that geographical features more than anything else contributed to the varying extent of colonial impact on the Keiyo. According to H.A. Mwanzi, geography may not explain fully why a people choose a certain area for habitation. But once settled in a given area, the geography of the area does affect a people's way of life.<sup>9</sup> The escarpment ledge had a cool climate and could easily be defended. It therefore acted as a sanctuary to famine refugees, dispossessed people and victims of colonial

administration. It was here that the Keiyo played a game of hide and seek with colonial tax-collectors and labour recruiters.

#### Statement of the Problem

In spite of the abundance of documentary material pertaining to the colonial period in Kenya there are serious historiographical gaps in Keiyo colonial history. Studies on the impact of colonialism in Kenya have dealt mainly with the larger groups or the more conspicuous societies like the Kikuyu, Kamba, Maasai, Swahili, Luo and Gusii.<sup>10</sup> Smaller groups like the Keiyo have been ignored with the argument that they were on the periphery during the colonial period. In fact, Bruce Berman as late as 1990 described semi-pastoral communities during the colonial period in Kenya as having, "languished in somnolent apathy."<sup>11</sup>

To what extent therefore did the Keiyo rural herdsmen and cultivators respond to British presence and initiatives? Did they become subordinate to British colonial demands? Did the loss of prime land and co-optation into the colonial labour market "marginalise" and "proletarianise" the Keiyo? This study attempts to answer the fundamental question of how much society really did change during the colonial period. On the same vein there is need to examine those institutions and values of Keiyo society that withstood colonialism.

The Keiyo have had a long history of interaction with the British officials and government beginning at the time of the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1894. In this regard, however, the Keiyo have not been the subject of any historical research. To determine therefore the nature and process of Keiyo exposure to the forces of change and continuity this work explains the relationship between coloniser and colonised.

### Justification of the Research

My original interest in Keiyo history arose during my undergraduate period when I was offered a 3.1.1 course in the Department of History in 1986. At the time it seemed to me that there was little we could call Keiyo history. After reading the works of Massam,<sup>12</sup> Kipkorir<sup>13</sup> and Chesang<sup>14</sup>, my skepticism was proved correct. My present study is therefore an attempt to examine in more detail a specific aspect of a subject earlier touched on in a more general form.<sup>15</sup>

This research was also prompted by my desire to understand the phenomenon of "cliff-dwellers", as the Keiyo were referred to in ethnographic circles. Scholarly studies on the other Kalenjin people have been done leaving the Keiyo in historical oblivion. Since members of the older generation who witnessed and became subjects of colonial rule are dying out, it seemed urgent, in justice to posterity to record their experiences while it was still possible to do so.

In addition, the problem of understanding and assessing the colonial period in Kenya has not been resolved. The present work is intended to be a contribution to that task. It is intended to portray at the micro-level, the response of a rural society to colonial rule by presenting a systematic analysis. It seeks to do so by telling and interpreting thirty-seven years of contact, experience, response and consequences of colonial rule. It hopes to challenge other scholars to undertake comprehensive studies on other Kenyan and African peoples in order to document fully their past.

Finally, the choice of Keiyo as the setting of the study was largely one of convenience. I happen to come from Keiyo, where commitment to such a study would be more fascinating to me. I am known by most knowledgeable persons in the region. This facilitated the establishment of rapport. Moreover, substantial background materials from the Archives were available, which have never been analysed. Hopefully, my study will contribute something to scholarship and to the historiography of Kenya.

### Research Objectives

Within the broader framework of the colonial period, the study aims at the realisation of a number of objectives.

My first objective was to understand the relationship between the Keiyo and the colonial administration in terms of methods, nature and impact of British colonisation of the

Keiyo.

My second objective was to evaluate the impact of land alienation on the Keiyo. Debate has been raging on suggestions that the loss of land led to stagnation and exploitation. This thesis attempts to quantify the results of land loss among the Keiyo and shed more light on the phenomenon.

The third objective was to investigate and assess the process of migrant labour to elucidate if it had any relation to a shortage of grazing land following the alienation of Keiyo land to E.M.S. Grogan Concession and European farmers.

### Literature Review

Much of the available literature on the Keiyo can be divided into three sections. These are by colonial administrators, European travellers or by students who have done research on the Keiyo in universities. In addition, some works about the Kalenjin groups have touched on the Keiyo and have provided information useful to this thesis.

J.A. Massam's book, The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya,<sup>16</sup> is a pioneer study on the Keiyo people. Massam was a British District Commissioner in the 1920s. The Cliff Dwellers is a record of his impressions of the Keiyo during this period of service. It is divided into nineteen chapters. Certain chapters are self-centred. The book provides an interesting account of earlier inhabitants of the present Keiyo region.

In addition, Massam writes so well on the Keiyo social systems particularly on aspects dealing with age-groups, oaths, inheritance, marriage, magic, religion, and medicine among others. Quite illuminative in the book is Massam's description of the British expedition on the Keiyo in 1919 and the 1923 E.M.S. Grogan Concessions' impact on the Keiyo land grazing rights. However, his otherwise intensive research on the Keiyo is marred by stereotypes.

In contrast, the traditions of the Keiyo state that they were never forced to live along the escarpment ledges. My submission is that the Keiyo opted to inhabit the escarpment ledges, not because of raids, drought and famine, but because the region suited Keiyo mode of subsistence. The escarpment was cool and free of mosquitoes. Security consideration also took precedent. Within the escarpment ledges the Keiyo practised hunting, gathering, honey collection, herding, cultivation and symbiotic relationships with their neighbours, the Tugen, Nandi, Maasai and Marakwet among others. It is true of course that at various times the Keiyo experienced severe food shortages brought by lack of rainfall, stock diseases and diminished pasture land or some combination of these factors; but these do not point to wholesome misery, ineptitude or laziness. This thesis demonstrates that the Keiyo adopted so well to their environment that with the establishment of colonial administration, the escarpment ledges provided them with a safe haven to challenge colonial



initiatives. But whatever weaknesses are discerned from Massam's analysis, his work provided an important point of departure for this thesis.

R.O. Hennings in his book, Africa Morning<sup>17</sup>, discusses his experiences among the Keiyo while a colonial administrator in the 1930s. Unlike Massam, Hennings presents a picture of a self-reliant people who are determined to preserve their cultural institutions but also eager to adapt to new changes brought in by the colonial administration. Henning's pre-occupation was with Keiyo reaction to the building of the road from Kabarnet to Tambach in the 1930s. He is also shown as being very interested in curbing cattle rustling which saw him travelling long distances to caution the people particularly the Keiyo and Tugen. The book, however, suffers from generalisations and stereotypes, partly because of its autobiographical and anthropological nature. The book therefore lacks any substantive information on the Keiyo colonial history. However, it was very helpful in appreciating the methods used by the colonial administration in subjugating the Keiyo under their rule. The Keiyo reaction is shown as not being passive.

European travellers' accounts in the late nineteenth centuries have provided very vital information on the Keiyo. Joseph Thompson is regarded both in the traditions and the literature as having been the first whiteman to traverse Keiyoland through Mogoiwa in 1883. In his book, Through Masai

Land,<sup>18</sup> Thompson graphically describes his experiences as he traversed through Keiyo territory. The most important was Keiyo demand for Hongo (a form of tax) to be allowed passage. According to traditions this hongo was demanded by children and was paid in the form of beads, shells, bracelets and cowrieshells. In exchange, Thompson's caravan received food from the Keiyo.

Carl Peters journey was significant in that he forced his way through Keiyoland. He was in a hurry on his way to Uganda to prevent Kabaka Mwanga, King of Buganda, from signing any treaty of protection with the British representative. Accordingly Carl Peters refused to pay hongo as had been done by all travellers. When the Keiyo of Tambach demanded hongo, Peters shot dead one of them as a show of force. This terrified the Keiyo. His ruthless behaviour changed Keiyo perception of white strangers who seemed eager to force their way through every other single obstacle they encountered. Realising the bitterness and vengefulness of the Keiyo warriors, Peters hurriedly ascended the escarpment.

According to F.D. Lugard in his book, The Rise of our East African Empire, the Keiyo were noisy and troublesome. When Keiyo demanded hongo Lugard was as arrogant as Peters. He states that, when the Keiyo ordered him to pay before crossing the Kerio-river from Baringo; "I turned a deaf ear to their arrogant non-sense, the shrill Kelele went up which summons the tribes to battle! However, our stolid

indifference had its effect, and before long the excitable chief laid down his spear and shield in the path, and stepped over them as an oath of peace. We did the same with a walking-stick, and his ardour for battle was appeased."<sup>19</sup> It appears Lugard was able to cross Keiyo country without incident and obtained flour and a scout through the escarpment.

Other European travellers who traversed Keiyo territory included Von Hohnel, James Hannington, the first Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, Fredrick Jackson of the Imperial British East Africa(I.B.E.A.), and J.W. Gregory. These individual travellers represented the vanguard of an international movement soon to gather momentum and engulf the whole African continent. Their writings help in understanding the nature of the early Keiyo reaction to foreigners.

F. Jackson describes in his book, Early Days in East Africa,<sup>20</sup> the process of Keiyo acquiescence to British administration. In 1894, Jackson was posted to Eldama Ravine as a representative of the I.B.E.A. Co. His domain embraced the Keiyo, Nandi, Kipsigis and Tugen. He transformed Eldama Ravine station from a mere resting and replenishing point for the caravans to an active station for spreading British imperialism. Jackson had the dual responsibility of bringing the various African groups under British dominance and making the company administration pay for its costs. Jackson's book therefore describes the methods used by the colonial

administration to bring the Keiyo under foreign rule a process which became a reality in 1902 when the control of the Eastern province of Uganda was transferred to Kenya.

I.C. Chesang has done commendable research on the economic and social systems of the Keiyo, in his unpublished dissertation "Analysis of Superstructure of the Semi-Pastoral Keiyo".<sup>21</sup> It is the first attempt by any scholar to give an indepth account of Keiyo superstructure and its cultural institutions. Chesang has given a short historical analysis of the Keiyo covering only ten pages. In such a short space, Chesang has competently summarised Keiyo history up to 1975. One wishes he could have done more! His focus was, however, on Keiyo superstructure. This thesis attempts to come out with a detailed analysis of the Keiyo during the colonial period to fill the gaps left by Chesang.

"Keiyo Initiation", by F.B. Welbourn and D.K. Kiprono is an excellent exposition of the experience of the Keiyo before and after circumcision. Their article clearly demonstrates the dilemma faced by "an educated Keiyo" on whether to accept colonial changes or cling to traditional values. According to Kiprono, "I saw initiation not as a longed for arrival at manhood but as a cruel experience through which I must pass ..."<sup>22</sup> The article conceptualises the conflict of change and continuity brought to society by the demands of colonial administration and their agents the missionaries and educationalists. By 1963, Welbourn and Kiprono argue,

initiation among the Keiyo had become more casual than in the past. Much of its mysterious character had been lost and some details were being omitted. Schooling was bringing opposition to the whole affair. Educated fathers were opposed to a rite which they felt was irrelevant to contemporary needs. For this thesis, this article was adopted as a frame of reference because it illustrated change and continuity in Keiyo society in the years of colonial rule.

There is also William Kimereng's sixteen page unpublished dissertation; "Keiyo concept of God",<sup>23</sup> This is a study of the various aspects of Keiyo religious life. Kimereng argues that religion was an integral part of Keiyo society. According to him, the Keiyo have since time immemorial worshipped one God, Chebo Kipkoiyo, with Asis (sun) being revered as a sign of God's power and goodness. The study was of particular importance in understanding not only Keiyo conceptualization of God but also in determining the extent to which it was affected by secular education and missionary endeavours.

The Keiyo are one of the many communities which comprise the Kalenjin-speaking people. Thus, this review would not be complete without a discussion of certain treatises which touch on Keiyo history. It is only by doing so that the subsequent colonial history of the Keiyo can be clearly understood.

This thesis has been greatly influenced by H.A. Mwanzi's book, A History of the Kipsigis,<sup>24</sup> Mwanzi disputes those writers who claim a north-south movement for the Kalenjin

people. He terms them as "migrationists", while affirming that societies have evolved. His thesis is that the Kalenjin and specifically the Kipsigis have not come from anywhere, but they have evolved as a result of extensive internal and external ethnic interaction with the Bantu, Sirikwa and Okiek. Mwanzi's book provided very invaluable background reading and the understanding of what has been described as the Kalenjin phenomenon.

Only three works give a detailed history of the Kalenjin-speaking peoples as a group. These are Christopher Ehret's book, History of the Southern Nilotes,<sup>25</sup> J.E.G. Sutton's book, The Archaeology of the Western Highlands of Kenya,<sup>26</sup> and finally, J.A. Distefano's dissertation entitled, "The pre-colonial History of the Kalenjin of Kenya: A Methodological Comparison of Linguistic and Oral Traditional Evidence".<sup>27</sup> These works have gone to great lengths to discuss Kalenjin pre-colonial history, were invaluable in the writing of the historical background of the study. A more pertinent concern of the above works has been the use of linguistic and archaeological data to answer certain questions concerning the ethnicity of the early occupants of the Rift Valley region and more specifically on Kalenjin origin, economy and other related phenomena.

B.E. Kipkorir's book, The Marakwet of Kenya (1977),<sup>28</sup> B.K. Kipkulei's dissertation on "The Origin and Migration of the Tugen" (1972),<sup>29</sup> and David M. Anderson's thesis "Herder,

Settler and Colonial rule: A History of the People's of the Baringo Plains, Kenya, Circa, 1890 to 1940" (1983),<sup>30</sup> provided excellent ideas in evaluating the intricacies of understanding the colonial period. In particular, Anderson's thesis on the Tugen which borders the Keiyo provided a theoretical and hypothetical rationale for this thesis. According to Anderson, Colonialism entailed political results of crisis, confrontation, conquest and control. Crisis was evident in environmental and economic spheres, rather than the purely political spheres. Confrontation is presented by the complex interaction of African herder, European settler and colonial administrator. The crises of drought, Kipn'gosia, of 1918-19 and Kiplel Kowo (the white bones) of 1924-25, provided very stimulating reading, for the Keiyo too experienced the same tragedies of famine as were the Tugen.

In spite of the useful information contained in many of the above cited works none of the authors has concentrated on the history of the Keiyo during the colonial period. Thus, this thesis is an attempt to remedy this omission and show how the Keiyo were affected by British colonial administration from 1902 to 1939.

### Theoretical Framework

The thesis will ultimately seek to address itself to the important variables of change and continuity. The term change here denotes a difference in anything observed over some

period of time particularly between the pre-colonial and colonial period. Changes began to occur as a result of the introduction of formal education, or political leadership, of new crops and technology, in transport network and in trade and business.

The analytical framework for this thesis is based upon a number of concepts and propositions from the existing literature on colonialism. Scholars have emerged with radical, alarmist, apologetic and even conservative views on the impact of colonialism on the various Kenyan societies. What has emerged is a vast body of literature on the theoretical model of colonialism right from the early twentieth century to the present day. The theoretical debate has centred on such issues as to whether colonialism was retrogressive or progressive.<sup>31</sup>

This study is another contribution to that debate. It is study of the ways in which the Keiyo were colonized, the impact this colonization had upon their traditional structure and the different patterns of change and continuity that marked their experiences roughly from 1902 to 1939.<sup>32</sup> This challenges the view by certain scholars that "smaller tribes" like the Marakwet, Pokot, and Keiyo were left largely in peace apparently because no one else wanted their difficult and arid mountainous lands.<sup>33</sup> The Keiyo were not only taxed but under-employed after losing a huge portion of their grazing grounds to the European Settlers and to the E.M.S. Grogan Concession.



The setting up of a political administration at Kamariny and later Tambach meant that the clan and the age-set were no longer the ultimate authority. Alienation of Keiyo land rights led to a shortage of grazing. The changes made the Keiyo to enter into a monetary economy as migrant labourers and later as traders, in response to new felt needs and opportunities.

Contact between the Keiyo and colonial administration which led to erratic and uncoordinated change and also to continuity of indigenous institutions. The theory of change and continuity is the central focus and provides its theoretical rationale. This is based on the presupposition that, "where new influences impinge on any society, a student is at once confronted with the problem of how much of the pre-existing body of custom and belief is discarded, how much is modified and how much is retained."<sup>34</sup>

The concept of change and continuity has been well developed by various scholars. R.M.A. Van Zwanenberg with Anne King have given a graphic description of change and continuity in East Africa with the following example:

If a man born one hundred and seventy years ago were still alive and looked back at the East African society of his youth it is quite likely that he would recognise some aspects of the present scene. He would feel familiar at the sight of the women bent in the fields carrying water; he might not recognise the shape of the imported Japanese pangas or the tin debbis they used but the scene itself would be familiar enough. He would probably find some of the square houses a bit odd, and he would certainly not feel<sup>35</sup> at home in today's clothing or transport ....

This enigmatic and, perhaps for some, overly simplistic proposition nevertheless forms the fundamental premise of understanding change and continuity among the Keiyo. The central argument here is that change may not be so transparent but evidence show aspects of transformation. On the other hand, the very forms of rural existence and institutions persisted the British onslaught.

Ann Frontera in her book, Persistence and Change: A History of Taveta,<sup>36</sup> provides excellent material on the many experiences of change and continuity the Taveta society underwent during the colonial period. She has lucidly described the loss of political autonomy through the establishment of political overlordship by the British. Two of the most important Taveta institutions, the Irika (age-set) system lost most of the functional value they had enjoyed in precolonial times. Economically, much of the Taveta land was alienated hence a loss of security and livelihood. According to Frontera, despite the destructive potential from these forces for change, the Taveta managed to preserve much of their traditional way of life. The economy of Taveta is still based on production for local consumption than for distant markets."<sup>37</sup> In view therefore of the multitudinous forms and aspects of social change and continuity, Frontera's hypothesis provided very fruitful comparison to a study of change and continuity among the Keiyo during the early part of the British rule.

Robert Tignor in his book, The Colonial Transformation of Kenya,<sup>38</sup> has explored the impact of colonial rule on three Kenyan societies, the Kamba, Kikuyu and Maasai. His interest has been to examine how African lives were affected by the colonial system. He examines aspects of change and continuity. According to Tignor, the colonial system was a set of unequal relationships. Africans served as underpaid unskilled labourers, and as subordinate clerks, teachers and chiefs. The rural folks suffered forced destocking in the name of maintaining an ecological equilibrium.<sup>39</sup> Tignor poses the key question which is relevant to our study, on whether colonial rule in Kenya was modernizing for the Africans or a hindrance to modernizing change.<sup>40</sup>

Various colonial writers have mainly concentrated on discussing the African population as passive and disinterested recipients of all that colonialism entailed.<sup>41</sup> Tabitha Kanogo has competently challenged this view. Kanogo in her book, Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau,<sup>42</sup> has paid particular attention to the relationships that developed between the squatters in Nakuru and the colonial administration, the European settlers and the emergent leadership among the African national elite. The central argument is that the squatters were not 'a passive or malleable appendage to the colonial system'.<sup>43</sup> The squatters are presented as having resisted coercion and subordination. They established a socio-economic sub-system that operated within, and to some

extent in competition with the plantation economy.<sup>44</sup> Since a large number of Keiyo worked as squatters and migrant labourers in Uasin Gishu Plateau, the Kanogo model in its broad outline is relevant in appreciating the Keiyo squatter phenomenon.<sup>45</sup>

A school of thought which has been more fashionable and widely applied in analysing the colonial period has been the underdevelopment theory.<sup>46</sup> This school argues that colonialism brought with it the capitalist mode of production and the integration of local economies into the capitalist world system. A characteristic of this was that colonies would provide raw materials which would be used for production in the imperialist economy. In addition a major function of colonies was to provide new markets for the colonising power. According to Colin Leys,<sup>47</sup> the British colonial government in Kenya was basically interested in the exportation of primary commodities and importation of manufactured goods. Atieno-Odhiambo states that during the colonial period the peasants and workers were "mere cogs in the wheel of capitalism."<sup>48</sup> Certain aspects of the underdevelopment theory and the dependency school of thought are relevant to our study and provide a framework within which to operate. The Keiyo following the introduction of a market economy were challenged to provide goods which were directly for the export market like flax, wheat, potatoes, maize, pyrethrum and livestock. The exchange of labour and commodities was a very unequal one.

There was a transparent relation of gross underpayment, of subordination and of exploitation. A major effect came through monetisation of indigenous economies in trade and business. The net result was that the family unit was no longer the basic unit for the organisation of production. In addition land as an essential means of production was alienated and elsewhere rendered non-communal.

According to T. Zeleza,<sup>49</sup> the imposition of colonial rule entailed the process of capitalist penetration of African economies. This was so because the colonial state played a fundamental role in the process of what is referred to as "primitive accumulation" by propping up settler production through alienation of land, introduction of a coercive labour control system and the growth of commerce and trade. Zeleza, however, hastens to add that despite this, "peasant commodity production was not destroyed" but "there was effective exploitation of opportunities offered by expanding local and external markets."<sup>50</sup>

It is within the above concepts that the exact character of colonial rule among the Keiyo can be discussed. Cognizance should, however, be taken of the fact that this thesis does not reflect a determinist application of a particular theory. It is indeed my contention here that a fruitful way of analysing the research problem is through a study of change and continuity by the application of the following hypotheses.

### Working Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the research design:

- a) That colonial rule distorted customary rules pertaining to land ownership and land use were leading to ecological crises and a shift to other economic activities like wage-labour, cash-crop farming and trade.
- b) That in the triangular relationship between the Keiyo, the settlers and the colonial government, the colonial administration favoured the settlers and made it possible for them to maintain their dominance over the Keiyo.
- c) And finally the fact that the Keiyo did not participate fully in migrant labour was not due to the working conditions but because the Keiyo economy was strong and as a result they did not wish to accept the alternative of low wages and other uncertainties while they were better off economically at home.

### Methods of Research

A variety of methods of data collection was employed. The bulk of research material was obtained from the Kenya National Archives and from informants.

Research was first done using archival material at the Kenya National Archives. During this initial step, various colonial reports were read. Of particular relevance were the annual reports, handing over reports, intelligence reports, safari (tour) files, labour files, Local Native Council

minutes and court proceedings among others. Although all these reports dealt with the Keiyo and the Marakwet in general, I concentrated on the Keiyo to the virtual exclusion of the Marakwet. This was dictated by the focus of my own interests on the Keiyo and partly by the exigencies of the situation for the Keiyo could stand independently.

Fieldwork for this study was spread over a period of seven months during which both primary and secondary data were collected. This was done between October 1989 and February 1990 while the writing of the thesis commenced in March 1990. Most of my informants who had been brought up as subjects of the colonial administration, were able to analyse some of the reported events giving their own version.

Before commencing each interview personal details of the informant were taken. These included name, place of residence, age, occupation and educational background. Interviewing was eased by the fact that most of my informants had provided me with information in 1987.<sup>51</sup> I appreciate the good services of my father in drawing up the list of informants. My father would travel all the way to inform a prospective informant about my proposed visit. He would also inform him of the material I wanted. I used group interviews only once. It was organized by the Assistant Chief of Kamariny sub-location. This was very fruitful for the five elders discussed the colonial period with each talking about his experiences. Otherwise for the rest of the interviews I

visited informants at their homes or arranged to meet at shopping centres. Being a Keiyo, communication posed no problems and most informants knew me personally or my parents or clan.

After initially interviewing forty one informants, I developed a new system. To obtain detailed information I kept a daily contact with a relatively small number of eight informants whose experiences were studied in great detail. These eight represented a rough cross-section of various individuals who kept in touch with events in various parts of Keiyo society. They were also regarded as repositories of Keiyo traditions by other informants. My main task was to establish a rapport with these informants. Informal interviews were the most acceptable as a method of gathering information until a close understanding had been developed. Only four informants accepted to be tape-recorded, although one later demanded a copy of the recorded cassette. But for the rest of informants the sight of a tape-recorder created a lot of curiosity which was found to be counter-productive. I therefore opted to take notes verbatim. But a camera was the most popular and drew me close to the families of the informants.

While doing oral interviews, various data collection techniques were used. A questionnaire was used to guide the research interviews. The questionnaire was composed of open-ended questions to enable the informants to give as much



information as possible. Informants talked freely, and I interjected only when too much time was taken discussing unimportant issues. The questionnaire was also composed of close-ended questions to answer specific demands. In addition, to acquiring data from interviewees, of particular interest was the general observation of colonial relics like settler houses, farming implements, windmills, bridges, dams, churches and burial sites.

My interviews were not, however, devoid of problems. Traversing the three ecological zones of the highland plateau, the escarpment ledges and the Kerio-valley was trying and time consuming. Most of these areas fell far from major roads which greatly limited travel to various regions. Informants complained of past researchers who never returned to appreciate or show them the results of their work. At Tambach Secondary School, the school administration declined to provide me with any information even though the school was established in 1928 and pioneered education among the Keiyo. The headmaster assumed that I had an 'hidden agenda' to investigate school files and make a report on his administration, despite assuring him that this was purely an academic exercise. It was therefore impossible to trace pioneer students for prospective interviews. However, the information I lacked from the school were corroborated by interviews with some of its known earlier students and archival sources.

### Scope and Organisation of the Study

The thesis is structured to include the period between 1902 and 1939. 1902 was chosen because at the time, the area of the Keiyo was brought under the administration of the East Africa Protectorate. 1939 was chosen as the terminal point for several reasons, despite the fact that colonial rule continued until 1963. The enormity of the archival material and oral information made it practical to end the story in 1939 to allow enough time for the collection, interpretation and analysis of data. In addition, the second world war broke out in 1939, and it therefore seemed appropriate to end our period.

Closely related to the above is that, it was impossible to deal with the entire region inhabited by the Keiyo. It was therefore necessary to narrow the scope to include areas of intensive contact with the European settlers and the colonial administration. That means interviews were done at Kapchemutwa, Tambach, Kamariny, Kaptagat, Chepkorio, Kipkabus, Kimwarer and Eldoret. However, what is presented here is hopefully representative of the whole Keiyo society.

Structurally, the thesis is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter presents the foundation for the thesis as a whole and the theoretical framework applied in the study. It also poses certain questions whose answers are attempted in the study. Chapter two is an attempt to discuss the historiographical problems of pre-colonial Keiyo history.

This is intended to place our subject in a proper historical perspective. The third and fourth chapters are the most important in the study. They focus on the impact of land alienation and migrant labour on the Keiyo. Chapter five details the socio-economic change in society as the result of new opportunities in Local Native Council, education, trade and business. The final chapter is offered by way of summation of the main arguments of the thesis. It evaluates the social and economic transformation of Keiyo society upto 1939 when our period ends.

Notes

1. Distefano, J.A., "The Pre-colonial History of the Kalenjin: A methodological comparison of Linguistic and Oral Traditional Evidence," Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1985, p. 148.
2. For a discussion of the Kalenjin Phenomenon, see Kipkorir, B.E.; The Marakwet of Kenya, KLB, Nairobi, 1977, Chapter five, and Mwanzi, H.A., A History of the Kipsigis, KLB, Nairobi, 1977, pp. 167-171.
3. Oral Interview (hereafter O.I.) Stanley Sawe, Kipchamasis Tireito, Samuel Chepsat and Noah Cheburet, 9-8-1987.
4. Masaam, J.A., The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya, Frank Cass, and Co. London, 1927, 1968.
5. This discussion of the human and physical setting is for the Most part based on, Republic of Kenya, District Atlas Elgeyo-Marakwet, Government Printer 1985, Republic of Kenya, Elgeyo-Marakwet District Development Plan, 1984-1988, Government Printer, 1985 and Kipkorir B.E., et al (eds), Kerio Valley Past, Present and Future, KLB, Nairobi, 1983.
6. KNA/ELGM/1/1 Elgeyo-Marakwet District annual report, 1915/1916 p.4.
7. District Atlas Elgeyo-Marakwet, p. 33.
8. Kenya Population Census 1979 Volume 1, Kenya Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.
9. Mwanzi, op. cit p. vii.
10. See for instance Tignor, R.L., The Colonial Transformation of Kenya, The Kamba, Kikuyu and Maasai from 1900 to 1939, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1976, Salim A.I., The Swahili-speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895-1965, E.A.P.H., 1971, Lonsdale, J.M., "A Political History of Nyanza, 1883-1945," Ph.D. Thesis, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1964, and Maxon, R.M., "British Rule in Gusiiland, 1907-1963," Ph.D dissertation, Syracuse University, 1971.

11. Berman, B., Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya; The Dialectic of Domination, Heinemann, 1990, p. 261 and Harlow, V., Chilver, E.M. and Smith, A. (eds) History of East Africa Vol. 2, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 344.
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13. Kipkorir, B.E., The Marakwet of Kenya.
14. Chesang, I.C., "The Superstructure of Semi-Pastoral Keiyo," Unpublished B.A. dissertation, University of Dar-es-Salaam, 1973.
15. Tarus, I., "An outline History of the Keiyo, C. 1700-1919," Unpublished dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1988.
16. Massam, op. cit.
17. Hennings, R.O., African Morning, Chatto and Windus, London, 1951.
18. Thompson, J., Through Maasailand, Frank Cass, London, 1968.
19. Lugard, F.D., The Rise of our East African Empire, Vol. 1, Frank Cass London, 1893, 1968, p. 356.
20. Jackson, F., Early Days in East Africa, Dawsons, London, 1969.
21. Chesang, I.C., op. cit.
22. Welbourn, F., and Kiprono D., "Keiyo Initiation," in Journal of Religion in Africa, Vol. 1. Fasc 3, 1968.
23. Kimereng, W., "Keiyo Concept of God," Unpublished dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1976.
24. Mwanzi, H.A., op. cit.
25. Ehret. C., Southern Nilotic History, North Western University Press, Illinois, 1971.
26. Sutton, J.E.G., The Archaeology of the Western Highlands of Kenya, British Institute in Eastern Africa, Memoir No. 3, Nairobi, 1973.
27. Distefano, J.A., op. cit.
28. Kipkorir, B.E., The Marakwet of Kenya.

29. Kipkulei, B.K., "The origin, migration and settlement of the Tugen," unpublished B.A. dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1972.
30. Anderson, D., "Herder, Settler and Colonial Rule; a history of the people's of the Baringo Plains, Kenya, c. 1890-1940," Ph.D Dissertation, Cambridge University, 1983.
31. See Brett, E.A., Colonialism and underdevelopment in East Africa: The Politics of Economic Change 1919-1939, Heinemann, London, 1973, Van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya 1919-1939, EAPH, Nairobi, 1975, Wolff, R., Britain and Kenya, 1870-1930; The Economics of Colonialism, Transafrica Publishers, 1974, Kitching, G., Class and Economic Change in Kenya: The Making of an African Petit-Bourgeoisie, 1905-1970, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980, Stitcher, S., Migrant Labour in Kenya: Capitalism and African Response, 1895-1975, Longman, 1982, and Leys, C., Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, Heinemann, London, 1985.
32. Tignor, R., op. cit pp.3-14.
33. Harlow, V., et al (eds) op. cit.
34. Bascom, R.W., and Herskovits, J.M., (eds) Continuity and Change in African Cultures, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, pp.2-3. See also Wallerstein, I., (ed) Social Change: The Colonial Situation John Wiley and Sons, Inc. New York, 1966, and Ogot, B.A., (ed) History and Social Change in East Africa, EALB, Nairobi, 1976.
35. Van Zwanenberg, R.M.A., and King, A., An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda 1800-1970, The Macmillan Press Limited, 1975, p. xv.
36. Frontera, A., Persistence and Change: A History of Taveta, Crossroads Press, Massachusetts, 1978.
37. Ibid. p. 3.
38. Tignor, R.L., op. cit.
39. For a fuller explanation of destocking on the Kamba and others see, Munro, F.B., Colonial Rule and the Kamba, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1975 pp. 189-246.
40. Tignor, R.L., pp.3-11 and p. 60.

41. For example in the case of the Keiyo, Massam writes that, "the men spend most of their time idly herding stock .... They have practically no crafts or industries." See Massam, J.A., op. cit p. 4.
42. Kanogo, T., Squatters and Roots of Mau Mau, Heinemann, London, 1987, p. 1.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid p. 27-28. The Keiyo are also presented as one of the major squatter groups in Uasin Gishu Plateau.
46. Leading exponents of this approach include Frank, G.A., Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974, Kay, G., Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis, Macmillan, London, 1975, and Rodney, W., How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, T.P.H., Dar-es-Salaam, 1972 and Bogle, L'Ouverture, London, 1972.
47. Leys, C., op. cit p. 29.
48. Atieno-Odhiambo, "Synthesizing Kenya History: The Problem of the Colonial Period," Department of History, Historical Association of Kenya, 1972, p. 17.
49. Zeleza, T., "The establishment of colonial rule 1905-1920" in Ochieng, W.R., (ed) A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980, Evans Brothers (Kenya) Limited, 1989, pp. 35-70.
50. Ibid p. 39.
51. List of those informants are appended in my dissertation, Tarus, I., op. cit. Some of the primary data were used in the writing of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWOHISTORICAL BACKGROUND UP TO 1902Introduction

Although the central concern of this work is the impact of colonialism on the Keiyo in terms of change and continuity, it is impossible to commence our discussion with the colonial period itself. The pre-colonial history of the Keiyo is important for the analysis and interpretation of the data and information gathered in relation to the change and continuity that took place during the colonial period before 1939. More importantly, British rule did not create the social, economic and political institutions of the Keiyo as we know today. Rather, under the British, society continued to carry with it the marks of pre-colonial development.

Historiographical Problems of Pre-colonial Keiyo

The Keiyo are one of the many communities which comprise the Kalenjin-speaking people. Because of this reason, their pre-colonial past cannot be divorced wholly from that of the Kalenjin.

Various scholars using archaeological, linguistic and oral traditional evidence have attempted to show the process of their emergence. However, J.E.G. Sutton<sup>1</sup> is so far the only scholar to have published on Kalenjin pre-colonial history as a whole. On the other hand, J.A. Distefano<sup>2</sup> has also attempted a comprehensive study of the pre-colonial



history of the Kalenjin. His work is yet unpublished thus restricting accessibility. Using archaeological evidence Sutton has provided a survey of up to three thousand years ago. He hypothesizes that:

It was probably in their present territory of the western highlands of Kenya, especially the more northerly parts of this region, that the Kalenjin evolved as a cultural and linguistic group. Very probably too, it was in this same region that the 'Highland' (or 'Southern') division of Nilotic speech from which Tatoga as well as Kalenjin descends, first developed, after splitting from what were to become the two Nilotic divisions - 'River-Lake' (or 'Western') and ('Plains') (or 'Eastern') - somewhere around the borders of the Southern Sudan and the Ethiopian massif two thousand years ago or more....

According to Kipkorir, the above passage poses the big problem of Kalenjin pre-colonial historiography, of whether we are dealing with tens of centuries or dealing merely with four hundred years.<sup>4</sup> Distefano has taken a more analytical approach combining both linguistic and oral evidence. He emphasizes the fact that there is no doubt that there has at least been various distinctive sets of societies present in the Rift Valley over the course of the last three thousand years. These fall under four distinctive sets of societies, identified with a variety of names and archaeological traditions. Recent research would, however, align them respectively with hunter-gatherers, possibly originally Khoisan in language, Cushitic pastoralists, Southern Nilotic mixed agriculturalists, and more recently, Eastern Nilotic

pastoralists. In addition, Bantu-speaking societies have also frequently been crucial actors on both edges of the region and often within it. All of these communities show periods of intensive interaction with one another, though the interaction between the Southern Cushites and Eastern Nilotes does not seem as strongly attested in this region, presumably because most southern cushitic speakers were already gone from the region or absorbed by Southern Nilotes by the advent of the Eastern Nilotes.<sup>5</sup>

Christopher Ehret<sup>6</sup> using linguistic evidence argues that the Kalenjin are a Nilotic group whose original homeland was somewhere in the point where the river Bahr-el-Ghazal meets the Nile in the Southern Sudan. Ehret has further postulated that by the beginning of the present millennium, a proto-Kalenjin people lived somewhere in a belt of country running south-west from Mt. Elgon to the Rift-Valley. According to him, it was from these people that the present Kalenjin eventually emerged. Distefano, whom we have mentioned earlier concurs with this view. He argues that a Nilotic population entered the western highlands of Kenya near the corridor formed between Mt. Elgon and the Cherangany hills. Distefano named this people as the Lagok ab miot (the children of miot).<sup>7</sup>

Another theory has been advanced by G.W.B. Huntingford who suggests that the Kalenjin people originally came from an area to the north or north-west of west Lake Turkana in the

neighbourhoods of the Ethiopian border. He claims that the group lived at Mt. Kamalinga about seventy kilometres to the north-west of Mt. Elgon. Huntingford asserts that, the Kalenjin dispersed from Mt. Elgon area sometime between 1675 to 1700 A.D. This date has been challenged by Sutton as being too recent.<sup>8</sup>

A.T. Matson<sup>9</sup> recounts that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, groups of Kalenjin speaking people left the Mt. Elgon area. He too like Sutton felt that Huntingford's seventeenth century date for the Kalenjin movement from Mt. Elgon area was too recent. While conceding that the genesis of the Kalenjin is obscure, he conjectures that the group was formed in the country between the River Omo and the Pibor tributaries of the Sabot, south of the Ethiopian boundary or south east of Sudan. Matson states that the Kalenjin contingents moved to the Mt. Elgon area where it seems there was considerable amount of wandering within the concentration area before some of the sections settled permanently (the Sabaot) and others moved away to their present locations. These migrations were caused either by natural calamities resulting in famine, or desire to seek better grazing and more congenial habitat.<sup>10</sup> Matson's fifteenth century movement of the Kalenjin from Mt. Elgon tallies with Gideon Were's<sup>11</sup> dates of c. 1490-1706 A.D. Their movements took the Kalenjin through the forests of North Nyanza (presently Luyia country) and reached Maseno before moving on to the plains near the

Kavirondo Gulf. Here, he claims, the group separated into the present various Kalenjin clusters.<sup>12</sup>

Data collected by A.C. Hollis<sup>13</sup> states that most of the Nandi clans claim to have come from Mt. Elgon. Hollis allies the Keiyo with the Tugen, the Nandi with the Kipsigis, while on the other hand he identifies the Terik, and Okiek, as belonging together.

J. Peristiany's<sup>14</sup> collection of Kipsigis traditions state that the ancestral Kalenjin came from Tto where they were called Mnyoot. According to him, Tto is situated near lake Chomus (Baringo). He further states the Kipsigis claim that they left the land of their ancestors because they were suffering from a severe drought. As a result they were on the move in search of better pasturelands. In addition, he states that the Kipsigis traditions stipulate that close relations existed between them and the Keiyo, Tugen and Pokot. On the same breadth, I. Orchardson<sup>15</sup> argues that the whole of Kalenjin speaking people may have come from a common stock originating around Lake Baringo. Orchardson talks of a period when the whole Kalenjin-speaking people were one group. He says that in the latter half of the eighteenth century, when the fathers of the Maina age-set were warriors, the Nandi, Tugen, Kipsigis, Marakwet and Keiyo were one people. At that time which he places to have been about 1780 A.D. they lived in a land called Tto situated probably north of the present Tugen and Keiyo, and not far from Lake Chomus (Baringo).

During the period, the rivers began to dry up. As a result exploring parties were sent out to scout for new countries in which to settle.<sup>16</sup> The result was the dispersal of the present Kalenjin-clusters.

On the basis of the evidence from oral tradition, T. Toweett<sup>17</sup> states that the ancestors of the Kalenjin stayed at Mt. Elgon for a period of eight hundred years. He however, does not tell us how he arrives at such a period. If this is true, the Kalenjin had settled at Mt. Elgon as a distinct group before the tenth century. Toweett accepts the common historical notion that the Kalenjin migrated from a place called 'Misri', which he places somewhere to the north of Kenya.<sup>18</sup> From 'Misri', the Kalenjin supposedly stopped at Burgei (a warm place). Furthermore, Toweett claims that all Kalenjins migrated together as a group and were descended from 'Lote' and were then known as Lagok ab miot (children of Miot). The Lagok ab miot are supposed to have gone through the Elgeyo-Escarpment corridor to their present homes. Toweett's oral sources indicate that movement to their present homes occurred in about 1670 A.D. when the Sawe and Chuma age-groups were in power. This date tallies with Langat's chronological table for Kipsigis generation sets.<sup>19</sup>

Langat's<sup>20</sup> collection of Kipsigis tales of origin, state that with the Nandi, they were among the first to leave the Mount Elgon area. This occurred during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. From here, they wandered off to Lake

Baringo, before moving further south to their present settlements. Not long afterwards the Tugen, Keiyo, and Marakwet also came to Lake Baringo. Here they found that the Kipsigis and the Nandi had moved on further south. They decided to follow them. But they were turned by a section of Rift Valley Maasai. It is possible that these were the advanced party of the Maasai who had moved southwards from Ethiopia and had occupied the region as far south as Lake Baringo. Langat conjectures that famine was the major cause for migration. Whatever, the reason Langat states that by 1650 A.D., the Kipsigis had settled in their present settlements of Belgut, Buret and Sot.<sup>21</sup>

B.E. Kipkorir<sup>22</sup> is one scholar who has written on the Kalenjin phenomenon. This phenomenon refers to the artificial coinage of the term Kalenjin and the coming together as one people. Further, it refers to the still unresolved equation of Kalenjin origin and the 'misri legends'. His excellent rendering of oral traditions leaves no doubt that he believes that at some historical point, the Kalenjin people were one. Using the Marakwet as a case in point, he states that certain clans claim to have migrated from 'misri'. In the traditions, the Talai clan aver that they migrated from 'misri', and that their important stopping point was at Mt. Elgon. Here, they further state that they met a man who taught them the rite of circumcision. They in turn taught this rite to the Sirikwa of Cherangany hills. The Sogom, another Marakwet clan likewise

say that they came from 'misri'. However, they by-passed Mt. Elgon to their present settlement at Cherangany. In retrospect, Kipkorir's main concern is the urgency for scholars to collect oral information pertaining to the pre-colonial period of the Kalenjin people before the elders die out.<sup>23</sup>

The most controversial and hypothetical school of thought concerning the pre-colonial history of the Kalenjin has been offered by H. Mwanzi.<sup>24</sup> He has dismissed the clan narrations of origin, migration and settlement of the Kalenjin people. According to Mwanzi all attempts by scholars to trace Kalenjin origin from a northern direction are equally unimportant and rejects such a possibility. His thesis is that the Kalenjin-speaking people and particularly the Kipsigis as such "have not come from anywhere."<sup>25</sup> He writes:

... rather than talk of the spread of the Kalenjin, we should talk of the coming together of the ethnic communities that make up the present Kalenjin groups. Concentration on migration tends to overemphasize physical movement and consequently overlooks social and cultural developments which normally require some degree of settled life.<sup>26</sup>

Mwanzi's highly hypothetical contention has been challenged by Distefano<sup>27</sup> and Kipkorir.<sup>28</sup> According to Distefano, Mwanzi's argument seems more of a "mere semantic difference" and the outright rejection of all migration is at best ahistorical. He argues that, there certainly has been movement of communities between different parts of the Kalenjin region and into and out of adjoining regions, as traditional,

archaeological and linguistic evidence all show. Kipkorir's view seem to concur with Distefano. His argument is that linguistic and traditional evidence overwhelmingly show that there has been a migration of the Kalenjin mainly as a result of famine. However, this is not absolute. Historical and archaeological research may at some juncture establish definitely whether people migrated or evolved. What is the most likely scenario is that the two processes went on simultaneously.

What has emerged from these various theories of Kalenjin evolution is the subjective reality of Kalenjin ethnicity. Indeed, contrary to the apparent evidence from oral traditions, it is rare that any group of people in the past travelled as one group or from a common origin. It is a natural tendency for people to project a kind of unity in their past which may actually not have existed. However, groups of people do come from an external homeland to evolve a cultural identity.

#### The Emergence of Keiyo Society

Among the cluster of people inhabiting the periphery of the Rift Valley, the Keiyo are the smallest in population and by far the least known historically. The earliest written descriptions of the Keiyo create a picture of poverty, desolation and misery unmatched by other peoples. Colonial administrators prepared their annual reports stressing the



marginality of the people. Nineteenth century travellers like F.D. Lugard, J. Thompson, Carl Peters, Von Hohnel and J.W. Gregory were the first European observers of the people and their environment.<sup>29</sup> However, the most impressive of all has been by J.A. Massam.<sup>30</sup> Typical of the early descriptions, Massam who was a District Commissioner among the Keiyo in the 1920s collected several accounts from Keiyo traditions. He emphasized the marginality of the people whom he claimed were always at the periphery of starvation, insecurity and superstitions.

Using oral information collected for this project, Distefano's comments, and Massam's writing; a pre-colonial history of the Keiyo is attempted. This is done on the premise that earlier writings on the Keiyo were misconceived and subjective. That does not, however, deny the fact that they are a great contribution to the historiography of the Keiyo. On the same tone, while it is also true that at various times the Keiyo experienced severe food shortages brought by rainfall failure, stock diseases and diminished pastureland or some combination of these factors, these do not, however, point to laziness, ineptitude and being non-economic as will be illustrated below.

The earliest inhabitants of the present Keiyo region are described by Massam as having been remembered as 'Kapchegrot' and 'Kimnegei'. They were later followed by the 'Kurut'.<sup>31</sup> Informants could neither recall the identity of the

'Kapchegrot' nor the 'Kurut'.<sup>32</sup> However, as 'Kipnyikew' is also a Keiyo age-set name, it may recall the age-group of the earliest settlers rather than an earlier population.<sup>33</sup> Other earlier inhabitants of the Keiyo region are mentioned as having been the Terngeny, Okiek and the Sirikwa. It is to these group of earlier inhabitants that the various Keiyo clans came into contact. The result was a process of interaction which led to the evolution of a distinct Keiyo society.

The Keiyo are divided into sixteen patrilineal clans. These are Talai, Terik, Tungo, Toiyoi, Targok, Kimoi, Kong'ato, Kabon, Kabilo, Soti, Saniak, Siokwei, Sokome, Kure, Mokio and Mokich. Movements of the various clans into their present location is not a subject of this study. Suffice only to mention the fact that most of these sixteen clans acted independently, while others like the Tungo and Kobil appear to have formed alliances. Keiyo elders concede that they have always been a people on the move. They cannot, however, determine with exact certainty their migrational routes. Many of the informants were of the opinion that the various Keiyo clans at some time in their history lived at Tulwob Kony (Mt. Elgon). After staying here for a period of time, they were forced by population pressure and drought to migrate. The Kobil clan aver that their ancestor settled at Kipkono after moving away from Tulwob Kony. Hunting was their major pre-occupation. They were later joined by a Tungo ancestor.

Hunting territory was demarcated to avoid conflict whereby a hunted animal became the prey of the occupant of a particular territory. Tradition further states that the two pioneers established the present Kobil and Tungo clans.<sup>34</sup> The former apparently are the most widely spread among the Keiyo clans.

A second point of origin mentioned by informants is Riwo in West Pokot. They relate that some of the clans who came to Riwo were from 'misri', who later moved to Sudan and eventually arriving at Mt. Elgon where they stayed for a long time. At Mt. Elgon, they state that they came into contact with other Kalenjin groups who taught them the art of circumcision. Ilchet (drought) is said to have forced them to migrate from the Mt. Elgon area to Riwo. At the scene were also the Pokot who may have pushed the Keiyo southwards. Lake Baringo was their next stopping point. Traditions state that, here they met with the Tugen and Marakwet. The three groups attempted to follow their predecessors; the Nandi, and the Kipsigis, who had earlier migrated southwards. At Sageri hills they realised that the two groups had settled. Hence, the Keiyo, Marakwet, and Tugen sought alternative positions. The Marakwet group are said to have followed the Kerio-river and settled northwards in their present homes. The Tugen remained around Lake Baringo and sought sanctuary along the hills by the same name. On the other hand, the Keiyo moved further south and crossed the Kerio-river around the present Kabirirsus in Metkei. Like the Tugen they chose well-

sheltered terrains on the escarpment ledge which extends from Tambach to Metkei. Above the Keiyo were the Kipwob Maasai who inhabited the highland plateau. Tradition states that the Maasai named them as the 'Il-Kerio' or 'Ilkeiyu' (those who lived along the Kerio river).<sup>35</sup>

A final area of Keiyo conjectures on their origin is Kongasis (the eye of the sun or east). The majority of people from this eastern direction claim a Tugen ancestry. The Kapn'geno section of the Kobil clan claim to have migrated from Tugen. Some of these groups settled in Metkei while the rest hived-off and settled at Muskut to which they have done to the present day. The exact position of Kon'qasis cannot be ascertained. When asked, Keiyo elders point towards the southern part of Baringo District.<sup>36</sup> Some of these splinter groups were most likely part of the Koilegen group alluded to by Kipkulei.<sup>37</sup>

As mentioned earlier, most of the informants mention il chet (drought) as the immediate reason for abandoning their homes.<sup>38</sup> Kipkorir concurs with this view. He argues that these people have always migrated and abandoned their homes in search of food, pasture and water.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, having acquired the art of keeping livestock, migration was a normal transhumant phenomenon. These were a pastoral people driving their livestock to greener pastures and staying of necessity close to Lake Baringo and the Kerio-river. Yet, a third possibility was that the Keiyo and other Kalenjin groups were

disposed by a more militant more numerous and a more expansionist enemies like the Luo and Luyia. In addition, some oral sources explain migration simply as a result of the spirit of adventure. Others do not give any reasons for leaving. The majority it appears believed that they would always return to their homes. Other factors for migration might have been deaths of people and livestock, witchcraft, and disagreement within a clan or family.

Further migrations while inside the valley floor or the escarpment ledge depended largely on the fortunes of the individual members or families. A determining factor was how they adjusted economically to the new environment. The physiographical state of the Elgeyo-escarpment determined not only the course of clan settlement but also their mode of subsistence. The three ecological zones of Soin, Korget and Mosop fitted well with Keiyo hunting and herding activities. Due to the prevalence of mosquitoes and a hot climate none lived in the Soin zone. Most people had hamlets within the Mosop zone which was cool and easy to defend against cattle raiders and wild animals.

Having found sanctuary in the escarpment ledges, the Keiyo set about interacting with the original inhabitants and its neighbours. The period from the eighteenth century therefore saw the Keiyo not only increase in population but also in territorial expansion. Keiyo oral sources show that they met no resistance apparently because the land was

inhabited by a dwarfish people whom they called Terngeny. These Terngeny are said to have had no fixed abode. And if one fell down accidentally, he could not rise up on his own without assistance. Consequently, a Terngeny was said to have had a technique of whistling to alert a colleague for assistance.<sup>40</sup> According to Sutton<sup>41</sup> and Kipkorir<sup>42</sup> these people are said to have inhabited holes in the ground and lived in the valley "long, long ago". These people, the Terngeny were either absorbed or killed by the Keiyo or they were simply part of folk stories to amuse children, and may have been non-existent.

Unlike the Terngeny, the Okiek, however, have for real influenced Keiyo evolution for the last two centuries or more. This has taken various forms. According to Mwanzi,<sup>43</sup> they have been miscalled "Dorobo", a Maasai term for a poor stockless person. On the contrary Okiek traditions collected by R. Blackburn<sup>44</sup> indicate that the Okiek had a robust economic life which relied on honey, meat and vegetable matter. They were widely distributed within the Rift Valley region and particularly in the forests hunting, gathering and collecting honey.<sup>45</sup> Oral traditions from among the Keiyo describe the Okiek as an anti-social people forced to flee famines or conflict to the forests to take up a marginal form of existence.<sup>46</sup> Distefano has challenged this misconstrued view of the Okiek and argues that:

Though characterised as 'dependents' or remnants, the Okiek themselves feel they have everything.

They certainly interacted, with their more numerous neighbours, but generally remained culturally and economically distinct. Though they are often referred with contempt and inferior status is imputed to them, they actually played a significant role in their neighbour's lives.<sup>47</sup>

Contact between the Okiek and the Keiyo took various forms. Famine among the Okiek is said to have led them to give their women away in marriage. At other times, whole Okiek clans settled among the Keiyo as they did among other Kalenjin groups. The phenomenon of bartering infants for food existed between the Okiek, Nandi and the Keiyo. During times of famine, Keiyo women exchanged their infants with Nandi women for grain.<sup>48</sup> When there was a surplus, a symbiotic relationship was established. From the Okiek the Keiyo obtained honey, herbs, weapons and bee-hives. In turn the Okiek obtained grain and pots from the Keiyo. From the middle of the nineteenth century, owing to population increase and depletion of wild game and due to the clearing of forests for cultivation, some Okiek began to settle as herders and cultivators, eventually assimilating into Keiyo society. Traces of Okiek are still found inhabiting parts of Chepkorio, Sabur and Metkei forests.

The Sirikwa are one other group of people whom archaeological and traditional evidence show the intensity of their interaction with the Keiyo. However, the ethnicity of the Sirikwa is still unclear. Sutton has concluded that the significant weight of archaeological evidence would point to the Sirikwa being culturally allied to or belonging to the

same group as the Kalenjin. He calls them the vanished people of Kalenjin tradition.<sup>49</sup> According to Keiyo traditions, the Sirikwa were not only a Kalenjin people but essentially of the Keiyo cluster. Chesang states that:

There is a high degree of probability that the Sirikwa and the Keiyo were one stream of a historical movement located at Chepkorio, Kaptarakwa and Sabor. The evidence suggest that they were one people at different historical periods and at different ecological zones adopting different economic activities, interrelated in particular aspects as indicated by the commonness of the iron-smiths.<sup>50</sup>

The Sirikwa inhabited parts of the escarpment ledge particularly at Muskut and Tambach. By the time the Keiyo clans began to filter in from the various directions during the last decades of the seventeenth century, they found the Sirikwa already settled. These people are said to have been stockless and therefore practised a different mode of subsistence; iron smelting. The Sirikwa were despised and some are said to have fled to Tanzania.<sup>51</sup> Those who were left behind entered into close relationship with the Keiyo. Using their art of iron-smelting, they were able to supply the Keiyo with livestock bells, hoes, weaponry and even bracelets for Keiyo women. In return, they obtained grain and livestock from the Keiyo. The livestock was used to pay bride-price leading to the acceptance of the Sirikwa. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, the Sirikwa living within the proximity of the Keiyo had become completely assimilated into the mainstream of the various Keiyo clans.<sup>52</sup>



Cattle raiding particularly between the Tugen, Nandi and Maasai led to cultural exchanges. Women captured in raids were married to the warriors. And once married a woman and her children belonged to the husband's clan. For those who could not afford the bride-price, obtained their wives in this way. Maasai women married among the Keiyo are said to have introduced the practice of mixing charcoal with sour milk to curdle into Mursik. During drought, famine refugees were accepted. Few returned to their homes while the rest were absorbed.<sup>53</sup> There was thus lending and borrowing on concepts, values and behaviour just as much as there was evidence of war and social conflicts. Peaceful co-existence was only disrupted by the desire to acquire cattle through raiding one another. This, however, did not hinder Tugen boys or Keiyo boys from being circumcised among the Keiyo and Nandi respectively. Many Tugen women were married among the Keiyo and this was an assurance to the Tugen of the availability of food in case of a famine. This famine factor seem to have accelerated close contact between the Keiyo and its neighbours. As Chesang states; in the course of famine, most Keiyo migrated across the escarpment westwards to Nandi and those who did not return were assimilated into Nandi society.<sup>54</sup>

They are a conglomeration of various clans and diverse people. Within the confines of the Kerio Valley and the escarpment ledges, the concept of Keiyness began to emerge from the seventeenth century. Integral to this concept was

the development of economic and social institutions.

### The Economy

In the eighteenth century the majority of Keiyo clans were hunters and gatherers. Later by the nineteenth century they had become agro-pastoralists who practised cattle rearing and cultivation. Animals such as the elephant, the antelope, the buffalo, and the wild pig were hunted for meat. Hunting was done with the assistance of traps, snares, arrows and spears. This task was mainly the work of men, while the gathering of wild fruits like Tibaek, Kimolik and fruits of the Lomoiywet tree was basically the work of women and children. During famines the Keiyo dug up root tubers known as NvakaneK. Grasshoppers, termites and honey collection were also other ways of supplementing food supplies. In the initial days of hunting, the Keiyo hunted widely within the confines of the Kerio Valley floor and the Elgeyo escarpment. Hunters were confined, however, as a matter of decorum within their ridges unless in pursuit of a wounded animal.<sup>55</sup>

With the acquisition of livestock, Keiyo mode of subsistence was greatly enhanced. Their diet thus changed to milk, blood and meat. Blood from cattle was drawn from the jugular vein in the neck after piercing it with a special arrow called Lon'qno. When the blood had been drawn out the wound was sealed with dung. Cattle further provided dung for

plastering and decorating houses. The horns were used as snuff-holders while the hides provided bedding. Families in the Kerio Valley zone left their livestock to graze around the Kerio-river for easy access to water and salt licks at N'gentui. There was also the practice among the Keiyo to distribute cattle to relatives in the various ecological zones as a form of security in case of drought and pestilence. By mid-nineteenth century, cattle economy had become very popular and a man's prestige was counted on how many head of cattle he had. The result was intensive cattle-raiding with its neighbours, the Tugen, Nandi and Pokot.

Land for grazing and cultivation was abundant.<sup>56</sup> This is especially so because the Keiyo cultivated only certain patches leaving the rest for grazing. In addition, their farming implements were crude to allow extensive cultivation. Initially they used digging sticks until the emergence of iron-workers, Kitongik who supplied the Keiyo with farming tools such as the Mboket (hoe) and ringet (sickle). This increased their ability to clear land, to cultivate large plots and with weaponry, they were able to expand their land holdings. The result was that clans acquired land rights running from the highlands down the escarpment into the Kerio Valley. Such strips of land were often demarcated by a row of stones or by a certain type of vegetation. As cultivation of crops gained importance, individual families started cultivating certain areas of communally owned clan-land,

especially in the highlands, while areas in the valley floor, less suitable for cultivation, were left for communal grazing.<sup>57</sup> This way the traditional form of landownership gradually disappeared starting in the highland plateau, a process that was completed by colonial land policies.

The basic unit of production and consumption was the individual family which included a man, his children and wives. There was a division of labour based on gender. The clearing and opening up of new plots for cultivation was the responsibility of the man. Other duties included the construction of houses, granaries, herding and protection. On the other hand, women prepared and cooked food, milked the cows and cleaned the cow-shed, sowed and harvested millet and the general welfare of the family.<sup>58</sup>

As with the Kipsigis, food production was not such as would ensure continuous supply.<sup>59</sup> The result in both cases was that famines ravaged the country especially the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A most devastating famine, kemeub kimakatoi (famine of skins) is said to have occurred in the 1890s killing so many people. Another famine period, kipsiqirio (donkey) is said to have afflicted the Keiyo during the early years of colonial rule. The Keiyo responded to famine in various ways. Some fled to the Nandi and Kipsigis to escape from their drought stricken homes. Others persisted relying solely on fruits, livestock skins, hunting and even donkey meat from the Turkana or Pokot which under normal

circumstances, no Keiyo would touch. According to Chesang, those Keiyo who migrated across the escarpment westwards to Nandi did not return and were assimilated into Nandi society, thus depleting the population of the Keiyo. Other families bartered their children with Nandi women so as to obtain grain. Famines further generated trade in exchange for food. Others laboured for wealthier kinsmen in exchange for food. Famine must therefore be considered as a major factor in the many disruptions of the Keiyo people. They were forced to abandon their homes and migrate. What is significant about those famines is that they led to the break-up of families. One informant claimed that in 1904, his whole family was wiped out by both famine and a scourge of smallpox. He managed to escape the ordeal and fled home to Nandi. However, on the way at Kaptagat he met a Nandi who employed him as a herdsman. In 1910 he was employed by a settler who was called Kipukan.<sup>50</sup>

In retrospect, the fundamental unit of production among the Keiyo in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the household land. Ownership was communal in which livestock grazing was not limited. Yet it was the household which remained the fundamental unit of production and consumption. There was a division of labour in which each member of the household was allocated duties. Since a money economy was non-existent the barter system was used. The price of one item was fixed in terms of a certain number of quantity or some goods. For instance, the Keiyo women sold a pot for the

amount of grain it would hold. In the final analysis a mixed economy for the Keiyo during the pre-colonial period became a rational way of adaptation to varying ecological conditions.

#### Pre-Colonial Keiyo Land Use and Custom

Keiyo land use and custom was based on three concepts. These were: (1) methods of acquiring land; (2) rights over that land; (3) the economic exploitation or use. During the pre-colonial period, no man was landless among the Keiyo, since each man belonged to a certain clan, and it was the responsibility of the clan elders to apportion land to each male member.

I.C. Chesang has described the process of land ownership among the Keiyo as follows:

... the concept of ownership is based on the belief that a man's labour power has been involved in the act of claiming a piece of virgin land. For instance the act of burning a virgin bush, marking the boundary of a shamba, or the act of fixing boundary stones (oiywek) around a portion of the burned virgin land. ...Land as an economic factor was considered conditional rather than basic like the human labour that has been involved. It is the notion that someone's hands have passed over a piece of land ("kakobun eutab chi") that ownership was recognised. What comes out in the appraisal is that land was not a basic economic problem in the sense that there was no scarcity of land.<sup>51</sup>

There was, of course order in the acquisition of land. As indicated in the second chapter, ownership of land among the Keiyo was determined by customs going back to the initial stages of settlement in the eighteenth century. Land was in the first instance owned by clans. Titular ownership was a

creation of colonialism and the twentieth century expansion into the highland plateau. Clans used to own strips of land, running from the highlands plateau down the escarpment into the Kerio Valley. Such strips were often demarcated by a row of stones or a certain type of vegetation.<sup>52</sup> Clearly, from this point, land for the Keiyo was a readily available commodity. Titular ownership of land was vested in the clan. Each of these clans obtained land in the first place through the founder, before population increase which led to acquisition of more territory. However, the only time when a clan claimed sole use of land was during cultivation when each clan would cultivate only its share. Otherwise any Keiyo had free access to the resources of land even of other clans. These included water supplies, pastures, getting building materials, access to salt licks and the gathering of wild fruits and vegetables.

Sons inherited land from their father equally. In polygamous households, each wife retained the plots allocated to her. However, since women had no inheritance rights, sons inherited all the plots of their mother. Indeed, this was the case since land ownership centred on the nuclear family, although the clan determined the direction of territorial expansion.<sup>53</sup> Although women had no inheritance rights, they had unquestionable access to agricultural use of the land.

As Salim Chepkeitany reckons:

A woman should be married by a man from a different clan. And since land was owned by a clan, she had

no rights. All her rights were through her husband. After all women were considered as 'children'<sup>54</sup>.

Land was valued for the pasture it offered to livestock. Cultivation of crops like millet and sorghum was along the Kerio River and selected regions of Korget and along the escarpment ledges of Tumo.

Apart from inheritance, one could strive individually to acquire a piece of land, either by moving onto it and clearing it, or by purchase. According to Chesang, this was caused by the fragmentation of the inherited land in "an inversely decreasing geometric progression",<sup>55</sup> at each stage of the breakage of nuclear family into an extended family. In addition, a hunting party, chasing an animal, could claim land around the place where eventually the animal fell dead and was skinned, assuming of course that the piece of land around that place had not been demarcated before. The first man to land an arrow, or a mark on the animal was given first priority. The rest would then each claim a piece of land around the first man's portion.

### Social and Political Organisation

The social institutions and organisation of the Keiyo were very much similar in name and custom to the other Kalenjin-speaking people. Social and political life in traditional Keiyo was centred on family, lineage, clan and age-groups.



The family was both nuclear and extended. Here it consisted of a man, his wives, their children and other relatives. This had its effect on marriage, ceremonies and land ownership. A lineage, bikab oret was a group of people linked by descent from a common ancestor, usually in the male line. Clans, oret, were also based on descent from a common ancestor but were much larger than lineages and went back further in time. Lineages were normally the starting point for new clans. Through intermarriages, initiation ceremonies and symbiotic relationships, families and clans could build up a very extensive network of alliances and relationships which was an important factor in the consolidation of the once fragmented society.

Each family, lineage and clan had its own role to play within the social structure of pre-colonial Keiyo society. In addition, each man was also a member of an age or generation group in the society. This traversed the family, lineage and clan boundaries. The Keiyo age-sets which were recalled in rotation included, Maina, Nyongi, Kipnyikew, Kaplelach, Kipkoimet, Korongoro, Sawe and Chuma. Periodically all the people of the same age were initiated together into a single set and remained members of that set for life. The age-set system gave every man a chance of participating in societal decisions at one level or another. It also enabled the Keiyo people to establish close relationship with others outside the family and clan. At each stage, there was a ceremony, saket

ab eito, (sharing of the bull) to pass responsibility to another generation set. Although women had their own age-sets, they went out of use soon after marriage. Those girls initiated during the same period called themselves, Bosoito, but once married no such intimacy continued. Among the men it lasted forever and they referred to one another as Bakule. People travelled far within Keiyoland to attend a circumcision ceremony. It created a feeling of solidary and permanent interrelationship.

\* For the Keiyo these too were the basis of political organisation. Society was egalitarian. They had neither chiefs nor rulers in the western sense of the word. Matters involving disputes and social welfare were referred to informal council of elders, Kokwet. Above the Kokwet was the Bororiet council. The Kokwet was made up of different clans brought together by proximity to each other. Meetings were held beneath a tree and it was here that elders met to deliberate on matters affecting the community. The Kokwet could be dragged into political functions through advices on land disputes, thefts, marriages, divorce and witchcraft. On the other hand, the Bororiet council was a group of several clans separated from each other by streams, or hills and connected together by a common desire to protect themselves from outside attacks. The ever present threat of outside attack from the Tugen, Nandi, and Kipwob Maasai was a natural unifying factor. To do this effectively, each of the various

Kokwotinwek (plural of Kokwet) had its head Kiptaiyat (a kind of messenger) whose responsibility was to summon the various Kokwet elders to attend a bororiet council. While on such missions, a Kiptaiyat identified himself by wearing cloak of Koroit (colobus monkey) which no one else was allowed to wear. The council deliberated on issues like cattle raiding, time of initiation ceremonies, the approach of wild animals and on any other calamity in the society such as strange disease, drought and the appeasement of Chebo Kipkoiyo (name for God). A Kibarbarindet (ritual leader) was always consulted for advice. Like the Nandi Orkoiyot, the Keiyo Kibarbarindet sanctioned raids before being undertaken. In times of famine they predicted the position of game. The Kibarbarindet also blessed age-grade ceremonies, rituals and rainmaking. In addition, they were charged with foreseeing impending danger and in laying strategies through which the warriors would successfully attack the enemy. Mention should also be made of the fact that each ridge or section had its Kibarbarindet. They were not appointed by anybody or group in society. Any individual could be one if he was able to predict correctly the hazards about to face the society and to suggest corrective remedies. Such people were rare and were thought to be in possession of certain magical powers known as Setanik, used for prediction.<sup>66</sup>

Closely related to Keiyo social and political organisation was its conceptualization of God. Keiyo

religious principles centred on two concepts. A God, Chebo Kipkoiyo or Cheptaillel and their ancestors, Oiik. In addition, Asis (sun) was highly revered by the Keiyo.<sup>57</sup> Asis was always called upon to act during catastrophes, epidemics, famine or drought. The Keiyo, however, did not literally worship the sun. It is through the sun that they reached the Supreme God, Cheptaillel. Before any rite of passage or ceremony could be performed, an elder prayed facing the east immediately the first rays of the sun shot the ground.<sup>58</sup> A second important aspect of Keiyo religion was built around the fact that their ancestors survived after death as spirits who were able to intervene in human affairs. There were both malevolent, chesawiloi and benevolent spirits, oiik. When neglected the spirits became malevolent while those remembered through libation became benevolent. Like the sun, ancestor spirits were not worshipped. They were expected to assist their living clan members. The general belief was that ancestors were reincarnated several times through children of the same clan. The wish of the dead relative who wanted a child to be named after him as manifested in the persistent crying of the child after birth. A clan elder would direct that the child be named after the particular dead relative. The spirit of the dead relative was said to have been recalled back to life again in the new born baby.

Although Asis was generally regarded as benevolent, at times it would show its anger through drought, famine,

epidemics, and other social calamities. On such occasions the Keiyo would make concessions to God through appeasement ceremonies and sacrifice. Most popular was the Biret ab Beek (splitting of water) ceremony intended to cleanse the society of all evils committed. The Kerio-river was always an ideal choice. This appeasement was a monopoly of men. Men would offer sacrifices around a thick bush selected called kapkoros (public sanctuary) where an altar was constructed from nice smelling medicinal plant known as Nyamtutik.<sup>69</sup> A white spotless he goat was slaughtered by the elders and roasted on this fire. If the smoke rose to the sky at vertical angle, it was generally believed that Asis had accepted their sacrifice.

Women also offered their gifts. An arch was built across a path normally leading to a river or a water point. The arch measuring about one and a half metres high was constructed of green twigs and decorated with sodom apples. The Senendet (euphorbia) twig was also hung from the arch. Millet and milk were poured on the ground. When one went through the arch, it was assumed that he or she had been cleansed of all N'qoki (evil). The women would plead to the 'mother' of all the ancestral spirits, Kokob-oi, pleading for her intercession on their behalf.

Thunder and lightning also played a major role in Keiyo religious beliefs. Although feared terribly, thunder was always viewed as a dispenser of justice. A wronged individual would make a personal appeal to thunder, ilat to revenge on

his behalf. When there was a drought, the women of Toiyoi clan whose totem was rain, were always requested by Keiyo elders to intercede on their behalf and allow rain to fall. Two families, the Kaptoromo and Kaplegek, were respected by the Keiyo for possessing ritual powers to forecast the future and to 'make' rain fall respectively. The former was said to be capable of foretelling the future through dreams either by "reading" a flame or by examining the entrails of a freshly slaughtered animal. The former was reputed to possess ritual powers capable of bringing or withholding rain.<sup>70</sup>

Another crucial role played by religion among the Keiyo was the arbitration of disputes. Certain disputes which neither the elders nor the Kokwet could solve were settled by self-implicatory oaths. Among these were swearing by thunder, ilat, stripping naked at a public forum or leaking the soil with ones tongue. This form of curse was believed to be stronger form of punishment than all. This was so because it was believed that it would not only affect the offender alone but even his children and posterity.

Religion among the Keiyo was therefore a life-long process in which the living and the dead interacted with one another. The dead had only migrated to a new abode. Asis was the author of all good things but could punish when displeased. As J. Mbiti<sup>66</sup> states the beliefs of many African peoples permeated into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to always separate. This indeed

was true for the Keiyo. Religion was an integral part of society. It encompassed the economic, social and political life.

### Conclusion

This then, was an analysis of the nature and process of the pre-colonial Keiyo economic and social institutions. It has demonstrated both the salient external and internal factors that led to the emergence of the Keiyo society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The argument has been that the two processes of interaction and migration were simultaneous.

The pattern of settlement was always along the escarpment ledge and the foothills. This choice was dictated by two factors: security and health. It was cool and free of mosquitoes and tsetse flies. Initially they practiced hunting and gathering. But by the eighteenth century they gradually adopted a mixed economy cultivating millet and sorghum and livestock keeping. The Keiyo also established symbiotic relationships with its neighbours, the Tugen, Nandi, Kipsigis and Pokot.

Kinship ties, residence and age-sets gave the people a sense of belonging and solidarity. All men were equal save for the hierarchial nature of the age-sets. The younger generation had to respect and take advice from the old ones. Social responsibility was expected of all Keiyo. The three

institutions, of Kokwet, Kibarbarindet and religion stood for those functions that necessitated an atmosphere conducive to peace, health and proper functioning of society.

With the disappearance of the Maasai military threat in the Uasin Gishu plateau in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Keiyo had begun to extend their influence to the plateau. However, their expansion was halted by a more powerful force; the settlers and the colonial state. The next chapters are devoted to this phenomenon. It examines the changes and continuities that resulted over their contact with the Keiyo. This is crucial if one has recognise the fundamental fact that in Kenya as in most colonial situations, there was a disruption by default as much as by design to subordinate indigenous institutions to the whims of the colonial state. For the Keiyo that process began effectively from 1902.



Notes

1. Sutton, J.E.G., The Archaeology of the Western Highlands of Kenya, Memoir Number Three of the British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi. A concise and well arranged version is found in B.A. Ogot (ed) Kenya Before 1900, EAPH, Nairobi, 1986, pp. 21-52.
2. J.A. Distefano's work is entitled, "The Pre-colonial History of the Kalenjin: A methodological comparison of linguistic and oral traditional evidence", and it provides a critical study of Pre-colonial Kalenjin History.
3. Sutton, J.E.G., The Archaeology of the Western Highlands of Kenya; p. 14.
4. Kipkorir, B.E., The Marakwet of Kenya, p. 77.
5. Distefano, J.A., "The Pre-colonial History of the Kalenjin", p. 243.
6. Ehret, C., "Cushites and the Highlands and Plains Nilotes to A.D. 1800" in Zamani edited by B.A. Ogot, pp. 157-160.
7. Distefano, J.A. p. 136.
8. Huntingford, G.W.B., The Nandi of Kenya, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1953, pp. 1.
9. Matson, A.T., Nandi Resistance to British Rule, E.A.P.H., Nairobi, 1967, p. 1.
10. Ibid.
11. Were, G.S., A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya, EAPH, Nairobi, 1967, p. 47.
12. Matson, A.T., op. cit.
13. Hollis, A.C., The Nandi. OUP, London, 1967, pp. 1-3.
14. Peristiany, J., The Social Institution of the Kipsiqis, Oxford, 1939, pp. 1-5.
15. Orchardson, I.Q., The Kipsiqis, EALB, Nairobi, 1961, pp. 4-6.
16. Ibid.
17. Toweett, T., Traditional History of the Kipsiqis, KLB, Nairobi, 1979, pp. 5-8.

18. W. Ochieng, in an essay "misri legends in East Africa" found in The First Word, KLB 1975, pp. 45-56 argues that no meaningful conclusion can be provided for the authenticity of the legends. But argues that they should not be rejected wholesale. The Logoli, Gusii, Bukusu, Tachoni, Marakwet, Haya and Baganda among others claim a 'misri' origin.
19. Lan'gat, S.C., "Some Aspects of Kipsigis History before 1914" in Ngano edited by McIntosh, B.C., EAPH, Nairobi, 1969, pp. 74-77.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Kipkorir, B.E., The Marakwet of Kenya, pp. 66-88. Kipkorir appeals for an urgent collection of Kalenjin oral traditions and eventual writing of Kalenjin pre-colonial history, for posterity.
23. Ibid.
24. Mwanzi, H.A., A History of the Kipsigis, p. vii.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Distefano, J.A., pp. 124-125.
28. Personal communication with Dr. Kipkorir on 29.3.88. In fact he says that linguistic evidence show a strong presence of Kalenjin speakers in the Sudan. J. Kibowen of the B.I.E.A. also indicates the presence of Kalenjin speakers in Tanzania - the Tagota; having visited there. He could exchange certain words with them.
29. Their first impression of the Keiyo has been discussed at length in the Literature Review. These are: Lugard, F.D., The Rise of our East African Empire, 1893, Peters C., New Light on Dark Africa, 1891, Von Hohnel, The Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stephanie (Teleki's Expedition), 1894, Gregory, J.W., The Great Rift Valley (1896) and Thompson, J., Through Maasai Land, (1885).
30. Massam, J.A., The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya 1968. His subjectivity becomes evident when he sub-titles his book as "An Account of a People Driven by Raids, Famine and Drought to take Refuge on the Inaccessible Ledges or Precipitous Mountains...."

31. Massam, J.A., pp. 14-15.
32. O.I., Kipchamasis Tireito, Arap Chepkut, Stanley Sawe, and Samuel Chepsat, 9.8.87.
33. Distefano, J.A., p. 149.
34. The same was confirmed through O.I. by Kobilu on 6.11.87.
35. O.I. Toroitich Arap Kandie on 18.8.87 and Kipn'gatib on 17.8.87.
36. Ibid.
37. Kipkulei, B., "The Origin, Migration and Settlement of the Tugen" pp. 56-57.
38. O.I., Kipchamasis Tireito, Arap Chepkut, Stanley Sawe and Samuel Chepsat on 9.8.87.
39. Personal Communication with Dr. Kipkorir on 29.3.88.
40. O.I., Kipngatib 17.8.87.
41. Sutton, J.E.G.. The Archaeology of the Western Highlands of Kenya: pp. 26-32.
42. Kipkorir, B.E., et. al (ed) "Historical Perspective of Development in Kerio Valley", Kerio Valley Past, Present and Future, pp. 1-2.
43. Mwanzi, H.A., p. 31.
44. R. Blackburn has a very illuminative article on the Okiek in Kenya Before 1900, by Ogot, B.A. (ed) pp 53-83.
45. Mwanzi, H.A. op. cit.
46. O.I. Job Cheburet 9.7.87.
47. Distefano, J.A., p. 235.
48. Arap Kogo Chemjor of Cherota at about 70 years of age now; was sold to a Nandi woman Zainabu for grain during the 1918-19 famine. He later traced his home in the 1950s, O.I. 19.11.89.
49. Sutton, J.E.G., pp. 26-32.
50. Chesang, J.C., pp. vii-ix.
51. O.I. Henry Chemweno, 16.8.87.

52. O.I. Job Cheburet 9.8.87. There is a family by the name of Kap-Sirikwa inhabiting the Kipkin'gwo region. No attempt, however, was made to determine if it had any links with the Sirikwa.
53. Ibid.
54. Chesang, I.C. p. xi.
55. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 9.8.87.
56. Elgeyo-Marakwet District Atlas, p. 57.
57. Ibid. p. 57.
58. Massam, J.A., p. 115.
59. Mwanzi, H.A., p. 161.
60. O.I. Toroitich Kandie, 18.8.87.
61. Chesang, I.C., "An Analysis of the Superstructure of Semi-pastoral Keiyo", pp. 1-2.
62. This system of land demarcation is common in the Kerio Valley, particularly in the middle zone. This is the region running North-South from Irong, Tambach, Changach, Sego, Muskut, Ngobisi and Turesia. Oral information obtained indicates that demarcation was done by old men who threw a stone at random. The resting point was considered a boundary. He could only throw the stone as he moves backwards so that he does not favour. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 10.8.1987, and John Chesire, 13.11.1989.
63. Op. cit., p. 2.
64. O.I. Salim Chepkeitany, 14-1-90.
65. Op. cit., pp. 2-5. Chesang further explains the diverse ways of acquiring land, such as by leasing. Land lease was exchanged for livestock, grain, farming tools and honey. However, ownership remained fundamentally with the owner.
66. Chesang, I.C., p. xi.
67. Tuitoek Arap Cherugut in "Kalenjin (Keiyo) religion" has attempted to show a number of Keiyo gods which include a god of rain, (Toiyoi) god of destruction (Chebonomu) god of beauty (Cheptaillel) god of the underworld (Chesawil) and god of kindness (Asis), in Popular Culture of East

Africa Liyong Lo, T., (ed) Longman, Nairobi, 1972, pp. 31-32.

68. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 10.8.87.
69. O.I. Kobilu, 17.8.87.
70. This information was conveyed to me by John Kimaiyo Ego a geologist. He is a member of the family, 16.4.88.
71. Mbiti, J., African Religion and Philosophy, Heinemann, London, 1969, p. 1.

CHAPTER THREETHE FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIALISM: LAND FACTOR UP TO 1939Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the process and impact of colonial land alienation among the Keiyo. The land factor was one of the most contentious issues in the relationship of the Keiyo with the colonial state. Land as shown by C.K. Meek had something of a sacred character and rights over land were more jealously treasured than any other form of rights.<sup>1</sup> Discussing land issues among the Kamba, Kikuyu and Maasai, R. Tignor argues that the manner in which land was alienated shaped many developments during the colonial period<sup>2</sup>. There is no doubt that the land question was intrinsic for the Keiyo too, especially with the loss in 1922 of 328 square miles of prime forest land which was alienated to E.S.M. Grogan Ltd.<sup>3</sup> This was apart from the hundreds of acres of land alienated to other Europeans, and particularly the Afrikaners, on the Uasin Gishu Plateau.<sup>4</sup>

The analysis is done in four sections. The first section examines the nature of Keiyo land use and customs during the pre-colonial period. This is necessary because there was a systematic attempt by the colonial government to dismiss African land tenure as non-existent. African land rights, it was claimed lasted only as long as the land was in use. Whatever was not being cultivated or occupied was 'vacant' land. Such misconceptions were often used by the colonial

state to rationalize expropriation of African land.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, colonial land policy in Kenya and its consequences are analysed. Thirdly, it looks at the reaction of the Keiyo with particular emphasis on the motives and results of the Hosking-Barton Memorandum relating to Keiyo rights in the Grogan Concession. In addition, an appraisal is made of the evidence given by the Keiyo to the Carter Land Commission of 1932 with a view to assessing whether it had any impact on Kenya land rights. And finally, a comprehensive analysis of the impact of land loss on the Keiyo is attempted so as to shed light on how the Keiyo underwent social, economic and political change.

#### Colonial Land Policy 1895 to 1923

The process of transforming Kenya into a colonial state and creating a colonial administration began in 1895. From 1888 the Imperial British East Africa Company had succeeded in establishing its presence on the Kenya Coast and in Buganda, as well as along the caravan route linking these two areas but this did not produce an administrative system.<sup>6</sup> In 1895 Sir A.H. Hardinge was appointed the first Commissioner of the East Africa Protectorate. Hardinge used former servants of the I.B.E.A. in the establishment of control over the different peoples and the selection of a suitable administrative system. C.W. Hobley and J.F. Jackson were key persons in these processes among the Keiyo and other Western Kenya peoples.

Hobley and Jackson organized the creation of districts, got to know the people, their customs and languages and gradually extended the area of effective jurisdiction.<sup>7</sup>

With the appointment of Sir Charles Elliot as the Commissioner of the East Africa Protectorate in 1900, the territory began to acquire a new status. Elliot wanted not only to introduce a crown colony type of administration but also to find new sources of revenue to make the railway pay. Taxation was introduced but appeared insufficient. Elliot therefore fully supported the colonisation of the highlands of Kenya by Europeans.<sup>8</sup> His recommendation was further hastened by the decision of the Foreign Office in London to transfer the Eastern Province of Uganda to Kenya in 1902. This large area was suitable for European settlement and exploitation. This land was, however, not a vacuum. Its precolonial inhabitants had to be evacuated to leave room for white settlement. Closely linked with this was the need for labourers on settler farms after the first world war.<sup>9</sup>

The first land regulation, which permitted Europeans to be issued with a twenty-one year, renewable land certificate, was passed in 1897. In 1902, the first Crown Lands Ordinance authorised the Commissioner to sell, grant or lease or otherwise dispose of land which had been designated as crownland to settler with a ninety-nine year lease.<sup>10</sup> In 1915 the length of such leases on land was extended to nine hundred and ninety nine years.<sup>11</sup> The European settlers had felt that



the 1902 Ordinance restricted their settlement. The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902 said that all 'empty' land could be sold at two rupees per acre or rented out at fifteen rupees per 100 acres per annum to Europeans. The 1915 Ordinance defined Crown Land as including "all lands not occupied by the native tribes." This empowered the Governor to proclaim reserves, which was formally done in 1926. At this stage the Africans became "tenants at will" of the Crown and could thus be turned off their land at the government's pleasure.<sup>12</sup> That meant the non-recognition of the rights of ownership by Africans. The assumption was that African rights regarding land were confined to occupation, cultivation and grazing and did not amount to a title to the land itself. In 1924, the Land Commission fixed the boundaries of African reserves which were legalised in 1926. By the Native Land Trust Ordinance of 1930 it was decreed that "African reserves belong to Africans for ever." This policy, however, was discarded when gold was discovered in Kakamega in 1932. The same year saw the creation of the Carter Land Commission, which by 1934 had fixed the boundaries of the white highlands. Furthermore, all Africans save for resident labourers in the highlands were removed which created bitterness.<sup>13</sup> The situation was such that by 1934, some 6,543,360 acres of the best arable land in Kenya had been alienated for occupation by some 2,027 settlers, an average of 2,534 acres per occupant. The average amount of land under cultivation per settler was 300 acres.<sup>14</sup>

The administration of Sir Charles Elliot laid the foundation for European settlement in Kenya. Settlers arrived from as far away as Australia, Canada, Britain and South Africa among others. For instance, by 1915, eight thousand two hundred and forty-two square miles of land had been alienated on behalf of about one thousand settlers. However, it was unevenly distributed. Twenty per cent was held by private individuals or groups. These were Delamere, the two Coles, Grogan and the East African Syndicate.<sup>15</sup> This encouraged speculation on land. Holders of these huge tracts sold them off in small parcels. Land values in the Rift Valley rose from pounds sterling 6 an acre in 1908 to 240 an acre by 1914.<sup>16</sup> For the Afrikaner settlers, the Uasin Gishu Plateau became the focal point, providing them with an opportunity to found an alternative colony in the highlands that would resemble a homeland.<sup>17</sup> The Keiyo who occupied the highland plateau had the unenviable task of neighbouring the Afrikaners.

#### Keiyo Land Loss and Reaction 1923 to 1939

Scholars of the colonial period have attempted to quantify the amount of land lost by the Keiyo in relation to their grazing and cultivation requirements. Van Zwanenberg<sup>18</sup> and T. Kanogo<sup>19</sup> aver that in 1922 the Keiyo were evicted from 328 square miles of forest, which was alienated to E.S.M. Grogan Ltd. The area of grazing left to them approximately 72

square miles was too small and quickly became hopelessly overstocked, making the animals vulnerable. This loss was deeply resented by the Keiyo. But contrary to the assertion by Van Zwanenberg and Kanogo that the Keiyo were left with no alternative, but to sign on as resident labourers, it will be argued here that the Keiyo were not marginalised as hitherto stated. Evidence adduced indicate that the Keiyo never felt outrightly constrained by the Grogan Concession. In fact, grazing went on as usual within the Concession area. Those who signed on as squatters did so to expand their grazing areas and accumulate more livestock. There were markets at Kipkabus, Kaptagat and Chepkorio for them to sell their livestock and this was an opportunity they exploited to the maximum.<sup>20</sup>

Chesang also makes the same assumption that the Keiyo were marginalised following the alienation of the Grogan Concession. He states that following the European settlement of the Uasin Gishu Plateau: "what emerged was competition for grass, a competition which ended with the colonial regime making the Keiyo subservient and integral to the colonial settler economy. It was this conflict of interest that led the Keiyo being made peripheral to the colonial economy, that is, a labour pool for the settler economy."<sup>21</sup> Chesang fails to appreciate the fact that by 1926 only 840 Keiyo were listed as squatters against a population of more than twenty thousand.<sup>22</sup> Most Keiyo continued to graze on the unalienated

part of the highland plateau clearing the bamboo forest to create further room. Others withdrew to the ledges of the escarpment and the middle zones of their country in search of grazing.

William Kiptoo Chirchir declared that the greatest grievance of the Keiyo against the settlers was the denial of accessibility to the salt lick at Kipkabus and the water resources at Lake Sergoit. He stated thus:

The settlers and Grogan only held the concession on paper. We held supremacy over grazing grounds. Although occupying thousands of acres they failed to guard against us. The only quarrel was n'genda (salt lick) and water which is the livelihood of a cow. Even when fenced we could cut the wires at night and graze our cattle.<sup>23</sup>

For the Keiyo, it was only during the various famines that they lacked grazing. The famine of 1918 known as kenyitab kibichotit (year of locusts) among the Keiyo pushed several into squatter labour. The colonial government provided the unemployed Keiyo with posho (maize flour) as a famine relief.<sup>24</sup>

These do not, however, indicate that the Keiyo were contented. They refused to accept the loss of their land and exerted whatever pressure they had to secure its return,<sup>25</sup> particularly, after 1923 when the colonial government used excessive force to drive them out of their land.<sup>26</sup> From the 1850s the Keiyo had been grazing on the Uasin Gishu Plateau, although at great risk from the Maasai, the Nandi and the Karamoja.<sup>27</sup> With the decline of Maasai power at the end of the 19th century the Keiyo began to enjoy the freedom of peaceful

grazing. The honeymoon lasted only briefly. It was then that the Keiyo were to lose their grazing grounds on Uasin Gishu Plateau to Grogan and other settlers. Thus the Keiyo were halted in their westward expansion. According to Kiptoo Chirchir:

... the Keiyo and other Kalenjins were expelled to leave room for white settlement. My father lived in Uasin Gishu Plateau before I was even born. My father was forcefully evacuated by Douglas whom I later worked for. Douglas made my father move to the reserve in Chepkorio in 1922.<sup>28</sup>

Similar stories were narrated by Kipchamasis Tireito and Elijah Chemweno.<sup>29</sup>

However, as far as Keiyo-European contact was concerned, the first European settlement on Keiyo lands began in 1904. The earliest application by Europeans for land on the Uasin Gishu Plateau was made in 1904 by W.F. Van Breda on behalf of himself and his two brothers. The application was made, as Van Breda stated because:

Having been told by private individuals and government officials of the wonderful Uasin Gishu Plateau and more especially about Sergoit rock at the foot of which there was a lake with four big rivers running into it and one running out.<sup>30</sup>

These views were significant for not only were the Keiyo to lose grazing grounds but a very important source of water for their livestock. The three brothers had arrived from South Africa in February 1903 and each obtained ten thousand acres of land. They then proceeded to the plateau to make their selections around the Sergoit rock. Besides farming one of

the brothers engaged in surveying for the administration. The Van Breda Concession was the first grant of land on the Uasin Gishu Plateau to Europeans.<sup>31</sup>

The success of the Van Breda brothers persuaded other settlers to stake claims on the Uasin Gishu Plateau.<sup>32</sup> One of these was Major Arnold who was so impressed with the reports of the plateau that he came immediately from South Africa and settled with his family in the same year. He was accompanied by John de Waal who purchased land from the Van Bredas in 1905, and later became one of the leading Afrikaner farmers on the plateau. The largest single South African group to move to Uasin Gishu was that of Jan Van Rensburg, a prominent Transvaal farmer.<sup>33</sup>

By ceding land on the Uasin Gishu Plateau to the settlers, the colonial administration ignored the land rights of the indigenous people. The East African Standard daily newspaper supported the Afrikaner settler presence, arguing that these would strengthen the area's defences and open up new regions for farming. Concerning the indigenous people it was argued thus:

... the Boer treatment of the natives is more patriarchal than harsh. They do not pander to native proclivities, but simply take him and deal with him as master and servant, invite his presence on the farms ... but insist upon his service at a reasonable rate of wage.... When strife becomes inevitable the Boers generally give a good account of themselves, but generally speaking they are not a disturbing factor in contact with natives, but a controlling factor. For this arrival of this contingent of Boer families marks a promising epoch in the history of the land.<sup>34</sup>

In spite of such confidence, the first settlers on the Uasin Gishu Plateau found life difficult during the early years. The virgin soil needed considerable work before it became productive. Lack of housing and reliable mode of transportation dampened their initial optimism.

The Keiyo no doubt resented the European's penetration into their domain. Their first reaction was very violent and fatal. By 1911 the Van Breda brothers had been forced to abandon their holdings owing to thefts and continual hostility from the Keiyo. In 1905 the eldest of the Van Breda brothers was ambushed and his ear almost severed by a simi (knobkerrie) when returning to his house from a walk. These antagonisms persisted until 1911 when one of the Van Breda brothers was murdered. An employee of the Van Breda brothers named as Kipkurugumet arap Mawach gave the following account of the murder to the colonial administration:

I worked for Mr. W.T. Van Breda and I got six days leave, I went to my reserve. On my return I did not find the Bwana, and evidence in the house showed that he had left hurriedly and had been sometime. I searched around and found blood marks, and eventually discovered his body about 150 yards away from the house near the garden. The body was already putrid. He had evidently been trying to mount a slope leading upto his house after having been struck, and died in the attempt.

I later learnt that Arap Chemorna and Arap Saiwa were the culprits. The latter had gone to the Bwana's house and told him to come with him to extract some honey from a tree. Bwana Breda followed and not far from the house Arap Chemorna was in the hiding, and as the Bwana passed speared him. I do not know why they did it, as this Bwana was a friend of the Elgeyo, he frequently shot game for them. They stole nothing, from his house or stock after killing him.<sup>35</sup>

Arap Chemorna and Arap Sawe fled to Marakwet. Settler pressure prevailed upon the administration to send the King's African Rifles to find the two men.<sup>36</sup> Quoting the L.B.E.A., G. Groen<sup>37</sup> insinuates that the K.A.R. apprehended the murderers. But the anonymous author of the short history of the Uasin Gishu indicated that only one of the culprits was arrested at this time. The actual thrower of the spear Arap Chemorna was not caught until many years later. It is possible as Groen suggests that another man was arrested.<sup>38</sup>

The murder of Van Breda generated settler emotions. In 1910 they had formed the Uasin Gishu Farmers Association which now began to agitate for punitive action against the Keiyo. On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1911 the settlers gathered at Sergoit and elected Major Parker Toulson, a retired army officer as their President. Several issues came out for discussion. Main on the agenda was the murder of T.W. Van Breda and what they deplored as "lawlessness by the natives". These acts included the assault on Mr. Steekkamp, the burning of Mr. Miller's house, a threat to shoot Mr. L. Van Maltitz's employee, and trespassing on the farms of Captain Forster. In addition, the meeting resolved that the settlers be supplied with rifles and 300 rounds of ammunition.<sup>39</sup> True to its policy of using force to obtain African acquiescence, the British colonial administration retaliated against the Keiyo and Marakwet by sending an expedition under Lt. Llyod Jones in 1911. During the expedition Arap Chemorna from Koopke was captured and



taken to Mombasa where he was killed.<sup>40</sup>

The murder of Van Breda created an uneasy relationship between the Keiyo and the settlers, supported by the colonial administration. It was the first instance of Keiyo resistance to colonial intrusion. Colonial reports argue that Van Breda was killed 'with no motive' but the motive was definitely clear. Practically everywhere in Kenya the imposition of colonial rule and alienation of land was stiffly resisted.

As Ochieng aptly argues, one issue that was common among the Keiyo and Marakwet was that they would not tolerate a white farmer.<sup>41</sup> This was proved in 1919 when a serious border incident occurred between the Keiyo and the European farmers. Since the arrival of settlers at the Uasin Gishu Plateau from 1904, the British colonial government had placed a number of demands on the Keiyo people. In an attempt to stop cattle raids persons found raiding were seriously punished. According to Van Zwanenberg:

... In order to cut stock theft, draconian measures were passed under various stock theft ordinances, whereby people suspected of stealing stock had to prove themselves innocent and if they could not do so they had to pay a fine amounting to ten times the value of the stolen stock. If they could not do this, the fine was imposed to their kin or whole locations. Yet despite the law and the energetic pursuit of stock thieves by police, incidence of stock thefts continued.<sup>42</sup>

For Keiyo warriors and society in general, cattle raiding was accepted as one of the main ways of building up large herds of cattle. Thus in 1919 the Keiyo community of Koopke, supported

by Singore warriors, raided cattle belonging to European farmers at Mekenya and Kapchorua farms. Their leader was a warrior of the Nyongi age-group, called Chesire Kibelion arap Omonei.<sup>43</sup>

Other reasons have been suggested for the raid. The Uasin Gishu District political record file of 1919 states that the famine of 1918-19 and the District Commissioner's continued pressure for the hut tax were the major reasons for the raid. The colonial government in addition had stopped the Keiyo from grazing on the farms bordering their reserve.<sup>44</sup> According to the then District Commissioner, as the Keiyo expanded onto the plateau, they found the land confiscated by European estates and concessionaires.<sup>45</sup> Groen interviewed one Keiyo whom he referred to as Kiptoo, who had been working for Europeans and stated that the cause of the raid was the bad treatment which members of the Keiyo community received when they hired out to Afrikaner transport riders on the Londiani road. From these trips a number of the Keiyo never returned and this was the immediate cause.<sup>46</sup>

As stated, the raid occurred on February 16, 1919, and over five hundred head of cattle and 600 sheep and goats were stole. According to Massam:

The Europeans, finding the warriors in such numbers and not knowing the extent of the raid, retired temporarily after shooting one Elgeyo dead. About two thousand head of cattle were seized, a few of them being slaughtered and eaten at once. In the evening the cattle were brought down the escarpment.<sup>47</sup>

The King's African Rifles organised an expedition in retaliation with forces from Kaptagat, Eldoret and Marakwet. Five Keiyo were killed while five hundred and fifty one head of cattle and one thousand and one hundred sheep and goats were seized.<sup>48</sup> According to Kipchamasis Tireito, all the cattle belonging to the Koopke community were seized and distributed to the affected settlers and the soldiers. The leader of the raid, Chesire arap Omonei was killed by the police.<sup>49</sup> Once livestock had been recovered, the motive of the expedition changed to a determination to subdue the Keiyo. To achieve that goal, a force encamped at Kaptagat three days later. Sections of Rokochu, Singore and Mutei were attacked for having collaborated with the Koopke. All houses, granaries, cattle shed and food stores were razed to the ground. At the end of it all, the soldiers left a burning trail extending from Koopke to Metkei in the southern part of Keiyoland. Thus, although this incident involved a small section of the Keiyo, far reaching effects on the whole Keiyo society were felt.

The colonial administration further demanded that all the Keiyo leaders and elders assemble at Bombo near Kaptagat, where a peace treaty was to be imposed. First of all, the Keiyo had to swear never to challenge colonial authority or the settlers. The swearing is reported to have gone thus:

"Kwek, kwek Chesebet ak Bombo" ("Never never at Chesebet and Bombo")

The congregation had to say this in chorus.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the Keiyo had to surrender their weapons, bows, arrows, spears, and shields to the colonial administration. They were further required to forfeit all stock that had been confiscated. They were informed that the whole community would be punished if any of their members raided cattle from European farmers or any of its neighbours again. Up to 1939 the Keiyo never gave much trouble to the British again.

This helps explain why in 1923 when 328 square miles of Keiyo land was alienated, new methods of resistance were adopted. Massam wrote about the suffering of the Keiyo thus:

The question of grazing is all important to the native. If pasture is available he is easily kept in a contended frame of mind.... Concession made things difficult for the natives. It meant not only a smaller grazing area, but also a considerable increase in the number of cattle to be carried by the reduced acreage. The narrow strip of the reserve became hopelessly overstocked.... There is thus little hope of the Elgeyo ever becoming more than labourers on farms.... The dispersal of the vigorous men and their families must inevitably result in the breaking down of the tribal tradition which hitherto has held the tribe together.<sup>51</sup>

The process of Keiyo land loss began in 1904 when an agreement was signed between the colonial administration and E.M.S. Grogan. The agreement read: "to grant a lease of all that piece or parcel of land near Eldama Ravine comprising 64,000 acres or thereabouts of forest including all rights that were supposedly preserved for the Elgeyo."<sup>52</sup>

Informants<sup>53</sup> were of the consensus that Keiyo shortage of grazing was due to Grogan. He has been described elsewhere as a ruthless entrepreneur, an adventurer and a polished sycophant.<sup>54</sup> Under the above agreement Grogan and his colleague Lingham set out for a joint venture. Elliot, after meeting with the two, admired their wit and offered them a ninety-nine year lease at pound 150 sterling a year. Most of the 64,000 acres offered to Grogan was made up of forest which contained a wealth of podo carpus, (a high quality softwood) and scented cedar suitable for roofing and furniture making. Lingham particularly foresaw a tremendous demand for timber in the construction work facing the colony and for export. The two took a loan from a bank to open the colony's first timber industry out of the rich natural vegetation of Mau forest. The forest extended as far as Timboroa, Londiani, Kipkabus, Kaptagat, Sergoit and up to Cherangany.<sup>55</sup> Here was an opportunity for Grogan and Lingham to fulfil their dreams of being timber magnates. For the period up to 1923 the concession was only on paper. From then onwards a systematic attempt to evacuate the Keiyo into the reserves was began. A buffer forest reserve was created to stop the Keiyo from interacting with the settlers. The Keiyo, being a pre-literate society and unaware of the details of the lease did not appreciate the existence of the conditions under which their land was leased to Grogan. These included:

- i) That the agreement becomes valid only when all native rights in and on the said land shall be reserved.
- ii) That all natives shall be entitled to exercise on or over any part of the premises which in the opinion of the Governor shall for the time being not be actually necessary for the operations of the licensee for grazing rights.
- iii) That the lessee, his servants and agents will not interfere with settlements of the natives and so as far as possible avoid quarrels with the natives in or near the land leased.
- iv) Any disputes over reductions of rent on account of diminution of the amount of land leased or for the compensation on account shall be referred to the arbitration of a judge of the high court under section 525 of the Indian code of civil procedure.
- v) Rights to reside and erect all necessary buildings, shelters and fences for the accommodation of themselves, their families and their animals.
- vi) Rights to grass, water and other vegetable products required by them or their stock of every description.
- vii) Rights to agricultural land, salt licks, to as much fuel as required and as much forest produce as may be required for their consumption.

- viii) Rights to snare or hunt game animals, collect honey and put up honey barrels. And
- ix) Such other rights as may hereafter be proved to the satisfaction of the Governor to have been exercised by them within the said area prior to the date of the said adventure."

These so called conditions became obsolete in 1923 when the colonial administration drove away all the Keiyo with their livestock to the reserve and the escarpment ledges. When the Keiyo protested, the colonial administration through the Provincial Commissioner Mr. Osborne informed the Keiyo petitioners that in effect there was no use crying over spilt milk.<sup>56</sup>

In analysing developments after Grogan after obtained the concession, one is faced with the fact that like other speculators he failed to exploit the resources himself. He hired out the exploitation rights to the Equatorial Saw Mills for timber extraction. However, this did not stop Grogan from working with the colonial administration to deny the Keiyo all rights to the use of land. For instance his quest for land concessions did not end with the provision of the 64,000 acres. He wanted to be assured of an eventual timber export market for his clients and so asked for an additional concession of a hundred acres of Mombasa deep-water frontage at Kilindini which was granted.

On the other hand the colonial government's policy towards the Keiyo was paternalistic throughout this period. For instance, before the evacuation of the Keiyo in 1923, the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner, Mr. F.W. Isaac, wrote a report which read:

... Elgeyo - I have examined with great care all the evidence that has been brought before me in connection with this tribe and I have interviewed several of its members. I find that they have no claim whatsoever to grazing or other rights within the forests outside the boundary of their reserve. In 1907, they were not grazing their stock at the top of the escarpment. A few years later, they were granted a strip of mile-broad on the escarpment for the whole of their reserve and in the case of the Mutei, it was extended to Sergoit lake. I am quite satisfied that outside this area they have no shadow of right.<sup>57</sup>

It is, however, clear from an earlier argument that the Keiyo had inhabited the highland zone, from at least the middle of the 17th century and had been grazing their livestock on the Uasin Gishu Plateau as early as 1850.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of the administration's attempt to downplay Keiyo land grievances, the colonial administration felt that further attempts to ignore Keiyo demands would lead to a disruption of peace. The formation of the Local Native Council in 1926 provided the Keiyo with a forum to demand grazing rights. Evidence from the annual reports<sup>59</sup> show that the district officials were supporting Keiyo demands only to be overruled by the Governor or the colonial office. The following three tables show the amount of land alienated from the Keiyo and what was available for their use.



TABLE 1 Forest Reserved, Demarcated or Earmarked for Demarcation:

1. Government or Grogan Concession	- 26,604 acres
2. Gazetted Local Native Council Forest	- 62,074 acres
3. Metkei Forests	- 5,000 acres
4. Tingwa Hill	- 3,000 acres
5. Irong Forest	- 5,000 acres
6. Sogotio Hill Forest	- 4,000 acres
	<hr/>
Total	105,678 acres
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Source: KNA Ref. No. 13/1 - Hosking-Barton Memorandum  
pp. 11-12.

TABLE 2      Statement of Land available in district for grazing and agriculture (estimated): Elgevo reserve

1. Grazing area (in use)	-	260,450 acres
2. Native reserve	-	14,540 acres
3. Forest reserve	-	245,910 acres
4. Area available for grazing (not in use)	-	31,500 acres
5. Area available for agriculture	-	13,300 acres
6. Area of land, bare and rocky suitable for sheep and goat grazing	-	201,110 acres
7. Amount of grazing per head of cattle	-	0.8 acres
8. Amount of land available for cultivation per person	-	2.5 acres
9. Amount of wasteland available for sheep and goat grazing	-	2.4 acres

Source: KNA Ref. No. 13/1 - Hosking-Barton Memorandum pp. 11-12.

**TABLE 3** Land available for Keiyo grazing and agriculture per location

LOCATIONS	AREA IN ACRES	CATTLE OWNED	GRAZING ACRES	ACRES PER HEAD	AREA CULTIVATED
MUTEI UPPER	24,064	2309	5000	2-9	3081
TUMEIYO	17,660	1691	5000	2-9	2977
MARICHOR	30,592	1383	1000	-	4153
ROKOCHO	21,760	463	-	-	4164
MUTEI LOWER	56,000	2197	6400	3	10471
IRONG	43,776	1922	1400	7	1984
KAPCHEMUTWA	22,000	1748	1000	6	2535

Source: Ibid.

From these three tables, it is evident that within the context of the total acreage for Keiyo were greatly constrained. Secondly, some 200,000 acres of the Grogan Concession is not mentioned thus showing the realisation that the data should be accepted with reservations. Basically because statistics obtained from colonial records varied from year to year with vital ones being omitted. Thirdly, the figures help to illustrate colonial concern particularly for grazing demands in a bid to dissuade the Keiyo from any violent reaction. And finally the figures were used by the colonial administrators at Tambach to plead for Keiyo right to grazing so as to avert what they regarded as an impending ecological disaster due to overstocking and overgrazing.

Local Native Council demands for a return of Keiyo alienated land were so vigorous that the writer of the 1926

Annual Report described the Grogan Concession as Alsace Lorraine, comparing it to the land contested by the Germans and the French in the 1870s.<sup>50</sup> In an interview with Hoskings and Barton in 1921 Chief Kimoning arap Cherono later a member of the Local Native Council averred that:

I was born at Koitarop where Mr. Cloetes farm is now in South Sergoit.... I have heard from old men that some of the Keiyo came originally from Elgon.... The Nandi are our cousins, at times we have fought with them but usually we have been friends. When the whiteman first came, my Manyatta was by the north-west beacon of the Grogan Concession (Mutei). My cattle were grazing over Mr. Theunissens farm. They went to Sergoit for salt. Kisormoi arap Kiptela was living to the south of me near Sitoton. Arap Chemoiwa was in the middle of L.O. 907 Kaptagat. We have never ceased to graze over what is now the Grogan Concession.<sup>51</sup>

One informant argued that Chief Kimoning belonged to the second generation of Keiyo chiefs who were responsible for ceding out huge chunks of Keiyo territory to the settlers. Kimoning and all the chiefs of the Nyongi age-set are accused of failing to articulate Keiyo land grievances. The explanation given by Kiptoo Chirchir was that during the First World War there was compulsory confiscation of bulls. Chief Kimoning may have feared that demanding more grazing lands, would be taken as a sign that they had large herds of cattle, which could as a result be confiscated by the colonial government.<sup>52</sup>

Some blame may be apportioned to Chief Kimoning and his fellow chiefs, but it is also true that the odds were heavily against the Keiyo. They were very much at the mercy of the

colonial state whose belief was that settler farming was a sure way of making the administration and the railway pay for itself. In addition various institutions ganged up to frustrate Keiyo demands for grazing. Most notable were the Forest Department, Eldoret municipality, Equator Saw Mills, (Major Grogan's) notwithstanding of course the hundreds of settlers who saw Keiyo grazing lands as being rightfully theirs.<sup>63</sup>

#### The Carter Land Commission and Keiyo Grievances

The previous section has highlighted how the process of land alienation was implemented. It has also demonstrated that although Hosking and Barton clearly demonstrated Keiyo rights to grazing, the colonial administration ignored its findings. Consequently, the colonial state, faced with pressures not only from the Keiyo but from other Kenyan communities set up the Carter Land Commission to look into the problems of land in Kenya.<sup>64</sup> Operating against a background of continued denial of land rights, this section shows how the commission tackled the Keiyo land demands.

A former chief of Soy location, Elijah Chemweno, stated that he was a young herdsboy when Keiyo elders gave evidence to the Carter Land Commission. He says that the elders were very enthusiastic about giving evidence to the commission hoping that they would get back their grazing lands, salt licks and watering holes. Those selected were men of high

integrity endowed with orational and rhetorical skills. Among those chosen were Chief Kimoning and William Chirchir.<sup>65</sup> According to Chirchir, those chosen spoke to the utmost of their strength. Chief Kimoning had insisted that the Keiyo boundary ran from Sergoit rock near Hajee's drift in the Uasin Gishu Plateau and to the northwest of the present Kaptagat Hotel. He petitioned that the Kaptagat forest be returned to them. Furthermore, he demanded that they should be allowed access to use forest products like pitsaw, timber and fencing posts in addition to cultivating and grazing in the forests. According to Kiptoo Chirchir, Carter and his fellow commissioners had appeared keen listeners and promises of help were made.<sup>66</sup> But when the report was released, the stark reality emerged. There were to be no changes whatsoever. Precisely, the report on the Keiyo states that:

... It cannot be said the Elgeyo have accumulated cattle in excess of their needs, since the average wealth per household is only six cattle and thirteen sheep and goats .... We therefore accept it as a fact that the Elgeyo have no sound historical claim to the area under consideration (the Grogan Concession)....<sup>67</sup>

One of the District Commissioners during the period, Mr. Hamilton Ross, argued that the commissioners went contrary to their terms of reference and the needs of the Keiyo and Marakwet were grossly underestimated.<sup>68</sup>

The locations affected most by a lack of grazing land were Rokocho, Marichor, Metkei and Kapchemutwa. The carrying capacity of grassland had undoubtedly been very greatly

strained. The Grogan Concession had sandwiched the Keiyo between the reserve and forest to which they were not allowed access. In addition residents of Kapchemutwa were also further cut off by the Elgeyo Saw Mills. The colonial government could not accept the fact that it caused the pressure on land. Instead they claimed that the whole problem facing the Keiyo was one of pressure of human and animal population. Coupled with the alienation of grazing land was the alienation of Keiyo salt licks and water resources. Kendur salt lick was to cause a further protracted correspondence between the administration, the settlers and the Keiyo chiefs. This salt lick was situated between the reserve boundary to the north and the spring which the Moiben Saw Mills procured in 1929. The mill was owned by the Elgeyo Saw Mills which exploited the timber but also paid substantial revenue to the Local Native Council. This was the L.N.C's. source of income for financing some of its projects.

In 1935 all the lands claimed by the Keiyo were held by various settlers by a lease of 999 years. And in 1939 the District Commissioner categorically informed the Keiyo that all the loss was inevitable. Their only hope was that the 1957 expiry of the lease would be recognised and the concession revert back to them. It becomes clear therefore that their land grievances were virtually ignored by the colonial state, although the colonial officials at Tambach pleaded their case. However, whatever, came from Nairobi was

final.

The memoranda submitted to the Carter Land Commission of 1931 remain as a living reflection of how seriously Africans from all parts of Kenya viewed the land question<sup>59</sup> The Land Commission not only failed to achieve its goals and according to Breen it also exacerbated the problems it hoped to solve.<sup>70</sup> The Keiyo articulated their case but the odds were invariably against them. Land was required for settler production of export commodities to make the colony pay for its administration. On the other hand, the Keiyo had never thought in terms of 'legal rights' for grazing land. The Keiyo recognised no boundaries to their grazing grounds beyond the limits of distance needed for immunity from Maasai, Nandi, Karamoja and Tugen cattle raiders. Stripped of its source of subsistence, the Keiyo responded to these changes in diverse ways.

#### The Consequences of Land Alienation

T. Zeleza<sup>71</sup> and A. Frontera<sup>72</sup> have argued that despite the imposed dominance of settler production and alienation of land use for agricultural work and grazing, peasant commodity production was not 'destroyed'. Writing about the Taveta, Frontera argues that the Taveta did not passively accept Grogan's wholesale alienation of the plains beyond their forest walls. Although they were a small community, they were articulate and active in pressing their claims. They were



even more successful in being able to avoid economic dependence on Grogan; few Taveta ever found it necessary to work on his estate. Her arguments are relevant to the Keiyo on two fronts. One, the main actor in land loss among the Taveta and Keiyo was Grogan. They are both small communities. Second, they were able to adapt to the various forces of change and at the same time protect their institutions or their identity as a community.<sup>73</sup>

The initial shock to the Keiyo was the loss of grazing grounds. They were essentially a pastoral people and not very fond of agricultural work. This disinclination for agricultural work was strengthened by the appalling nature of Keiyo country. Apart from some small patches of arable land, the rest of the regions are too steep and rocky for any crop.<sup>74</sup> Millet, sorghum, tobacco and gourds were the only suitable crops for the environment, until the introduction of maize in the early part of the twentieth century. Livestock management therefore became a major form of capital. Cattle and goats were the most popular.

By 1922 the Keiyo had lost 328 square miles of grazing land. Over time this substantial land loss led to a serious problem of overstocking. The end result was land overuse which would not sustain a large human population leading to environmental and economic crises.<sup>75</sup> According to Tabitha Kanogo, by the mid-1920s the Keiyo like the Kikuyu had also found it necessary to resort to squatter labour.<sup>76</sup> In 1920 the

District Commissioner reported that seven hundred to eight hundred of a total of fifteen thousand, eight hundred and fifty-three Keiyo had gone to work on European farms. By 1929 the report indicated that there were over one thousand Keiyo squatters who held one third of the total cattle population on the European farms.<sup>77</sup> Signing on as squatters was thus a way of obtaining pasture for their livestock.<sup>78</sup> In fact most Keiyo preferred squatter labour to wage labour. As squatters, they had right to cultivate part of the land and to use it for grazing their livestock. The grazing grounds found in settler farms were generally referred to as kap-blue (a Keiyo-term for grazing lands available in settler farms).<sup>79</sup> Living in a marginal area sometimes forced the Keiyo to seek employment on European farms, especially during periods of famine usually brought on by severe droughts common to the area. The famines of 1918-19, 1926, and 1930 are remembered as having been the most severe.<sup>80</sup> It is, however, important to note that unlike the Kikuyu, squatting for the Keiyo was viewed as a temporary measure. It did not involve a complete severing of physical ties with their original homelands. The Keiyo had their feet in two camps, their places of work and their areas of origin.<sup>81</sup>

Those who were not willing to register as squatters devised ways and means of grazing their cattle on settler farms or in the forest grades. Popular for those bordering the farms or the forest was to graze their cattle in the Grogan Concession amid the danger of confiscation or

imprisonment. Mzee Chebaige moved with his father's cattle to Wellwood's farm near Kipkabus in the 1930s. The farm being so wide, he was able to graze the livestock unnoticed for a whole week. Then he claims he was betrayed by a Kipnvapara (foreman). Wellwood accompanied by his fierce dogs ambushed him. The dogs played with him tearing his clothes. His father's livestock were confiscated by Wellwood. He was charged in a Eldoret court and sentenced to nine months for trespassing.<sup>82</sup>

Isaiah Chesang has also examined the consequences of land alienation on the Keiyo. He argues that following the settlement of the Uasin Gishu Plateau by Europeans, there emerged a competition among the Keiyo for grazing grassland, a competition which ended with the colonial office making the Keiyo subservient and integral to the colonial settler economy (his emphasis).<sup>83</sup> Evidence indicates, however, that the Keiyo were made only partially subservient and were never fully integrated into the settler economy. Most Keiyo were never dependent on the settler economy save for labouring to get grassland and to obtain tax money. This is illustrated by the fact that the Keiyo laboured on the settler farms and estates for not more than two months per year. This was a phenomenon that greatly distressed both the settlers and the colonial administration. In other words those who prolonged their stay as squatters did so purely for the purposes of accumulating wealth through stock rearing. Thus the Keiyo squatters used

the settlers for their own ends.

One cannot, however, ignore the fact that some Keiyo were fully coopted into the settler economy. One exceptional case was of one informant.<sup>84</sup> A scourge of smallpox wiped out his whole family long before the boriet ab Jerman nebo tai (First World War). He managed to survive alone and sought refuge among the Nandi. On his way a settler nicknamed Kipukan (Van der Heyden) offered him employment. He was then about ten years old and served the settler until 1963 when the settler left the country after independence.<sup>85</sup> Arap Kandie was one individual who developed himself economically outside the reserve and became quite successful despite the odds. As he put it:

I began by washing dishes, and then a garden boy. I was promoted later to a chief cook. This is where I got married and raised a family. Trouble began when I sent my children to school in the 1930s. The settler was not amused. He began slapping me on a daily basis and threatened me with eviction, if I did not withdraw my children from school. My friend Kiptoo Chirchir got me a farm in Chepkorio in case the threat became real. If I grew maize on the farm, he would wait until they ripen before destroying the crop by firing from his gun. In spite of everything, I have managed to educate my 24 children to a minimum of form four level.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, some Keiyo became squatters, while others were content to remain in the reserve trespassing to graze on the settler farms.

There were indeed other Keiyo who could not fit into the above scheme. A number of Keiyo emigrated with their livestock to Cherangany hills. Sometime in the 1920s the

colonial government informed the Keiyo that Cherangany hills had been added to their reserves. There was a wave of migration with information reaching the Keiyo reserve on the availability of sufficient grass. However, the hopes raised by the government proved to be immature. None of the lands were to be exchanged and the Keiyo were barred from emigrating to Cherangany. It was argued by the colonial administration that the Native Lands Trust Ordinance made no provision for exchanges.<sup>87</sup> However, before the halt in emigration to Cherangany one of my informants claims that:

I went to Cherangany in the early 1930s. My land in the reserve was not sufficient to graze my eighty head of cattle. Chief Cheptorus arap Lenja was also forcing us to reduce our stock. They were even telling us to get employment on settler farms. I had never cultivated in my life and could never do so. That is for women and weaklings. All the time they were threatening us with imprisonment. I distributed my cattle among my brothers and moved to Cherangany despite the restrictions on the number of stock. There, I acquired a huge chunk of unclaimed land. I married from the neighbouring Pokot and became accepted.<sup>88</sup>

Another option open to the Keiyo was to rent grazing grounds. Depending on the attitude of the various conservators of forests, the Keiyo paid twenty cents in a Concession per cow per month to graze. Those with goats were not allowed, and prices were increased in the case of a large number of applicants. Some rented the grazing, while others who could not afford the rent devised ways of circumventing those unfavourable colonial policies.<sup>89</sup> The Keiyo could graze at night or early in the morning when least likely to be

caught. They could cut the wire fence to enable their stock to get through. According to one of the affected settlers, J.W. Reid of Kipkabus, the Keiyo would always take the risk of being caught in order to graze their livestock.<sup>90</sup>

At times, however, reaction from the settlers took a violent turn. Kiptoo Chirchir recalls how Bwana Ulaya (Mr. C.J. Theunissen) would go around beating the herdsboy and at times demanding compensation. One day, he apprehended a herdsboy and tied him up outside his granary for three days without food.<sup>91</sup> In cases where the culprit was not apprehended villages under headmen were forced to pay a levy. As it were, the imposition of a levy was vehemently rejected by the Keiyo. In the 1930s Daniel Sawe Kibiab, a headman and later chief, together with Chesire arap Chepnyakwol, a member of the L.N.C. argued that such generalised levies would not stop people from grazing in the concession.<sup>92</sup>

The colonial administration at Tambach was not, however, averse to settler victimisation of the Keiyo. For instance there was the case of G.J. Macdonald of Sergoit who was cautioned by the District Commissioner Tambach in 1939:

Your remedy of trespass does not lie in impounding the offending animals and you are not within your rights in demanding immediate compensation. You must understand that you cannot go on shooting goats and young steers. Please realise that farm cattle do stray into the reserve....<sup>93</sup>

Macdonald was infuriated and claimed that the District Commissioner, Mr. Storr-Fox was a 'Pro-native':

Since you support the natives in sabotage and theft by denying there had been any, I shall have to deal with it myself, whether you like it or not. Now I refuse to meet you in anyway and my boys have orders not to give you any information but to report to me if you should visit the farm again. The attitude of Tambach who in my experience behave like a hen with one chick renders life extremely difficult.<sup>94</sup>

True to colonial policy of supporting the settlers, the District Commissioner was very remorseful.

Should you be able to come to Tambach while I am at home - I will see that there are adequate stocks of home bread mead which is the stuff which made our ancestors grow those wings on the huts, to make us forget any quarrels which we might ever have had.<sup>95</sup>

The District Commissioner was thus ready to compromise Keiyo interests to please European settlers. Storrs Fox had learnt a lesson that no amount of appeasement would lessen settler intimidation of the Keiyo.

Coupled with the problem of a shortage grazing land was the denial of access to water and salt licks. Lake Sergoit and the salt lick at Kipkabus had all along provided the Keiyo with their requirements. However, with the establishment of settler farms, all the access routes were blocked. Arap Chelagat recounted the great losses he suffered. The only other available salt licks were found in the Kerio Valley at N'gentui and Chebilat. The distance travelled led to the deaths of a large number of livestock.<sup>96</sup> The obstructive presence of settlers drove a serious wedge between the Keiyo, the settlers and the various district officials. In all cases of dealing with access to the salt licks and watering points,

the settlers prevailed by claiming that Keiyo cattle were infected with ticks and could infect their own. The colonial administration went further and through the veterinary department imposed a quarantine on the movement of cattle for a number of years in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>97</sup>

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 led to further demands on the Keiyo. They were called upon to hand over livestock and to labour in the settler farms as their contribution to the 'war effort'.

### Conclusion

It was the arrival of the British settlers from 1904 onwards that was to create fundamental changes of Keiyo land use and custom. Land was no longer the single most important source of production and consumption. Working as labourers and as squatters detached certain Keiyo from their land. Individual holdings began in the highland plateau through fencing. For those who joined the military, government service or as trader-businessmen, land became another factor of production rather than the only source of survival.

Perhaps the salient point to note is that the colonial government was ignorant of the Keiyo perception of land. Under pressure from the settlers, the colonial administration made sure that the Keiyo were sandwiched between the escarpment and the forest. However, as has been argued here, in spite of restrictions and constraints the Keiyo were not



overwhelmed. They continually devised ways of circumventing colonial control. As the colonial period progressed, so the Keiyo also became bold in demanding a return of the concession while at the same time enjoying access to grazing. As has hitherto been stated, the Keiyo were inconvenienced but never felt totally constrained by the Grogan Concession. In fact the more progressive members of the Keiyo society engaged in staking out large areas of land on the Irong and Chepkorio plains. These were turned into private maize, wheat and potato farms in full competition with the European settlers. How they managed to adapt to a market and wage economy will be the subject of subsequent chapters.

Notes

1. Meek, C.K., Land Law and Custom in the Colonies, O.U.P., London, 1946, p.V.
2. Tignor, R., The Colonial Transformation of Kenya, p. 15.
3. Van Zwanenberg, R.M.A., Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya, 1919-1939, EALB, 1975, p. 234.
4. Gerrit Green, in his thesis, "The Afrikaners in Kenya, 1903-1969", unpublished PhD dissertation, Michigan State University, 1974 has detailed the nature and extent of Keiyo contact with the Afrikaners in Uasin Gishu plateau, see pp. 32-54 of the dissertation.
5. Okoth Ogendo, H.W.O., "The Political Economy of Land Law - a essay in the Legal Organisation of Underdevelopment in Kenya, 1895-1974", Ph.D thesis, School of Law, Yale University, 1978, p. 14.
6. B.A. Ogot, "Kenya under the British, 1895 to 1968" in Ogot, B.A., (ed) Zamani, pp. 249-294.
7. Ibid p. 252. - A.T. Matson gives details of very captivating movements by Jackson. Beginning on 6 August 1889 Jackson left Machakos with 535 men. They marched through Naivasha, the Mau forest, Sotik, Luoland, Mumias Kingdom, Mt. Elgon, Keiyo, Nandi and Turkana among others. Information found in his book, Nandi Resistance to British Rule, pp. 62-68.
8. Wolff, R., Britain and Kenya, 1870-1930, pp. 47-48.
9. Ibid, p. 92.
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12. Mbithi, P., and Barnes, C., Spontaneous Settlement Problem in Kenya, EALB, Nairobi, 1975, p. 40.
13. Ochieng, W.R., A History of Kenya, Macmillan, Kenya, 1985, pp. 107-108.
14. Ochieng, W.R., The Second Word, p. 111.
15. Van Zwanenberg, R.M.A. and King, A., p. 34.

16. Ibid, p. 37.
17. Sorrenson, M.P.K., The Origins of European Settlement in Kenya, p. 229.
18. Van Zwanenberg, R.M.A., Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya, p. 234.
19. Kanogo, T., Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, p. 28.
20. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989.
21. Chesang, I.C., p. xii.
22. Van Zwanenberg, R.M.A., Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya, p. 234.
23. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 30.12.1989.
24. Republic of Kenya, Kenya Population Census 1989, Enumerators Instructions Manual, p. 31.
25. Breen, M.R., "The Politics of Land. The Kenya Land Commission (1932-33) and its effects on Land Politics in Kenya", unpublished PhD thesis, Michigan State University, 1976, p. 4.
26. Massam, J.A., p. 19.
27. Ibid, pp. 23-24.
28. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 23.12.1989.
29. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 12.11.89 and Elijah Chemweno, 11.11.1989.
30. This quotation and the information in the following paragraphs come from DC/UG/2/1, Political Record Book, 1909-1933, p. 2.
31. Ibid.
32. Groen, Gerrit, "The Afrikaners in Kenya, 1903-1969" Unpublished PhD dissertation, Michigan State University, 1974, pp. 39-57.
33. Ibid.
34. From the "Leader of British East Africa" of July 18, 1908, p. 4, quoted by Groen Gerrit pp. 59-61.

35. KNA, DC/UG/2/1 Political Record File, p. 5. The information has also been quoted by Groen, G. p. 115.
36. Groen, G., p. 115.
37. L.B.E.A. Newspaper dated 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1911 and 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1911, p. 13.
38. Groen G., p. Op. cit.
39. KNA District Annual Report 1911-1916 DC/UG/1/1. The meeting held on farm 64 near Eldoret River it was attended by 43 settlers whose names are listed in the report. See also Kenya Population Census 1989, Enumerators Instructors Manual, p. 31.
40. KNA DC/UG/2/1 1909-1933, District Annual Report, p. 7. For further information see KNA Medical Department report on "Elgeyo-Marakwet Expedition Report No. 45/36 nos. 1/705 written on 21.3.1912.
41. Ochieng, W.R., A History of Kenya, p. 88. A point that needs to be qualified is that no empirical evidence was adduced to show that the murder of Van Breda was motivated by hatred of foreigners over alienation of land. However, evidence from the time of initial white settlement shows that Keiyo were opposed to a denial of grazing and cultivation rights.
42. R.M.A. Van Zwanenberg, "The economic response of Kenya Africans to European settlement 1903-1939", in Politics and Nationalism in Colonial Kenya, Ogot, B.A. (ed) Nairobi, 1972, p. 225.
43. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 9.7.1987.
44. KNA, DC/UG/2/1/UG District Political Record File - Africans, p. 11.
45. KNA, DC/ELGM/2/1 Elgeyo-Marakwet District handing-over Report, 1921.
46. Groen, G., p. 151-152. The name should be spelled Kiptoo and not Kipto. I have a feeling that this Kiptoo is the William Kiptoo Chirchir, interviewed widely for this thesis. As claimed by Groen, Kiptoo is very clear-minded. This assertion, however, is hypothetical and could be another Kiptoo.

47. Massam, J.A., pp. 26-29. According to Massam the trouble was inspired by a witchdoctor known as Yator son of Kipkirus. No evidence was adduced. Despite his subjectivity Massam's description makes interesting reading.
48. K.N.A., DC/UG/2/1, UG District Political Record File, p. 4
49. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 9.7.1987.
50. Ibid. The joke at present is that when a child makes a mistake, he is made to swear by the same words of 'kwek' (never).
51. Massam, J.A. pp. 127-131.
52. KNA Barton-Hosking Memorandum 1921-1922 relating to Elgeyo rights in the EMS Grogan-Lingham Concession.
53. O.I. Elijah Chemweno, 12.11.1989, Kipchamasis Tireito, 26.12.1989, Kiptoo Chirchir, 23.12.1989 and John Chesire, 13.11.1989. Kiptoo Chirchir acknowledges the fact that Grogan's wit fooled the world into thinking that he had made an epic journey from the Cape to Cairo, thus basking in undeserved glory.
54. For a stimulating and precise biography of Grogan see, Ann E. Frontera, Persistence and Change: A History of Taveta, African Studies Association, 1978, pp. 30-34.
55. Wymer, N. The man from the Cape, Evans Brothers, London, pp. 137-143.
56. KNA, Ref. No. 279 L.N.D. 16/3 of 19.4.1932.
57. KNA, RVP Annual Report memo from P.C., F.W. Isaac, in 1922 to Chief Native Commissioner, Nairobi.
58. J.A. Massam, the then District Commissioner in 1922 acknowledged that the Keiyo had been grazing on the plateau since 1850, op. cit p. 23.
59. KNA No. MIL. 21/10 D.C. Tambach, 14.7.1943 to P.C. Nakuru,  
p. 1.
60. KNA, DC/TAMB/NO.178/17/2/40. Also referred to in The Barton-Hoskins Memorandum, p. 4.
61. Oral interview by Hosking Acting D.C., Eldama Ravine, on 28.9.1921.

62. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989.
63. KNA, Hosking-Barton Memorandum.
64. See Rita M. Breen, "The Politics of Land: The Kenya Land Commission (1932-1933) and its effects on Land Policy in Kenya, unpublished PhD dissertation, Michigan State University 1976. Incidentally, Breen had proposed a topic entitled "The Reaction of Keiyo (Elgeyo) to colonial land and development policies". It is likely she later opted for the above title which covered the whole country. Found in Janmohammed, K., and Ochieng, W.R. (eds) Kenya Historical Review, Vol. 1 No. 1, 1974.
65. O.I. Elijah Chemweno, 12.11.1989.
66. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989. For verbatim evidence given to the Commission see The Kenya Land Commission evidence, 1946, 1957, 1958, 1961 and 1965. This deal with the land each location wanted returned and also the Grogan Concession.
67. Report of the Kenya Land Commission, 1933, pp. 263-269.
68. KNA, DC/TAMB/2/10/8, Kendu Salt Lick, 1929-1956, pp. 1-36
69. Ochieng, W.R., The Second Word, p. 118.
70. Breen, R.M., p. 202.
71. Zeleza, T., 'The establishment of colonial rule, 1905-1920' in A modern History of Kenya, Ochieng, W.R., (ed).
72. Frontera, A., Persistence and Change, p. 41.
73. Ibid:
74. See Massam, J., p. 111. However, his argument that the Keiyo would prefer each year to risk months of semi-starvation rather than break more land or introduce new foodstuffs is unfounded.
75. The same applied to the Tugen in the Baringo plains, neighbours of the Keiyo. Here there was a complex interaction of African herder, settler and colonial administrator. See, for example, David Anderson's "Herder, Settler and Colonial Rule...."
76. Kanogo, T., pp. 27-28.
77. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/1 Annual Report 1920-1927, p. 4.

78. Op. cit.
79. O.I. Tororei Tuilonget, 10.11.1989.
80. Ibid.
81. See Kanogo, Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, p. 28. She, however, hastens to add that not all Kikuyu squatters severed all ties with Central Province (my emphasis).
82. O.I. Mzee Chebaigei, 6.10.1989.
83. Chesang, I.C., pp. xvii-xviii.
84. Toroitich Kandie, the informant passed away in 1989 when he was about ninety years old. He was interviewed on 16.7.1987.
85. Ibid. Until his death, he used to maintain contact with his former employer's children who now live in London.
86. Ibid.
87. Hosking-Barton Memorandum.
88. O.I. Chebokel Kipkenei on 16.1.1990. The informant is the author's grandfather.
89. KNA DC/ELGM/1/1 1926 Annual Report, p. 13.
90. KNA DC/TAMB/1/7/1, Administration Labour Complaints File 1930-1938, pp. 4.14.
91. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989.
92. KNA, DC/TAMB/1/7/1, Op. cit.
93. KNA, DC/TAMB/1/1/3, 1929-1940 Monthly Intelligence Reports, p. 7.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid. p. 10
96. O.I. Arap Chelagat, 6.9.1989.
97. KNA/DC/ELGM/1/3/1930-1939, Annual Report, p.2.

CHAPTER FOURTHE KEIYO AND WAGE LABOUR, 1902-1939Keiyo Pioneer Labour up to 1920

The introduction of migrant wage-labour into Kenya has been discussed by various scholars.<sup>1</sup> Among them, Richard Wolff has identified three major stages in the transformation of the African population into a wage-labour force between 1895 and 1930. The first stage, 1895 to 1914, saw the decision by the colonial government to establish settler dominated agriculture as the basis of Kenya's economy. The second stage, 1914 to 1919, coincided with the mobilization of the Carrier Corps for war. The third stage, 1919 to 1930 which continued up to 1939, saw the establishment of a regular labour supply.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter aims to discuss the various demands for Keiyo labour, in government offices, the military, railway construction and on European farms. Mention is also made of the various methods used by the colonial state to "separate the producer from his means of production and to force him to labour for capital."<sup>3</sup> Further, the chapter seeks to examine the conditions under which migrant labourers and squatters operated. These related to wages, food, housing, discipline and health services. The inevitability of Keiyo contact with European farmers was led by two factors namely, land and labour. These needs were made more acute by the fact that the



settlers had limited capital while their agricultural technology was rudimentary. The settlers in Uasin Gishu, who bordered the Keiyo, therefore aimed at reaping a comparative advantage through alienation of land and the use of cheap labour. J.A. Massam, in the 1920s, noted the following concerning Keiyo labour:

The Elgeyo are, like most natives quick to learn mechanical work. They are ... experts at handling cattle, and become good drivers for farm and transport. Properly handled, they are good labourers, as European farmers on the plateau have proved. The sub-contractors who built the Uasin Gishu railway found them very satisfactory except for the heaviest work-breaking metal for ballast, for instance, at which work, they were physically incapable of competing with the hefty Kavirondo. An employer able to handle natives finds the Elgeyo easy to manage. It is granted that they are obdurate and difficult if they feel they have a grievance - and certainly they will not work in districts which are far from their homes.<sup>4</sup>

Job Cheburet recalls how the first group of settlers in the 1910s employed a negligible number of Africans compared to settlers in the 1920s after the First World War. Much of the work was done for themselves with the assistance of one or two Africans. These duties included clearing the ground, building houses and domestic chores.<sup>5</sup> The first pioneer settlers lacked the capital necessary for the employment of a large labour-force. A very large portion of these pioneers came from South Africa. They are reported to have run their own ox-wagon transport service and made their own shoes and implements, and were described as "poor-employers".<sup>6</sup> Many of the settlers were just beginning their agricultural production

and were anxious to keep operating costs low. They turned to the colonial government for assistance in obtaining cheap labour that would not threaten settler profit-making. Equally important was the fact that the colonial state was determined to ensure the success of European farming. The result was the expulsion of the Keiyo from alienated lands, the imposition of taxation and the 'Northey Circulars', all reflecting a desire by the colonial government to achieve settler success.<sup>7</sup>

By 1912 a severe labour shortage had hit settler agriculture. This prompted the state to set up a commission to investigate the labour problem and make recommendations. The evidence obtained has been described as "a mine of information" on prevailing labour practices and European views of African labour.<sup>8</sup> The labour shortages were found to have been a result of a variety of factors. These included increased demand, ill-treatment, poor housing and low wages among others. Mr. E. Engelbrecht, a settler from Uasin Gishu, gave evidence to the commission and argued that on average he paid Rs. 4/= and food to all his workers. He proposed that to stimulate an increase in wage-labourers, the government should increase taxation to Rs. 15/=: encourage of squatter labour and reduce the area of the reserves.<sup>9</sup>

The introduction of various ways to stimulate labour did not keep the Keiyo perpetually in the service of the settlers. It did not stop them from active participation in the exploitation of their own resources in the reserve or on the

escarpment ledges. Some worked for only a few months in a year before deserting. Those who chose squatter labour were basically interested in the available grazing opportunities.<sup>10</sup> In addition it should be noted that those who opted for migrant wage-labour were to become wealthy relative to those who opted to remain in the reserve. The money obtained from their savings was used to open retail shops and butcheries, do livestock trading and large-scale farming, among other entrepreneurial activities.

The major employing agencies among the Keiyo were the colonial administration, the Public Works Department, the railways and of course the settlers who needed labour for their cash-crop production and herding.

With the setting up of administrative headquarters in Eldama Ravine and Eldoret before 1919, the colonial administration employed some Keiyo as mail runners, messengers and summon servers. The District Commissioner further required a body of chiefs, headmen, interpreters and hut counters. The former two were appointed from among the local elders. Their duties included mainly tax collection and the maintenance of law and order together with flushing out those members suspected of possessing ritual powers. The following is a list of Keiyo chiefs in 1910-1911:

Table 4    List of Kerio Chiefs 1910-11

NAME	LOCATION
1. Kimoning arap Cherono	Mutei
2. Limo arap Mosit	Metkei
3. Cheptorus arap Kimetkot	Kabkwan
4. Kotut arap Chebos	Maoi
5. Chepkurgat arap Chesang	Tumeiyo
6. Kipsang arap Kapkoros	Kowochi
7. Chebii arap Kapkwonot	Mwen
8. Kiburur arap Kaptalai	Marichor
9. Rotich arap Kipsano	Sego
10. Kapkutut arap Kimarian	Chan'gach
11. Rotich arap Chesire	Rokocho
12. Letuk arap Chepn'gorem	Irong
13. Lesio arap Menetu	Kipkoiwa
14. Cheptalam arap Kimoron	Kapchemutwa
15. Chemitei Bulgalik	Kapsaniak

Source: KNA DC/ELGM/3/1/2 1909-1915 Political Record Book p. 7.

Interpreters and the hut counters were selected not from the Keiyo, but from among the Swahili and Somali who had settled at Eldama Ravine. The chiefs received Rs. about 20/= per month while the hut counters and the interpreters received a comparatively higher wage of Rs. 30/= per month.<sup>11</sup> This disparity is an indicator of the varied opinion in which the

colonial administration held the Keiyo. Compared to other chiefs the Keiyo earned less. For instance in 1909 a Kamba chief Mboli wa Methangi, senior headman in Ulu, used to receive Rs. 40/= per month. While in Kisumu District, in 1910, Chief Ndeda of Gem received Rs. 40/= per month. Chief Kinyanjui of Kiambu was receiving Rs. 100/= per month in the same year.<sup>12</sup> The criterion used was what the D.O. or a D.C. thought was an individual's worth. However, the determining factor was the ability to collect taxes.

The Keiyo who served in the Public Works Department (P.W.D.) were mobus (prisoners). Kipchamasis Tireito who was jailed for one year and six months after the First World War for stealing a goat learnt how to work as a mason. On his release he was employed by the P.W.D. as a mason and to supervise other mobus serving jail terms. They were used in the construction of roads linking Eldoret and the settlement areas. Working for the P.W.D. became unpopular because of the heavy work involved.<sup>13</sup> Railway construction and military service became the most popular because working conditions were better in terms of pay, housing and health care.

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, most Keiyo were conscripted to service. Arap Cheptulil recalls the boriet ab Jeruman ne botai, (the first German war). He and his colleagues were recruited by Chief Kiburur Kaptalai at Chepkorio. He served in Tanganyika and Ethiopia with a pay of Sh.12 per month. At Kariokor in Nairobi, they had joined

other Africans who in most cases were used as porters since they were rarely allowed to use guns.<sup>14</sup>

The construction of the Uasin Gishu railway from Nakuru to Eldoret through Timboroa between 1921 and 1924 provided the Keiyo with another employment opportunity. Asked why he preferred working for the railways rather than on settler farms Chemwotei Chepchoke stated:

... the Nyapara (foreman) in a settler farm would walk up and down the farm with a stick. You work for three months without pay. When you ask, you are flogged with a sjambok. If one does not complete a task for the day, he gets no ration. At the settler farms, pay was three shillings while at the railway construction we got more than ten shillings and no harassment.<sup>15</sup>

It is not certain, however, how many sought employment in railway construction. For instance, in 1925 the Secretary of State agreed that compulsory labour should be employed on the extension of the Uasin Gishu railway line. In 1920 the government voted pounds 1,400,000 for the construction of the extension. The largest number of labourers employed in any one month was 1500.<sup>16</sup> Up until the building of the extension line Uasin Gishu settlers were dependent on wagon transport to move their produce to the railway head at Londiani, 80 kilometres from Eldoret. After the war, the soldiers' settlement scheme led to an increase in settlement on the plateau.<sup>17</sup> The need for a railway then became urgent, which may explain the use of compulsory African labour to supplement the Indian labour.

The beginning of the First World War in 1914 saw the establishment of the first plantations in Uasin Gishu. These were mainly concerned with the growing of flax and wattle which were used during the war. Flax was grown within the Kaptagat-Kipkabus region while wattle was grown near Eldoret town and in the estates of Eureka and Kapsiliat. According to R.D. Wolff, the brief spurt in flax cultivation in the 1920s was a response to high prices caused by the war-time interruption of flax exports from Russia and Belgium. After the war, prices fell, ruining almost all the Kenya flax farmers.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from wattle and flax, the settlers also relied on commodities which could give them the best return. In Uasin Gishu plateau, apart from livestock keeping, the settlers grew maize, wheat, barley, oats, potatoes and sisal. And since the settlers could not work on their farms themselves, they required cheap labour. In the pursuit of this goal, the following methods were generally applied: the creation of squatter labourers, taxation, the 'kipande' system, and recruitment by chiefs. The Keiyo found themselves confronted in all these processes and sought labour in the Uasin Gishu plateau as a response to the above colonial initiatives.

### Keiyo Squatters

The full effect of the alienation of Keiyo lands and the creation of reserves in 1905 was not seriously felt until the

1920s. A detailed analysis of land loss among the Keiyo has been discussed in the preceding chapter. Suffice it to mention here the extent to which land loss pushed the Keiyo into wage-labour and squatterdom.

The Keiyo land expropriated to the European settlers and the Grogan Concession was situated in the region most favourable to livestock production. In addition, the Uasin Gishu line of the Uganda railway was constructed across the most fertile and watered areas of the plateau. Between 1912 and 1913 the Keiyo were estimated to be 10,075 in number occupying a reserve of 400 square miles. On average, there were 25 people per square mile.<sup>19</sup> In 1922, 328 square miles of the reserve was alienated for the E.S.M. Grogan Concession.<sup>20</sup> This was a substantial land loss, leaving the Keiyo with only 72 square miles of land for grazing and cultivation.

The popular alternative became to sign on as resident labour on European farms. The movement towards squatting is first mentioned in the District Annual Report of 1925, and by 1926, 840 Keiyo were listed as squatters. By 1929 the report indicated that there were over 1000 Keiyo squatters in the plateau who held one third of the total cattle population on the European farms.<sup>21</sup> The Land Commission of 1932 found that the Keiyo had about 6000 head of stock on European farms and were in great need of pasture.<sup>22</sup> Tireito Chepkurgat was a squatter in 1923 at the farm of Captain Forster near Kaptagat.



He had signed a two year contract at the DC's office, Tambach. He moved in with seven cattle. His main duty was to herd his employers cows at a salary of two shillings per month.<sup>23</sup>

The District Commissioner at Tambach, wrote in the 1926 Annual Report that the Keiyo went out to squat not through any love of "Bwana Tom and Bwana Pete" but simply to get grazing for their cattle.<sup>24</sup> During these same years, the Marakwet did not go out to squat at all. This would seem to confirm that it was for the sake of the livestock that the Keiyo took to squatting. However, the 1918, Resident Native Labourers Ordinance (RNLO) had curtailed squatter independence. The fundamental provision of the ordinance according to Kanogo was the squatter's obligation to provide not less than 180 working days per year on a farm. In return for this, the worker and his family were allowed to live and cultivate a part of the settler's land for his own use.<sup>25</sup>

#### Keiyo Squatters, Circumstances and Relations with Settlers

The bulk of the settlers under whom the Keiyo served in Uasin Gishu as squatters came from South Africa. They brought with them fixed notions about land and the inequality of races.<sup>26</sup> These factors led to the racist mentality prevalent among these settlers, that the African be only regarded as an object and a source of cheap labour. Stories by the squatters of being flogged with the sjambok (oxen whip) by the Kaburu (South African settler) were common. The Keiyo nicknamed the

settlers according to their physical traits or character. The most common names were: Bwana Tumbo (hefty with a big stomach), Msomeno (saw), Kulomban (very proud), Mis mis (blinker), Kipsimbir (pimples), Bwana Fundi (Mr. Carpenter) Chepchai (one who likes tea), Bwana Maji (Mr. Water) and Kipkuktit (very ferocious).

Arrogant settlers could not retain their labourers or squatters for long. Desertion to the reserve or to other settler farms was common. One settler by the name of Cullen, who owned a farm near Kipkabus, was known for his harshness. When annoyed, he could shoot at the cattle and maize farms of the squatters and set his dogs to maul the squatters or his other labourers.<sup>27</sup> Another settler, Wellwood, denied the squatters access to the salt licks and water situated on his farm. In addition, the settlers preferred squatters with smaller herds of cattle in order to reduce the grazing stress. The settler farmers in the 1930s would no longer accommodate a herd of fifty cattle or more belonging to one resident labourer. Under the circumstances, the settler would send the squatter back to the reserve with the cattle already acquired.<sup>28</sup> The repatriation of squatters and cattle to the reserve, seriously strained the capacity of the reserve. The squatters, however, had to obtain a permit (pass) from the District Commissioner at Tambach, to re-enter the reserve with livestock. In the same vein, an individual who wanted to move onto a European farm in search of a possibility of

squatting also had to get permission from the District Commissioner. The work of the office of the District Commissioner entailed in dealing with squatters was described as enormous.<sup>29</sup>

There were two types of squatters, the single squatter who moved to squat leaving their families at home in the reserve, and those who were family squatters in the sense that they dwelt rather permanently with their families on European farms. The majority of the squatters of whichever kind, however, maintained close ties with their relations with frequent visits every month.

The settlers preferred certain categories of Keiyo as squatters. Young unmarried men were discouraged from being squatters and rarely did they obtain a permit from the District Commissioner. The only unmarried people who became squatters were those employed as garden boys, cooks and farm supervisors.<sup>30</sup> Issuing young unmarried men with permits to squat was discouraged on account of the prevalence of stock thefts. The general settler belief was that the temptation to steal cattle to pay dowry was high. In some cases, the settlers would not accept new squatters from the reserve; instead they allowed some of their long-serving casual labourers to graduate to become squatters, by allowing them to purchase livestock or to bring some in from the reserve. Even then, before a man was given permission to become a squatter he had to satisfy the District Commissioner at Tambach of the

following: that he had paid his current tax; that he was married; that he was only taking out cattle that were registered as his property; and finally, that he was of good character (that is, not blacklisted) and responsible. Persons who did not meet these conditions would be denied the right to squat.<sup>31</sup> All these controls were created by the colonial state and the settlers out of fear that unregulated squatterdom would interfere with the supply of labour by making the labourers economically independent.

Without adequate grazing on the settler farms, the Keiyo could hardly subsist the wage labour alone. On the other hand, the settlers restricted the numbers of squatters. In order to enhance their position, the Keiyo devised ways and means of circumventing colonial restrictions on the number of cattle to be grazed. A case was told of a boy aged about sixteen years. He appeared at the District Commissioner's office at Tambach to sign a squatter's contract. He went with his elder sister whom he claimed was his wife. He was allowed to graze twenty head of cattle. His father also had a squatter's contract on another farm in the district.<sup>32</sup> It is evidently obvious that the family were leaving the reserve only to obtain grazing for their cattle.

Once settled, Keiyo squatters did not simply graze cattle. They also grew crops like maize and potatoes. While they could go any distance to graze, squatters were limited to two acres of land for cultivation. According to Toroitich

Kandie, the settlers did not tolerate progressive squatters. A squatter who had healthy livestock and farm produce risked them being destroyed by shooting or burning by an enraged settler.<sup>33</sup> One squatter, nicknamed Kikono (the Swahili term for arm) claimed that he had his hand tied with a metal rod. Whereas the settler accused him of stealing cattle from another squatter, he avers that the settler actually envied his healthy green looking maize which was far superior to the settler's having used composed manure from his cowshed. The arm was permanently paralysed.<sup>34</sup>

A major impediment facing squatters was the fact that the settlers did not tolerate progressive squatters. This was compounded by the fact that squatters could not change their employers at will. Thus, a squatter on contract to a rough settler like the one mentioned above, would suffer, for he could neither change places nor go back to the reserve which was characterised by a shortage of pasture. In addition, to curtail their ability to produce and accumulate wealth, squatters were not allowed to sell or dispose of any of their produce without first notifying the settler.<sup>35</sup> A settler would then buy the produce at a very low price. Sometimes they could even refuse to pay on the pretext that the Keiyo had trespassed on the farm.

Apart from facing serious restrictions on their economic production as squatters, the Keiyo also faced stiff competition from the Nandi. The Nandi had begun to occupy the

southwest part of the plateau as squatters in the 1920s. By 1930, some Nandi were replacing Keiyo squatters on the eastern side of the plateau. The settlers had a preference for the Nandi as squatters for reasons which are not altogether clear. Unlike the Keiyo the Nandi tended to be permanent on the settler farms while the Keiyo frequented the reserve to dispose of some livestock or bring others. The settlers recommended the return of some Keiyo with their livestock to the reserve. The economic depression of the 1930s added impetus which saw several Keiyo moving to the reserve, while others moved to Cherangani, to Rongai and while others resisted. The Keiyo felt that the Nandi had squatted on farms they rightly regarded as theirs. Tension between the Keiyo and the Nandi ran high with mutual accusation of cattle thefts. The District Commissioner at Tambach became alarmed for fear that any physical confrontation between the two societies would be against settler interests. In 1937, the Chief Native Commissioner visited Tambach in an attempt to arbitrate, warning the Keiyo and the Nandi of dire consequences if law and order was broken. A number of Keiyo described as 'agitators' were arrested and charged. They were detained in Tambach and later used in the construction of the school and hospital.<sup>36</sup>

Following the depression of the 1930s, the settlers began to treat their squatters more harshly. There was available now a pool of labour seekers from which the settlers could

chose. Squatter labour was no longer a critical source of obtaining labourers. C.D. Cullen, a settler based at Kipkabus, was the embodiment of settler mistreatment of the Keiyo squatters and other labourers. At one time, he sacked all the workers in his farm and described the Keiyo as the "most useless labour in the whole of Kenya".<sup>37</sup> He accused the Keiyo of coming late for work, and of being so lazy that they could only weed six lines of pyrethrum forty yards long, that while one Kikuyu employee could weed ten lines a day, five Keiyo could only weed two and a half lines a day.<sup>38</sup> Cullen was reported to have frequently shot at his squatters' livestock when enraged. He was fined for the offence with a further reprimand from the District Commissioner at Tambach, warning him of taking the law into his own hands. Cullen reacted to this characteristically. He informed the District Commissioner that: "I shall have to take such action as I think fit. I dealt with them pretty drastically in 1939. Now I am still capable of making things extremely unpleasant for the Keiyo".<sup>39</sup> The Keiyo had at the time reacted sharply after the shooting of a cow by Cullen. An attempt to set fire to his house and wheat stacks had been made, which infuriated Cullen into shooting a cow.<sup>40</sup>

#### Squatters and the great depression

In the years 1929-1939 agricultural prices fell due to the world depression.<sup>41</sup> Keiyo squatters were hit hard

economically. Apart from the reluctance of the settlers to retain them as squatters, wages also decreased substantially. Before the depression, wages varied from Rs. 8/= to 12/= per month with posho or about 15/= without posho and 2/= extra for the Marakwet on what was described as 'humanitarian grounds'. In the 1930s wages slumped to an average of 6/= per ticket plus rations.<sup>42</sup> Scores of squatters who returned with their accumulated stock threw an added burden on the already depleted grazing available within the reserve. By 1932 there was little demand for labour. Those working were being paid a mere 5/= plus posho. Employment was difficult to get and the settlers took the opportunity to underpay.<sup>43</sup>

With the economic depression in the 1930s, the outlook for squatters became very bleak. Commodity prices declined and settler farmers needed to minimize expenditure. As the prices of settler crops dropped in the world market, so did the settlers' commercial production for export. The settlers reduced wages, and advocated the reduction or elimination of squatter stock, with the argument that it might infest settler stock with diseases. This campaign for reduction of stock came to be known as kifaqio among Kikuyu squatters in the Rift Valley.<sup>44</sup> Since the reserve was already overstocked, the Keiyo devised various methods to ensure that their livestock survived. Compounding the dilemma of the squatters, was the presence of Nandi squatters, who gave them fierce competition. According to Chelagat arap Muzee, who was a squatter, many



squatters did not return their livestock to the reserve. Instead they squatted illegally on land rarely visited by the settler. They could also collude with their colleagues who worked for a more humane settler to graze livestock on their behalf.<sup>45</sup> In some cases, however, squatters simply drifted back to the reserve or to the escarpment ledge, while others sold their livestock and went into business or trade.

The colonial administration at Tambach did not make things better for the Keiyo squatters. They were further squeezed through increased taxation. For instance in 1932, when Keiyo purchasing power had been greatly reduced, the colonial officials at Tambach declared that Shs.94,392 had been collected from the Keiyo as taxes. At the cattle auctions, a bullock sold at Shs.15/= instead of the going price of Shs.40/= before the depression. Kima arap Kimunji recalls selling his bull before the Second World War for Shs.12/= so as to pay tax to avoid being detained. He had contented himself to living in the reserve and had never ventured into squatter labour.<sup>46</sup> In 1934 there was slight improvement and the demand for cheap labour began, although wages had by then become as low as 4/= with posho. However, by then a few Keiyo were willing to attest as squatters.<sup>47</sup>

In 1935 the labour shortage became acute again, prompting the settlers to form the Sergoit and Moiben Valley Farmers Association. Their major goal was to pressurise the government into prevailing upon the Keiyo to accept wage-

labour rather than squatterdom.<sup>48</sup> Their attempts were frustrated. The Keiyo described the wages being paid as deplorable. For thirty days work they were to be paid between Sh.5/= and Sh.6/=. The Association then called for the creation of a kodi or kipande card (pass) system to coerce the Keiyo into wage-labour.<sup>49</sup> From 1938 onwards, the colonial officials based at Tambach placed upon themselves the onus of coercing the Keiyo. At all barazas (public meetings) the importance of young men going to work was stressed. However, rather than squatting or engaging in permanent employment, large numbers of Keiyo sought odd jobs of picking pyrethrum and harvesting potatoes on settler farms in Ainabkoi and Kipkabus. Some moved to Eldoret to work on the extensive wattle plantations cutting and stripping the bark.<sup>50</sup> Most Keiyo were no longer willing to work on settler farms, where pay was low with poor working conditions. It is estimated that by 1940 there were more than 3,000 Keiyo earning wages on various plantations, and 622 family squatters on the settler farms. In addition there were some 300 Keiyo serving in the military who remitted home about Shs.2000/= each a month to their families.<sup>51</sup>

By 1939 it had become possible for the colonial administration at Tambach to compile figures of Keiyo squatters from each location:

TABLE 5    Keiyo Family Squatters per Location 1939

LOCATION	NUMBER
1. Kibuswa	3
2. Kapchemutwa	47
3. Mutei Upper	62
4. Marichor	92
5. Metkei Upper	77
6. Cherangani and Sengwer	25
7. Irong	79
8. Rokocho	53
9. Tumeiyo	92
10. Metkei Lower	43
11. Mutei Lower	149
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Total	622
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Source: Letter from D.C. Tambach to the Chief Native Commissioner dated 18.9.1939, Ref. No. 740/adm./15/11.

From this table three broad conclusions can be drawn. First by 1939, a large number of Keiyo families still found squatting beneficial. Second, the settlers and the Nandi were not able to fully dispose the Keiyo squatters even during the depression. And finally, locations like Mutei, Marichor, Tumeiyo and Irong had high levels of squatters due to the fact that the Grogan Concession had alienated much of their grazing land.

vegetables.

### The Myth and Reality of Taxation in Keiyo Migrant Labour

The first records of Hut Tax collection from the Keiyo occur in 1910. The then acting District Commissioner from Eldama Ravine nicknamed Kiberenge visited the region and collected more than 400 rupees in hut tax. The tax collection had, however, begun in Kenya in 1901 when Lord Lansdowne, the Colonial Secretary sanctioned the levying of a tax not exceeding two rupees upon every African dwelling.<sup>55</sup> Taxation was initially meant to finance the administration of the country. By 1904, taxation had come to be used as a method to goad Africans into wage-labour.

Before 1918 the Keiyo were little affected by colonial taxation. Many simply moved to escarpment ledges and refused to pay taxes. Those who could not evade the last simply sold their livestock to pay taxes, particularly sheep, which were not so highly prized as cattle and goats. Grazing was still plentiful and even if one sold a cow, it would not threaten one's economic survival. It is no wonder then that the Labour Commission of 1911 and 1912 received testimony from European witnesses complaining that existing measures to induce Africans to work were ineffective.<sup>56</sup> The pressure on the colonial government from the settlers was based on the fact that taxation was the only remedy, arguing that: "only in this way can the cost of living be increased for the native, and

With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, there was a general appeal by the colonial administration to the African people to make their contribution in the "joint war effort". Such a contribution entailed labouring on settler farms, and particularly in the reaping of flax. They were further required to supply meat as their contribution to the war effort. Individual farmers also sent a recruiter to the District Commissioner, who in turn forwarded the recruiter to a particular chief with an order that the chief had to produce a given number of labourers.<sup>52</sup> The D.C. gave orders to the chiefs coded as secrets. One read:

Ukisha pata barua hii Sultani lazima aandike majina sita na wakikataa nitawashtaki.

Translated it read:

On receipt of this letter each chief must recruit six labourers. Failure will lead to prosecution.<sup>53</sup>

Those who were not willing to volunteer were conscripted. Tribal Police were employed to look for and arrest deserters. Those who resisted conscription were fined Sh.100/= or two months imprisonment.<sup>54</sup>

In retrospect, squatterdom among the Keiyo was a means to an end. From 1923, when much of their land was alienated by the E.M.S. Grogan Concession, what emerged was competition for grazing which lured some Keiyo into squatter labour. The Keiyo found alternatives to squatterdom, such as wage-labour, illegal grazing on the concession, migration to Cherangany, and the production of exchange commodities like pyrethrum and

... it is on this that the supply of labour and the price of labour depends".<sup>57</sup>

To protect themselves against heavy taxation, the Keiyo preferred to build their hamlets along the escarpment ledge, where they were not easily traceable. But the introduction of poll tax in 1910 widened the tax net. The Poll Tax Act provision of 1910 provided that every male of over sixteen years of age was liable to tax. Thus, even though a person did not own a hut, he had to pay a tax for his mere existence. Young men who had not been circumcised had few options of raising their tax money. Being under their father's dominion, they had not acquired individual livestock, which came only after circumcision. And as long as a person was over sixteen years old, he had to pay poll tax regardless of whether or not he had any income. As a result many young un-initiated boys left their home areas on their own to search for tax money, usually by engaging in wage-labour. After two or three months, they deserted their employment, after paying their tax which was normally collected by employers acting on behalf of the colonial administration. Some young men extended their period of employment for about six months, which enabled them to acquire extra money to purchase other commodities like clothes, blankets, household goods and even to purchase their own livestock for the payment of bride-price after circumcision.<sup>58</sup>

Statistics for both Keiyo and Marakwet tax payments between 1912 and 1919 have been recorded as follows:

TABLE 6    Keiyo Tax Figures for the Period 1912-1919

Year	R.S. (rupees)
1912-1913	3117
1913-1914	6741
1914-1915	12837
1915-1916	16197
1916-1917	17478
1917-1918	17546
1918-1919	17157

Source: KNA DC/ELGM/1/1 Elgeyo Marakwet Annual Reports 1912-1919.

From the above it can be concluded that tax collection increased progressively until the end of the First World War. Tax figures for 1919-1920 are not available but may have shown a further decline over 1918-1919.

The colonial administration maintained a very elaborate and thorough list of all those who defaulted in their tax payments. They went to great heights to ascertain the whereabouts of the defaulters. Most of the so-called defaulters were found to be prisoners in Nairobi, employees on settler farms and in the 1920s in the railway construction and plantations. Other defaulters were in the military either as policemen or in King's African Rifles. Mail runners were

exempted from paying tax for they obtained no pay for their services. From 1919 chiefs were used in the collection of taxes and the arrest of defaulters. A chief was described as good or bad in terms of the amount of taxes collected. Here is an example in tabular form to show the seriousness of tax collection under the colonial administration.



TABLE 7 Tax figure for the year 1919-1920

LOCATION	CHIEF	TAX LETTER	HUTS	POLLS	HUT TAX RS.	POLL TAX RS.	TOTAL COLLECTED
MUTEI	K. CHERONO	A	906	3	4530	190	4720
KAPSANIAK	C. BARGORIA	B	214	14	1070	70	1140
IRONG	K. BARTAI	C	254	12	1270	60	1330
KIPKOIWA	O. KIMURON	D	163	10	815	50	865
KAPCHEMUTWA	K. KIMURON	E	308	14	1540	70	1610
ROKOCHO	C. CHEMASE	F	378	5	1890	25	1915
KAPCHEMUTWA VALLEY	C. CHEPTOT	G	360	11	1800	55	1855
SEGO	R. KIPSARO	H	320	28	1600	140	1740
MARICHOR/ CHANGACH	K. KAPTALAI	I	730	35	3655	175	3830
MWEN	K. KIPTOE	J	85	1	425	5	430
KOWOCHI	K. KAPKOROR	K	144	13	720	65	785
TUMEIYO	C. CHESANG	L	316	13	1580	65	1645
MAOI	C. TUMO	M	206	13	1030	65	1095
KAPKWON	C. KIMITKUT	N	280	11	1400	55	1455
METKEI	L. MOSSUT	O	567	9	2835	45	2880
GRAND TOTAL			5232	227		1135	27295

Source: KNA Annual Report 1919-1920 ELGM/1/1

Up to 1921 the Keiyo were paying R.S. 3 for each hut and Sh.51,370/= was raised. The 1922 Annual Report shows a phenomenal increase of Hut tax rates from Sh.3 to Sh.5 and to Sh.10 and Sh.12 in one year. Those who paid earlier in January were lucky unlike those who by December were paying Sh.12. At the same time wages had fallen to Sh.6 per month.<sup>59</sup>

In 1922 the Chief Native Commissioner visited Tambach. Chief Kipkulei Bartai of Irong location complained that Keiyo labourers working in neighbouring farms were paid less than other groups. He argued that inspite of an increase of tax to Sh.12 the normal wage was still Sh.6 or Sh.7. The answer from the Chief Native Commissioner was that the Keiyo labourers were not worth as much as other groups. And that, "it lay with the Keiyo and the Marakwet to stay for several months until the farmer knew the value of their labour".<sup>60</sup> Under the circumstances Keiyo with livestock preferred to sell one to pay tax. For instance, in 1921, the Keiyo were estimated to have 21,862 head of cattle and 50,000 sheep and goats. Livestock could be sold profitably with one cow fetching between Sh.15 and Sh.20, while a goat or a sheep went for between Sh.4 and Sh.7.<sup>61</sup>

A cattle census was taken in 1921 within the fifteen locations. The results convinced the district officials that a robust cattle economy was inimical to wage-labour.

TABLE 8    Keiyo Cattle Census - 1921

Section	No. of Cattle
1. Mutei	2643
2. Kapsaniak	1015
3. Irong	2005
4. Kapkoiwa	919
5. Kapchemutwa	998
6. Rokocho	610
7. Segu	828
8. Changach	370
9. Marichor	2275
10. Mwen	480
11. Kowochi	492
12. Tumeiyo	1224
13. Maoi	1703
14. Kapkowin	3493
15. Metkei	2807
Grand Total	21862

Source KNA/ELGM/1/1 1921-1922 Annual Report

The 1922 alienation of Keiyo land to the Grogan Concession, negated Keiyo reliance on livestock to pay tax, save for the uninitiated young men who by virtue of age possessed no livestock but had to pay tax. The result of all

these was that the narrow strip of the reserve in the highlands became partially overstocked. This increased the number of livestock to be disposed, hence the choice to seek wage-labour for a short period, notwithstanding the low wages received.

The equation of tax, livestock and wage-labour is a complex one. It was widely acknowledged by the Keiyo that those left in the reserve rarely paid taxes. This, however, depended on particular chiefs. A chief knew know the tax defaulters but could be bribed with liquor. He could therefore ignore the pleas of the District Commissioner to arrest and prosecute tax defaulters. Others continued to gravitate to the escarpment ledge and could not easily be reached by tax-collectors. That, however, meant that their movement was restricted. Thus, to feel safe, certain Keiyo sold their livestock and grudgingly paid tax. Those on European farms were not so lucky. On Mrs. Irvine's farm in Songhor Valley, for example, the labourers received no pay whatsoever, the only remuneration for their work being "the liability accepted by the employer to pay their tax".<sup>62</sup> The same phenomenon was experienced by Kandie Toroitich who worked for two years without pay. He had sufficient grazing and was able to grow maize, potatoes and vegetables. When he demanded his wages, he was given tax receipts for the period.<sup>63</sup>

The 1932 Annual Report states that unlike the Kamba "who as a matter of honour" paid taxes promptly, the Keiyo appear

to consider tax evasion as a sport and a "matter of honour".<sup>64</sup>

In 1936 the District Commissioner, Tambach, had complained:

I consider on the whole the tribe are very poor tax payers, grudging every shilling paid to government and making no effort to find their tax until they find action is about to be taken against them. The majority of the chiefs fail to realize their obligation in the collection of tax and do nothing until a day or two previous to the arrival of an officer.<sup>65</sup>

During the period, of 1936 tribal police were sent to collect tax either by auctioning livestock or by conscription of men to go out to work on settler farms. The young men easily avoided the tribal police, who always came with a list of tax defaulters and armed with warrants for their arrest. On the other hand, the headmen who were accused of being slack and passive in tax collection no longer had any motivation to work, for their wages were miserably low. The headmen would not release the names of those "who have not made any real effort to get their tax."<sup>66</sup> When asked about numerous tax defaulters, Chief Salim Chepkeitany always averred that they were squatters in the nearby farms and were therefore beyond his jurisdiction.<sup>67</sup> The District Commissioner literally visited those farms to collect tax from the squatters. Instead of paying the tax, the squatters enumerated their complaints which included lack of watering joints, salt licks and the livestock quarantine.<sup>68</sup>

Settler pressure for the application of taxation to force the Keiyo to seek wage-labour was made more vocal by the

Sergoit-Moiben Valley Farmers' Association. In a meeting held at Moiben in 1937, the settlers passed the following resolution:

that in view of all round improvement of economic conditions, both within and without Elgeyo-Marakwet reserves and having regard to the increased demand for labour at a higher rate of wage, government be requested to consider whether the present rate of Hut tax be adequate.<sup>69</sup>

The implication here was that the tax rate should be increased for the purposes of increasing the flow of labour. The Provincial Commissioner concurred with the Association's wish and agreed that the tax be raised to Sh.10. However, Mr. H.R. Carver, the District Commissioner at Tambach, argued that the Keiyo were facing severe financial difficulties and would not be able to raise the required Sh.10 as tax. In a letter he stated:

I do not appear to be alone in thinking that in the past this reserve has been severely over taxed. This overtaxation is bound up with the food shortages. The following happens: A bad harvest leads to tax money being used for buying food. As a result all available men go out to work - the result is another food shortage.<sup>70</sup>

In contrast, there was absolutely no relation between the amount of services rendered by the central government to the amount of taxes paid by the Keiyo. Food shortage was a pervasive phenomenon in Keiyo society, but this did not lead to a tax remission. The Keiyo insisted that if the government had to collect taxes, then the Baringo system was preferable. Here certain areas paid reduced taxes. For instance, the

people dwelling on top of the escarpment would pay more than those below the escarpment. The Local Native Council shouldered all the responsibilities such as Tambach School, dispensaries, infrastructure and general development projects. This was inspite of the large taxes paid. For instance from 1930 to 1937 the Keiyo paid the following amount of money in the form of taxes.

TABLE 9     Tax Figures paid by the Keiyo 1930-1937

Year	Total tax collected Shs.
1930	136,216.00
1931	130,072.00
1932	75,224.00
1933	121,763.00
1934	113,310.00
1935	76,157.00
1936	83,504.00
1937	87,000.00

Source: KNA ELGM/3/1/2 Annual Report 1930-1937

The Keiyo through the LNC found such a system morally unsound. Most of their tax money was obtained through wage-labour and the selling of livestock. They bitterly complained about being compelled to work on settler farms or to sell their livestock without any tangible benefits to the society. In addition, the reserve was being denuded of all its able-bodied

persons, leading to the neglect of farming and a subsequent shortage of food and starvation.

To recapitulate, was taxation really successful in achieving its objectives among the Keiyo? First, there is no doubt that taxation was one of the important instruments in the colonial state's arsenal for creating wage labour. Second, young uncircumcised boys with no livestock usually earned their poll tax through migrant labour. Several Keiyo who initially opted for wage-labour fell into this category. And finally, even those who were forced by taxation to seek wage-labour were later to lure their colleagues. By 1939, the Keiyo had been integrated into the money economy, which enabled them to obtain their necessities such as clothes, salt, sugar, magadi soda, the plough and the capital to trade and operate businesses. In the final analysis, taxation acted as a spur for the forced movement of the Keiyo in search of labour. However, once settled as migrant wage-labourers the scope widened in the application of money earned.

#### The 'Kipande' in Migrant Wage-labour

The creation of reserves and the introduction of the squatter phenomenon did not sustain the supply of labour sufficiently to satisfy the settlers' requirements. Not even taxation could sustain the institution of migrant labour, since the Keiyo designed ways and means of evading the tax collectors. Once the above measures had been affected,



restrictive measures were introduced to ensure the continuity of migrant labour. The Native Registration Ordinance was enacted in 1915 and subsequently implemented in 1920. This Ordinance introduced the kipande (pass) system in Kenya.<sup>71</sup> The system required that every male carry a kipande which showed his registration number, name, rate of pay, nature of work name of employer, resident district or town, the duration of his employment and general behavioural characteristics. All these details were to be recorded by his employer. The kipande was enclosed in a metal container with a string and had to be worn round the neck at all times.<sup>72</sup>

Each day that the worker turned up for work was recorded in one of the thirty blank spaces on the card. Arap Tuei vividly recalls vividly the days of the kipande:

I hated the idea of working too far from home. I hated the Kikuyu overseer and the low wages we were paid. But the most ignominious act was when they told me to hang the kipande around my neck. What would my wife say? A dog. If one failed to complete thirty days as required, he could not be paid even though one had worked for twenty-nine days. I deserted.<sup>73</sup>

The Keiyo like other African people disliked these conditions and used any opportunity to desert. Desertion entrenched false stereotypes in settlers' minds about the ability or inability of the African to produce.<sup>74</sup> The kipande system then provided an effective and coercive system of controlling desertion. Every man had to be finger printed on the same card that showed his particulars. Desertion became a criminal

offence between 1920 and 1925. After 1925, desertion was made a civil offence. But in practice this change seems to have made little difference, as long as District and Labour Officers were sympathetic to the employer. By 1925 labour shortage was not as critical as before. There was therefore no need to impose stiff penalties on deserters as in other criminal offences.

With the advent of the kipande, it became dangerous for an adult male to be found in the reserves without a good reason. The practise grew up whereby a headman was informed of a desertion in his location and was required to have the man returned. Even in cases of desertion, the labourer stood little chance of getting a better job, unless he risked destroying his kipande along with all the revealing information it contained.<sup>75</sup>

The kipande system affected the Keiyo in a very profound way by curtailing their freedom of movement. Instead of working for the period they wanted to work, they had to labour for a longer period. A number of Keiyo wanted simply to labour and obtain tax money. The kipande confined them, particularly if one had an employer who mistreated his labourers. Those who were found with a kipande away from their employer's premises were imprisoned at Tambach for three months and then repatriated to their former employer. In spite of all the regulations, however, there were those like Arap Tuei, who kipande or no kipande made sure that they were

able to elude arrest.<sup>76</sup>

In the final analysis the kipande had a dual purpose. It was first introduced as an identification card which had to be carried by all adult African male. Most affected among the Keiyo were the Maina and Chuma age-sets. Secondly, the kipande served to locate deserters from the labour force, particularly from forced work on settler farms.<sup>77</sup> Thus, although the kipande system was a factor in the movement of labour it was mainly used as a means of controlling the already attested labour.

#### The Labour Recruiters and Chiefs

Shortage and erratic supply of labour continued to haunt the colonial administration. The settlers resorted to employing labour recruiters, particularly between 1920 and 1928 and also after the depression. In 1919, the Governor General, Sir Edward Northey, issued a circular aimed at mobilizing the whole administration machinery towards supplying enough cheap labour for the settlers. Administrators were directed to "actively encourage" Africans to engage in wage labour and to place heavy pressure on the chiefs and headmen to do the same.<sup>78</sup>

Use of direct force to recruit labour among the Keiyo was more marked in the year 1921-24 during the construction of the Uganda railway from Timboroa to Eldoret. The Governor requested the Secretary of State to approve forced labour for

the railway construction. As a result the District Commissioner, Tambach, was prevailed upon to supply by all means a number of labourers from each location for the construction of the railway. Though forced, labouring on the railway proved popular among the Keiyo, for not only did they receive a higher wage but the brutality prevalent on settler farms was lacking.

Another instance of forced labour concerned Public Works Department projects. The colonial administration constantly had to rationalize the use of forced labour. Thus, it was called 'communal labour', referring to the requisitioning of labour of a given location once a week. Under this provision, the Keiyo worked once a week clearing roads, particularly feeder roads linking the reserve to settler farms and centres of administration. Labourers were also employed under the same system in the building of the Koitalel dam in Irong and in performing other duties regarded as being in the interest of the society. The Keiyo used their own tools and were not paid any remuneration. A penalty was instituted for absentees, which included continuous labour on the project or detention at Tambach for two months, or a fine of Sh.100.<sup>79</sup> The only instance when the Keiyo were forcefully conscripted to work for settlers was the Kapsiliat estate which had complained of a lack of labourers. However, all are reported to have deserted.<sup>80</sup> In addition, much of the labour that was requisitioned among the Keiyo was used as portage to carry

loads of administrative officers' luggage and tax money.

Oral evidence shows that the first colonial chief to be appointed among the Keiyo was Kiburur Kaptalai in 1905. His duties included the maintenance of law and order, particularly reporting those with behaviours like the Nandi Orkoik (Labon or medicine-man), collecting taxes and organizing labour when required. He was also to check the cattler rustlers. Other chiefs appointed after 1910 included Kimoning Cherono, Kipkulei Bartai and Chepkurgat Chesang.<sup>81</sup>

The colonial administration had no clear-cut criteria for the selection of a chief. According to Massam, a District Commissioner in the early 1920s, the Keiyo had no chiefs in the ordinary sense of the word, and all the Keiyo appeared to be of the same social status. Old people received precedence, but only as an act of courtesy. He avers that the so-called chiefs placed in charge of the locations had been placed in power by government, and so had, as a rule, little influence apart from the power conferred on them by law.<sup>82</sup>

There were informal councils of elders to whom disputes and other social welfare matters were referred. These were the Kiruokik (arbiters) found in every section of Keiyo society. With the advent of colonial rule, appointed chiefs had to rationalize the use of force, rather than persuasion, in the collection of taxes and forced labour. The chiefs became torn between loyalty to the colonial administration and to their own people. In all their day to day activities the

Keiyo ignored the chiefs, unless they were faced with the prospect of arrest or recruitment for migrant labour.<sup>83</sup>

Within the colonial administration itself at Tambach, the chiefs were regarded as men of little consequence, save for a few exceptions. In 1920 Chief Kiburur Kaptalai was singled out as being the best, "who had made great efforts in persuading Elgeyo of the Southern half to go out and work"; he was further described as the "best friend of government."<sup>84</sup> Evidence adduced from a former colonial chief (later a chief in independent Kenya) shows that chiefs were not against recruiting labour, were it not for the fact that they felt grossly underpaid.<sup>85</sup> Chief Cheptarus arap Lenja won praise as being the best chief until 1934 when he was accused of collecting meagre tax and failing to recruit labourers, and was soon described as useless.<sup>86</sup> According to an informant:

Potential labour recruits knew the gullibility of the chiefs, and devised ways to evade recruitment. Anyone who committed a minor charge or was short in his tax money and did not want to leave home would at once approach his headman with two kibuyus (calabash) of beer. The villagers made sure that chiefs were always in a semi-intoxicated state. They received invitations for every ceremony where beer was offered. A most uncooperative chief would sometimes find an arrow flying over his head when approaching the hut of a tax defaulter or a potential labour recruit.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, in most circumstances, unless visited by a colonial official, Keiyo chiefs took little interest in the governance of the people. This was particularly common in the Kerio Valley and the escarpment ledges. However, the highland zone was under constant supervision for it bordered the European

farms in the Masin Gishu plateau. For instance, by 1938 the people of Chepkorio area of Southern Keiyo had become progressive growing potatoes, pyrethrum and rearing grade cattle. The availability of a nearby market for their produce from among the settlers discouraged most of them from seeking wage-labour. The Chief of Chepkorio Cheptarus arap Lenja, was accused of indolence and called a "useless old man" but according to the Keiyo he was a progressive man.<sup>88</sup> The Chepkorio area, because of failing to supply labour together with its thriving economy, was described by colonial officials from Tambach as the "danger point" in Southern Keiyo.<sup>89</sup>

The chiefs among the Keiyo found their duties conflicting. The people regarded them as the nominees of government. Failure to supply a number of required labourers at times led to confinement for up to two weeks. The chiefs tried not to offend their people. At the same time, they had to satisfy the requirements of the colonial administration.<sup>90</sup> Other departments that required the services of the chiefs were agriculture, veterinary, forest, education and the missions. Thus the recruitment of labour for the neighbouring European farmers was hampered by conflict of interests. What prevailed was the wishes of the district officials at Tambach, who normally required a chief to fulfil certain obligations, particularly the collection of taxes and recruitment of labour.

### Conditions of Migrant Wage-labour

Having examined the various factors that led to migrant wage-labour among the Keiyo, it is now appropriate to look at the conditions under which they worked. It will shed light on the impermanence of Keiyo labourers on European farms. Keiyo working conditions were determined by three crucial factors: wages, accommodation and welfare.

According to Shivji, the colonial economy was based on extremely low wage rates bearing very little relation to the cost of maintaining labour in a normal state.<sup>91</sup> Although European farmers justified this by saying that African productivity was low, the truth of the matter was that most of the farmers were indeed very poor financially and could not afford to pay a higher wage. They also feared that a higher pay could affect their position of domination. In 1935, the settlers in Uasin Gishu formed the Sergoit and Moiben Valley Farmers Association to ensure that wages paid were relatively low and uniform.<sup>92</sup> Other European farmers believed that increases in wages would decrease the supply of labour. Some argued that the natives' use for money was in most cases so limited that an increase in wages did not increase their well-fare, but only idleness and indulgence in bad habits."<sup>93</sup> Van Zwanenberg's explanation bears this out. He stated that the employers' self-interest was to offer the lowest possible wages under the poorest conditions, as long as the required numbers of labourers could be obtained throughout the year.<sup>94</sup>



In addition, wage labour determination was carried out with a feeling of racial discrimination. The Europeans, and particularly the Afrikaners, saw Africans as inferior and needing no money to live on. On the other hand, there were benevolent administrators like John Ainsworth, the Chief Native Commissioner, who in 1912 argued that a higher wage, if offered, would attract more labour out of the reserves. Such people would be encouraged to work for wages, by the fact that they would want money to enable them to satisfy their desires.<sup>95</sup>

In 1910 when the first Keiyo entered wage labour, they were being paid two rupees per month with daily rations of posho. Arap Chebaige, whose father was in the employ of a settler named Kipukan (Van Hey Den) from 1910 to 1914 (when he was conscripted for the carrier corps), states that together with over twenty-five other workers, they were being paid between Sh.2 and Sh.4 depending on their duties.<sup>96</sup> Kitchen work earned one a higher salary since it meant that he was trustworthy. Second in the hierarchy were the overseers and the herdsmen who also got a higher wage. The most underpaid group were the manual labourers who were in large numbers. They cleared the bushes, planted and harvested the produce.<sup>97</sup>

Kiptoo Chirchir worked for Douglas after 1920 and was being paid Sh.4 per month. He claims that Douglas' farm belonged to his father until he was evacuated to the reserve. He worked for Douglas as a loader and slasher-harvester for

wheat. He was also in charge of the bullocks owned by the settler. Chirchir had worked for Douglas until 1927 to earn his tax money and to escape the drudgery of herding cattle. In 1928 he was among the first pupils in the newly built Tambach School. After completing his education he worked for the colonial government as a Clerk before being appointed chief in the 1940s.<sup>98</sup> For most migrant labourers, the meagre wages paid were an important factor in their decision to desert. An exception was at Major Ridley's farm in Moiben where labourers were always paid higher than on other farms. For instance, in 1932 when wages stood at Sh.4 plus posho, Major Ridley, to the consternation of other settlers, paid Sh.6 to his labourers. All the labourers worked for him the whole year, and he had no labour shortages. On the other hand, his casual labourers, who were underpaid, deserted after a month or two.<sup>99</sup> In any case a settler who after 1935 wanted to raise wages was prevailed upon by the powerful Moiben-Sergoit Valley Farmers Association. Ridley was able to break this understanding after all his workers deserted when he was about to harvest his wheat due to the memsahib's (his wife's) refusal to pay the workers after a cow fell into a dam.<sup>100</sup>

A pertinent complaint from the Keiyo labourers was the withholding of wages. According to McGregor Ross:

There were well-known cases of employers who, engaging labourers for a month's work, became increasingly severe with them as the end of month approached. A few days before pay-day, some display of ferocity and injustice resulted in the whole, or a large portion, of a gang of labourers

absconding quietly at night from employment which had become intolerable.<sup>101</sup>

This was a common practice too among the European farmers in Uasin Gishu. Philemon Chebiego recalls how after three months of waiting for wages, he summoned up his courage and faced his settler employer. Before he even explained his case, the settler had already ordered his dogs to pounce on him tearing his clothes to pieces. The settler too flogged him with a sjambok before releasing him with a warning never to approach him again. This was in 1930 at Ziwa, Hoey's bridge, where they were involved in the harvesting of maize. The group of thirty later decided to appeal to the District Commissioner, Tambach for assistance.<sup>102</sup> They were paid, but in a letter to the settler, the District Commissioner assured him that: "this sort of thing must be nipped in the bud" and went on to describe the Keiyo as a "jungly tribe".<sup>103</sup> The 1930 District Annual Report states that there was a complaint of non-payment of about Sh.552/= to the Keiyo. Among those who had not been paid were juvenile workers based at Karuna Farm near Sergoit.<sup>104</sup> Individuals who also missed their wages appealed to the D.C. Tambach, requesting for assistance, for example:

Tafadhali Bwana nina shauri machache nitakazo kukueleza nayo ni hii. Nilifanya kazi kwa bwana Gannel Jangazer kwa siku tisaini. Nikachapwa vibaya sana. Nikatoka kwa ubaya wake nae akunipa mshahara.

When translated:

Sir, I beg to register my complaint to you. I worked for Mr. Gannel Jangazer for ninety days. I

was beaten terribly. I ran away because of his bad character. He never paid my salary.<sup>105</sup>

When the D.C. inquired from Jangaser, his reply was short and terse:

My labour has been rotten. I simply asked him why he was absent from his work. He simply laughed at me. I walked across to him. He then started to run. My dog caught him by his cloth. I slapped him for extremely bad work.<sup>106</sup>

Other settlers shared Jangazer's view. In 1937

G. Macdonald, a settler on farm 876 at Sergoit, wrote a letter to the District Commissioner, Tambach:

Are the laws promulgated to be for the protection of employers or simply to protect and foster native vice.... Every native should not be treated as an equal. Laws should be harsh and in favour of the European.<sup>107</sup>

Rarely did the administration at Tambach admonish the settlers. However, not all employers used the same tactic to retain labour by withholding wages. Other methods were used. Employers would tear labour (kipande) cards or refuse to hand over the kipande, refuse to discharge a labourer, detain his livestock, and even fine the labourer without recourse to the courts.

However, as shown in the case of Major Ridley, not all employers were brutal. At Kapsoya Estate near Eldoret, labourers were also paid a much higher wage, Sh.8 to Sh.10. In addition, they were given one blanket, one gunny bag, two pounds of posho per day and two pounds of beans every week. Their duties included fuel cutting and wattle bark

stripping.<sup>108</sup>

Housing conditions of both squatters and wage labourers were poor.<sup>109</sup> Between 1902 and 1923, most of the labourers came from nearby areas and could easily commute from their homes. From 1923 there was increased squatter labour, which meant that labourers did not return to their homes since they had moved with their families. At the wattle and flax estates and within the saw mills, labourers needed accommodation. Houses made of mud and flattened paraffin tins with grass thatched roofs were a common sight.<sup>110</sup> The railway quarters and the Public Works Department constructed tin huts without windows for their workers, which were most unpopular. Over time the houses became dilapidated, and employers rarely noticed the squalid conditions under which the employees lived. Even if they realised the conditions, they seem to have done little to improve them. The Keiyo, not used to more than one man sharing a hut, simply tolerated.<sup>111</sup> Most preferred to be squatters since they could then construct their own houses. Many European employers failed to understand that the housing problem could not be separated from the whole employment situation.

Low wages and deficient housing determined to a large extent Keiyo duration in settler employment. Added to these was the fact that their health was always precarious due to insufficient food. The squatters with livestock had an advantage for they obtained milk, blood and meat from their

animals. However, in general, dietary conditions on the farms were appalling. The rations provided were of very poor quality. The labourers were entitled to posho and sometimes beans. Salt and meat were only provided by the most benevolent employers once a week.<sup>112</sup>

Another important factor that created a wedge between the Keiyo and the settlers was an antiquated system of disciplining workers. Insurbodination or resistance on the part of individual workers would be interpreted by the employer as a personal insult or abuse. The vocabulary used often reflected racial overtones. Adult workers were referred to as boys or totos (children). The settler was Bwana (master), while his wife was memsahib (madam). Their children were referred to as Bwana mdoqo (small master). Any mistake, like reporting late or failing to complete the day's portion, met with being slapped, flogged or even denied the day's rations.<sup>113</sup> These were all part and parcel of colonial stereotypes about the African people. Arising from the poor working conditions and ill-treatment were frequent desertions and a perpetual shortage of labour.

### Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the process of migrant labour among the Keiyo. Wage labour was a new phenomenon for it incorporated the Keiyo to a money economy. Reciprocal relationships between people of the Tugen, Nandi, Marakwet and

Maasai took a different dimension. A money exchange economy gradually pervaded Keiyo society, but not replacing earlier reciprocal relationships which had been established over a time within Keiyo society and with its neighbours. Most Keiyo migrant labourers ended up in Uasin Gishu among European farmers. The rest joined the Uasin Gishu railway line as workers. The Public Works Department, the Carrier Corps and the King's African Rifles, also employed the Keiyo.

The alienation of 328 square miles of the Grogan Concession left the Keiyo with a mere 72 square miles for grazing out of 400 square miles. For many, the best alternative was to register as squatter labourers so they could graze their livestock freely and also cultivate maize and potatoes. By the 1930s however the European farmers were no longer willing to attest squatter labourers. The depression had led to the decline of commodity prices, rendering squatter labour too expensive. On the other hand, the Nandi squatters who were preferred to the Keiyo posed serious competition. The period 1902-1939 therefore witnessed the Keiyo playing a game of hide and seek with the settlers. There was illegal grazing on the settler farms while some Keiyo migrated to Cherangany and some to the reserve.

After obtaining their tax money, the Keiyo would work for a further period of time to obtain sufficient cash for purchasing commodities. Thus, although taxation was used by the colonial administration as a spur to migrant labour, the

Keiyo used wage labour to serve their own interests. Extra money was obtained for the purchase of commodities like clothes, salt, tyre shoes and livestock, while the most enterprising Keiyo used their savings to enter into business or large scale-farming, of wheat and maize. During famine there was no longer the need for the Keiyo to travel westwards to Nandi in search of food. The money obtained was used to purchase food for the migrant labourers and their close relatives in the reserve.

Individual Keiyo responded in different ways to the demands brought about by British colonialism. A household with sufficient livestock and grazing did not have to become squatters or seek wage-labour in order to pay taxes. Indeed, it was among the uncircumcised boys with no livestock of their own to pay poll tax (which had become compulsory in 1910), that migrant-labour became a necessity. In the process, the wages earned were used to purchase consumer goods and other commodities and also to accumulate a surplus. As the colonial period progressed trade opportunities expanded and it is here that the Keiyo invested much of their accumulated surplus. Through migrant labour certain Keiyo were influenced into joining Tambach School.



Notes

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3. Shivji, I.G., Law, State and the Working Class in Tanzania, Tanzania Publishing House, Dar es Salaam, 1986, p. 7.
4. Massam, J.A., p. 6.
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6. See footnote obtained by Clayton & Savage from Rhodes House Papers in Clayton A. and Savage, D.C., Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963, Frank Cass, London, 1974, p. 21.
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8. Tignor, R.C., pp. 108-109.
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15. O.I. Chemwotei Chepchoge, 16.1.1990.
16. Hill, M.F., Permanent Way: The Story of the Kenya and Uganda Railway, EALB, Nairobi, 1976, pp. 361-394.
17. Ibid. p. 410.
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19. Native Labour Commission, 1912-1913, p. 185.
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22. Van Zwanenberg, R.M.A. op. cit.
23. O.I. Tireito Chepkurgat, 12.1.1990.
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25. Kanogo, T., p. 37.
26. Sorrenson, M.P.K., Origins of European Settlement in Kenya, p. 68.
27. Op. cit.
28. Ibid.
29. K.N.A., DC/ELMG/1/1 District Annual Report, 1929, p. 1.
30. O.I. Chesang arap Chumo, 19.12.1990.
31. K.N.A., No. 15/11 Administration Circular from DC's office Tambach dated 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1937.
32. O.I. John Chesire, 14.10.1989.
33. O.I. Toroitich Kandie, 18.8.1987.
34. O.I. Kikono, 23.12.1989.
35. KNA Ref. SF. Lab/12/1 of 26.7.1944.

36. KNA PC/RVP/6A/1/15/4 Meeting of the Moiben Settlers Association in 1937 and DC/ELGM/1/2 Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual Report pp. 1-6.
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38. Ibid.
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91. Shivji, I., Law, State and the Working Class in Tanzania, p. 47.
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94. Van Zwanenberg, R.M.A., Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya, p. 71.
95. East Africa Protectorate, Native Labour Commission 1912-1913, p. 16.
96. O.I. Arap Chebaige, 14.11.1989. The informant was later to work for the same settler in the 1940s when his pay was Sh.12.
97. Ibid.
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99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Ross, W.M., Kenya from Within, p. 91.
102. O.I. Philemon Chebiego, 19.12.1989.
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104. Ibid.
105. KNA, DC/TAMB/Adm/15/2 Labour Complaints, 1930, p. 5.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/7/2 1932-1948 Labour Complaints, pp. 1-3.
109. Ibid. Information concerning working conditions was obtained from various informants. In fact this was the most generalised conversation. Between October and December 1989 the following informants narrated to me the working conditions in settler farms; Kiptoo Chirchir, Kipchamasis Tireito, Elijah Chemweno, Mzee Oloibe, Philemon Chebiego and Arap Chebaige among others.
110. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 17.9.1989.
111. O.I. Philemon Chebiego, 19.12.1989.
112. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 7.1.1990.
113. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 17.9.1989.

CHAPTER FIVESOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE 1902-1939Introduction

During the period between 1902 and 1939, Keiyo society was transformed. This transformation was gradual which still left the casual and even the scholarly observer with the impression of changelessness. Inhabitants of the Kerio Valley still clung to their age-old mode of subsistence and traditional values. The Keiyo in the highlands still looked to their clansmen in the Kerio Valley for traditional guidance particularly in land, initiation ceremonies and appeasement of the spirits. Yet behind this superficial continuity, a rural society had undergone change.

Perhaps, the greatest obstacle to understanding this change has been the short period under study. Transparent changes only became clear after the second world war, when the colonial state yielded to pressure from the African population for change. However, by 1939, various changes could be discerned. The mechanism of this change was the individualization of land ownership as opposed to communal ownership. Second, migrant labour acted as a spur to accumulation of wealth which led to diversification from a wholly livestock economy to trade and business. At the level of the village, social and economic differentiation became increasingly polarized between the rich and the many poor. The concept of mogorio (wealthy man) changed from the

ownership of large herds of livestock to ownership of large-scale farms, and investment in new market centres and as businessmen.

The creation of a reserve whose boundaries were fixed, severely restricted Keiyo land use and had many of them into squatterdom or wage employment. It was demonstrated that despite these restrictions, the Keiyo were neither wholly weighed down by colonial demands nor made directly dependent. This chapter addresses itself to those aspects of change, continuity and constraints that occurred to Keiyo society as a result of the above twin processes. By the 1930s the reluctance of the European farmers to engage Keiyo squatters and the congestion of the reserve in the same period, began a time of uncertainty and ecological stress during which the Keiyo made attempts to adjust their social, economic and political institutions to the new circumstances.

At the theoretical level, a number of propositions help us to distinguish and demarcate different factors of change. First, the main pre-occupation of the colonial state was not to bring about increased African production and profits but primarily to control and facilitate settler production. Second, in the early stages, the colonial state itself was ill-equipped financially, and understaffed to transform. And finally, Britain's colonial economic policy involved a bold reorganisation of land, labour and capital resources which overtime drastically changed people's daily lives.<sup>1</sup> According



to E.W. Soja, colonialism had the effect of creating a new and stronger pattern of circulation within larger units of organisation. It involved profound changes in individual and group behaviour and these he considered to be the most important concomitants of the whole colonial process.<sup>2</sup> Thus within this colonial situation, individual Keiyo responded in different ways depending on the advantages and disadvantages of participating in the process of structural change of the economy from household towards national and international economy.

By 1939 various social and economic changes in kinship relationships, land ownership, age-set responsibilities and the division of labour had taken place in Keiyo society. This further led to changes in entrepreneurship, agriculture, political structure and a demand for formal education. The following four case studies attempt to crystalize each variable and assess the extent to which it was a factor of transforming society or of persistence. Part of the Keiyo's success in re-shaping their institutions was due to the fact that they were able to borrow new concepts without compromising their traditional values. Actual change for the Keiyo was realised through the presence of Indian and Somali traders who brought out new commodities and concept of trade which made several Keiyo enter the market economy as traders. Secondly, new crops and agricultural policies brought changes of great magnitude to cultivation and livestock production.

Thirdly, a transport network was created that exposed the Keiyo to markets among European farmers and Indian traders. And finally, the chiefs and members of the Local Native Council were the first to adopt these changes and particularly the establishment of Tambach School where their children pioneered education among the Keiyo.

### Trade, Markets and Keiyo Entrepreneurs

Vigorous attempts to integrate the Keiyo into a colonial economy began in the southern part of the district within Mosop, Metkei and Irong regions. These areas were from the 1920s important migrant labour suppliers to the settler farms in Uasin Gishu plateau. As a result of exposure through migrant labour, were able to pioneer in trade and production of goods for exchange.

Among the earlier Keiyo migrant labourers who became successful traders were, Kiptoo Chirchir, Salim Chepkeitany, Kibiab Sawe and Kite Tiren. The centre of their trade was in stock trading, particularly in cattle and sheep. Kiptoo Chirchir stated that they were greatly influenced by the activities of Somalis who were active stock traders. The money that was accumulated were later invested in other businesses particularly in butcheries, shopkeeping, maize milling, ploughing and transportation.<sup>3</sup> By the 1930s they had emerged as progressive cash crop farmers competing unfavourably with the settlers. Pyrethrum, maize, wheat and

potatoes were the most important cash crops. All these were made possible by the introduction of the Rupee in 1901 as a medium of exchange.<sup>4</sup> This was followed by the establishment of periodical markets and colonial administrative centres which later became the focal points for commodity exchange.<sup>5</sup>

What factors made it possible for the Keiyo to accumulate a surplus and the resultant participation in business and large-scale agricultural production? What was the reaction of the colonial state and the settlers to the emergence of Keiyo traders and cash crop farmers? In order to appreciate the salient features of the above questions, it is important to diagnose the intentions involved. The alienation of land by Grogan and other European farmers led to a shift of economic activities from livestock production to migrant labour and trade. Other factors that characterised the period after 1923 were a severe depression, increased taxation and low wages. Under the circumstances, the Keiyo were left with few options. They had to organise themselves in a way that despite a shortage of grazing land, they had to produce sustainable food for local use and at the same time a surplus for exchange to purchase other consumer goods.

According to Micah Tireito,

I got tired of working for the European farmer in 1927. I wanted to do my own work. I began selling eggs, and then potatoes. Later we were buying cattle for auction in Kampala. That was in 1936. In 1940 I built a small shop at Chepkorio, which still runs at the moment under the management of my son.<sup>6</sup>

There were also the target labourers. Chemaiyo arap Sa moved to wage employment because he wanted the capital to open a shop. According to him,

In 1926 I was in Kapsabet assisting an Indian sell American clothes. He was paying me Sh.10. The same was used for buying food. I realised I could not save any money, because I wanted to conduct the same business at home. In 1927 I was employed by a Mr. Forster at Sh.8 per month. He used to get us daily rations of maize flour. On Sundays, I would go home in the reserve and come with curdled milk which lasted me for a whole week. After two years, I had saved Sh.160. In 1931 I began moving around the district selling clothes during market days. After five years, I abandoned, and opened my own shop at Chororget. The profits were high and I invested in another shop at Eldoret.

The case of Tireito and Chemaiyo illustrate the circumstances under which traders among the Keiyo emerged.

Kiptoo Chirchir, has been described by Elspeth Huxley as "a large loose-limbed, punchy man with an air of confident prosperity who would be quite at home dining at the Institute of Directors. Chief Willi had a thriving farm with a flock of English sheep, a herd of cows, pyrethrum and potato crops, and a labour force of fifteen men."<sup>8</sup> Kiptoo Chirchir was unique among other emerging Keiyo traders. He left working at Van Hey Den's farm in 1927 and joined Tambach School. In 1934 he left Tambach for employment as a clerk in the Local Native Council and later the African District Council. He states that his major aim was to understand the workings of the

colonial system so that he could actively participate in the struggle for the return of the Grogan Concession. In addition, he claims that he wanted to establish a typical farm like the settler's so that his people (the Keiyo) would emulate. He fenced his land and reared grade cattle which included a Corriedale sheep.<sup>9</sup> It was, however, common for other Keiyo wage-labourers to accumulate savings to be used to purchase more livestock, pay bridewealth, or to enter into petty trade of selling hides and skins to Kikuyu forest squatters at Kaptagat and Kipkabus.<sup>10</sup>

Suffice it to mention that most Keiyo trading activities during the period took place at the local and regional level. Methods of trading were basically symbiotic and reciprocal. A money economy was non-existent until 1901 with the introduction of the (rupee). Market centres were established along border points. For instance there was a thriving border market at Chebloch between the Keiyo and the Tugen. A barter system was used. The price of one item was fixed in terms of a certain number or quantity of some other goods. In this way a pot might be exchanged for foodstuffs it would hold.<sup>12</sup> Other essential commodities that were used for exchange were honey, weaponry, pestles and mortars and basketry. In turn the Keiyo received salt, magadi soda, cowrie shells, beads, bracelets and poison which were in high demand. There existed a strong and robust economic inter-relations among the Keiyo themselves and between the Keiyo and their neighbours. In the middle of

the nineteenth century these trade relations was extended to include Indians, Somalis, Arabs and various African communities like the Kamba, Kikuyu and Maasai. With the advent of effective colonial rule from 1902, trade was made possible by the creation of administrative centres which later became the central point for various enterprising people.

With this group also emerged determined traders who offered stiff challenges to Indian, Swahili and Somali traders. This was evidenced with the establishment of market centres. The four prominent trading centres established by the colonial government among the Keiyo were Kamariny, Tambach, Chepkorio and Ainaibkoi, The 1919 Elgeyo-Marakwet handing over report traces the growth of Kamariny.<sup>13</sup> This was to be the first colonial station for administering the Keiyo. Kamariny was strategically situated at the top of the Elgeyo escarpment and its environs offered a picturesque view of the Kerio Valley. Settlers from the Uasin Gishu plateau and colonial administrators from both Keiyo, Marakwet and Eldoret frequented the area which later turned out to be a popular resort. Arap Birir was a young herdsboy near Kamariny when he first encountered whitemen in his lifetime. As he himself recalled:

that was before the start of the first world war. The whiteman came in an ox-wagon pulled by two horses. Tents were pitched at the present Kamariny show ground. They were friendly. Long ago Thompson had passed here. They were later joined by Tarketi (Somali) and Indian traders who sold us beads,

bracelets, Amerikani cloth and maize flour during the 1918-1919 famine.<sup>14</sup>

The 1919 handing over report state that a Kamba trader had established himself permanently at Kamariny, stocking salt, magadi soda, beads and other sundries in his shop.<sup>15</sup> The Somali had also established themselves as livestock traders among the Keiyo at Kamariny. For instance in 1919, 550 bullocks were sold at an average price of Rs.40 to Rs.50. In the same year, 300 sheep were sold for approximately Rs.4 each.<sup>16</sup> The 1918-1919 famine remembered among the Keiyo as the famine of kimakatoi (period when skins were used as food) led to maize flour becoming an important part of the exchange process. It sold at 2 rupees per sixty pounds.<sup>17</sup> The famine had for the first time made the Keiyo cook kimnyet (pudding made from maize flour or ugali in Kiswahili) instead of relying solely on millet and sorghum flour.

Although most Keiyo took part as buyers at one time or another, few participated in the actual selling. There was a group of Kamba traders and Indians who managed to travel as far as Eldama Ravine to obtain provisions for trade. Why didn't more Keiyo exploit these opportunities? What distinguished the few entrepreneurs among the Keiyo that emerged? The answers are not hard to determine. In the first place, no one could become a trader without contacts at Eldama Ravine. The Kamba and Indian traders already had established trading links which the Keiyo lacked. A Keiyo informant who

lived in Eldama Ravine as a soldier after the first world war recalled that the Keiyo did not require the commodities in large quantities. In addition, it was not easy for the Keiyo to be provided with provisions by the traders at Eldama Ravine who always preferred Arab, Kamba and Somali traders.<sup>18</sup> And finally, the existing traders serviced their needs adequately. The Tugen and Pokot were preferred to the Indian and Somali traders because of familiarity and communication was easy. Indeed, these trading relationships were characteristically, reciprocal and did not necessarily require cash as was the case with other traders. Nearly every Keiyo possessed livestock which provided them with a readily exchangeable item in local markets when the need arose. However, the real impediment to Keiyo trading activities had something to do with the colonial ~~ad~~ministration's reluctance to issue the Keiyo with trading licences. The administration preferred that they work for wage labour to pay taxes and satisfy settler demands for labourers.

It did not take long for the Keiyo to enter into competitive trade. With the shifting of the colonial administration's station from Kamariny to Tambach in 1926, the way was paved for enterprising Keiyo to challenge foreign traders. Tambach favoured the Keiyo traders in three main ways. First, the Local Native Council which had been established by 1926, encouraged the Keiyo to diversify their economic activities to include trade. Second, since the Local



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Following the move to Tambach, Kamariny gradually lost its status as a trading centre with most traders investing at Tambach. The emergence of Tambach as both administrative and commercial centre is exemplified by the divergence of the population present by 1927.

TABLE 10 Showing Non-Keiyo Population at Tambach in 1927

1. Europeans	3
2. Goans	4
3. Indians	1
4. Somali	6
5. Kikuyu	16
6. Luo	26
7. Maasai	4
8. Nandi	6
9. Kipsigis	3
10. Sebei	6
11. Kisii	4
12. Mtende	1
13. Nyamwezi	14
14. <del>Kamba</del>	17
15. Mganda	3
16. Wagishu	4
17. Wanubi	1
18. Tugen	1
19. Pokot	1
20. Turkana	1
21. Mnyassa	1
22. Msugua	2
23. Unknown	9
Total	<hr/> 134 <hr/>

Source: KNA - DC/ELGM/1/1 1929-1927. Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report.

Several of the above non-Keiyo people were labourers in the road construction, government servants, those involved in the construction of Tambach School and hospital and employees of the newly established businesses like shopkeeping, butcheries, maize milling and trading in livestock.

The Keiyo did not watch events unfold passively. They took the available opportunities and offered strong challenges to the alien traders. Most successful at Tambach were Kite Tiren and Salim Chepkeitany. According to Huxley, the former is described as a successful and efficient farmer and trader. She avers that:

Arap Tiren is a Samuel Smiles hero, African style.... Everyone of Arap Tiren's paddocks is neatly fenced and watered, and he is building himself a stone dairy and cowshed. Around a yard are grouped the farm buildings of which the most important is a store holding ... 700 bags of wheat worth pound 1,700.... He was born on a European farm on the Uasin Gishu plateau and became a chicken-boy to his employer, Mr. Wright, whose son Alec was about the same age.... In due course Alec Wright inherited the farm and Arap Tiren, with saved money, decided to start on his own.... Now he is something of an entrepreneur. He has several beer shops, little stores dotted about in most of the townships in Elgeyo, a petrol station in the nearby village, and a mail contract between Tambach ... and various local chiefs and trading centres.<sup>20</sup>

It seems from the above that Tiren's entrepreneurial initiative and capital came from the experiences obtained while working in the settler farms. Tiren employed his sons as managers of his businesses and acted a model for other emerging Keiyo entrepreneurs. He is credited to have been the

enterprising Keiyo named Chepkon'ga had by 1928 accumulated enough funds to purchase a lorry. Oral evidence indicates that Chepkonga was the first Keiyo to own a lorry.<sup>24</sup> His transport business included ferrying labourers from as far as Baringo and other parts of Keiyo to settler farms. In addition, the lorry was used for transporting farm produce like maize, potatoes, pyrethrum and wheat to train terminals at Kaptagat, Kipkabus or Eldoret stations.<sup>25</sup>

It must be emphasized, however, that the local district officials based at Tambach did not fully support emerging Keiyo traders. The first act which earned the support of the local District Commissioner was the colonial state's act of declaring the district "closed". All visitors to the district had to be vetted. Vetting was done by the District Commissioner, who issued permits to visitors intending to engage in any trade, hunting and or recruitment of labour. The Keiyo on the other hand had to obtain a pass to move out of the district or travel from the settler farms to the reserve. Secondly, a quarantine was imposed by the veterinary department. The quarantine for the period between 1920 and 1939 was never lifted. According to the settlers, such measures were designed to reduce the spread of disease. However, no evidence was adduced is such a disease did break out to warrant a perpetual quarantine. It is safe to assume that the main intention was to deny the Keiyo access to markets outside the reserve. The Local Native Council

protested but failed making the Keiyo to sell their stock at depressed prices. In turn the Keiyo at various times ignored this regulation and sold their livestock to the Somali who paid more than the Liebig's Limited, the official government livestock buyers. On realising Keiyo attempts to circumvent the quarantine, the district officials at Tambach ordered all the chiefs to organise regular local markets. It became illegal to buy and sell cattle outside these markets which practically undermined the ability of the Keiyo to compete favourably with colonial settlers.

Between 1936 and 1937 there was clear evidence of Keiyo diversification of trading activities. More than 50 handmills in the district had been acquired showing the popularity of maize growing among the Keiyo both for domestic consumption and for sale. A carpenter's shop had been opened in 1936 at Tambach by an ex-student of the government school, Tambach. It supplied the local people with beds, chairs and boxes. Groundnut farming began to gain ground among the Keiyo and by 1940 one and a half tons of it were sold to the Kenya Farmers Association.<sup>26</sup>

Evidence adduced from oral sources and archival material show that the greatest drive towards entrepreneurship came from the chiefs and members of the Local Native Council. Most of the chiefs appointed were men with the greatest drive. They had the ear of the administration and requests coming through them would have the greatest chance of being heard.

One of them was Chief Daniel Sawe Kibiab. Informants concurred that he was a chief of rare qualities who wholeheartedly supported and initiated development projects like schools, markets and cash crop farming among the Keiyo of Chepkorio.<sup>27</sup> His dynamism led to the colonial administration at Tambach to brand the Chepkorio region a 'danger point'.<sup>28</sup> While this statement cannot be said to have been a political judgement, there is no doubt that it was an economic judgement. It was so considering the fact that cash crop farming in potatoes and pyrethrum and keeping of grade cattle had threatened the supply of cheap labour to the European farms and plantations.<sup>29</sup> The 1936-1940 annual report on Elgeyo-Marakwet shows how the colonial administration viewed the participation of Keiyo profitable business. The District Commissioner, Tambach stated that:

... the people (the Keiyo) are making personal profits out of exploitation of what is a valuable asset of the whole tribe. It is worth considering whether they can be subjected to any cess which would be devoted to the betterment of the grazing conditions.... A small holder, Chelal arap Sitienei, has got thirty acres of land. This is too much for his use. He employs nine labourers (instead of working himself) and ploughed up practically all the land and planted mostly<sup>30</sup> maize and has to go outside his area for grazing.

As a consequence, a situation emerged whereby African entrepreneurs were confined to small-scale business in trading centres. Even other African traders were denied trading licences. In 1935 an ordinance was introduced to regulate the marketing of African produce. The ordinance stipulated that

in designated districts certain commodities could be purchased only by traders, who had obtained trading licences from the government. This was intended to protect the financially strapped Europeans. The Local Native Councils strongly protested.<sup>31</sup>

Even other African traders were denied trading licences. The Kikuyu forest squatters stationed at Kaptagat and Kipkabus had provided the Keiyo with a ready market for their produce, namely, sheep, goats, gourds, hides and skins, potatoes and maize flour. The Kikuyu on the other hand brought to the Keiyo hard cash, vegetables, beads and clothes. The Kikuyu traders thus played not only a prominent part, but a dominant one in the extension of Keiyo trading activities. But the colonial administration at Tambach, greatly worked against Kikuyu traders. Licences to open shops at Chepkorio and Ainabkoi were denied to them. The trading licences were issued to the Keiyo who wanted to trade at the two centres. Examples of Kikuyus denied trading licences were Hezekia Njoroge, Maxwell Kabiru, Gideon Mwaura and S.N. Nganga among others. Oral informants, however, stated that only a few applicants were provided with these licences. At Tambach for instance, Salim Chepkeitany was given a licence which entitled him to operate a butchery. Kite Tiren of Tambach was also only licenced to possess a plough. The two, however, ignored the terms and operated other business like shopkeeping, butchery, maize milling and stock trading. According to



evidence, none was victimised because, they managed to establish friendly relations with the colonial officials at Tambach, who normally bought their provisions like beef and mutton from their butcheries.<sup>32</sup> In Chebara and Kapsowar, Chum arap Kandie and Chepterit arap Itok were given licences to trade in hides and skins and open retail shops respectively. Indian applicants had no problem obtaining trading licences. An example was of A.S. Patel, a general merchant who applied for a licence and quickly obtained a favourable reply from the District Commissioner W.H. Hale in 1940 to operate at Tambach.<sup>33</sup>

Thus in practical terms, the Keiyo took up the challenges of a market economy when the opportunities presented itself. It helps to explain partly why despite the Grogan Concession which left little room for grazing the Keiyo managed to maintain a considerable degree of economic independence. The Keiyo of the highland regions partly because of their proximity to the European farmers were able to apply the skills obtained through wage labour to establish their own businesses or farming activities. However, personal inclination was also an essential factor for the emergence of Keiyo traders. The literate members of the community or members of the Local Native Council and the chiefs were shown to have been the most likely participants in trade. Indeed the colonial administration by exposing the Keiyo to new goods, values and services, subjected the Keiyo to specific

demands which could only be met by participation in the cash based economy.

### Agricultural Change

Attempts by the colonial administration to stimulate agricultural production among the Keiyo began in earnest in 1922 when J.A. Massam became the District Commissioner for the Keiyo and Marakwet.<sup>34</sup> However, between 1909 and 1922 new crops like wheat, maize, linseed and English potatoes had been introduced. During the period 1910-11, the Governor of Kenya, Sir Percy Girovard instructed provincial and district heads to pay great attention to the production of agricultural crops and the establishment of markets and trading centres as a step to opening up the reserves.<sup>35</sup> As will be evident, these attempts met with limited success.

While the attitude of the administrators as agents and innovators of agricultural change was very crucial, so too was the attitude of the Keiyo towards administrators. Several informants claimed that Europeans who had "neither age-sets nor pierced ears" could not dictate to them what was good.<sup>36</sup> In fact the patronising manner of introducing new crops among the Keiyo greatly distanced them from the colonial officials at Tambach. For instance Massam's method of introducing a new crop to the Keiyo as he describes himself, went like this:

In order to gain their interest in increased food supplies I was practically obliged to bribe them by giving the headmen and the more influential elders

presents of bananas, cassava roots, sweet potatoes and other foodstuffs to sample. These gifts acted as a sugar to the pill, for while the elders ate I took the opportunity to demonstrate the correct cultivation of the various plants. They always listened very attentively, but not always receptively, and I occasionally caught out some old man whose thoughts had been elsewhere by asking him to repeat what I had said.... In short, they give a newcomer the impression that they are a thoroughly lazy, useless tribe. In reality, they have many good qualities, and are a likeable people. Most of them are intelligent.<sup>37</sup>

Massam's attitude, however, regrettable was incidental to the success or failure of the Keiyo agricultural adaptation. Had the colonial policy in general been attractive to the Keiyo it could have succeeded inspite of such people as Massam. And in any case these new crops could neither fit into the people's diet nor be easily integrated into their yearly agricultural cycle. At the same time, much of the land that the Keiyo looked to for their survival and security had been alienated. What remained had to be used for very essential crops and grazing. However, the case of Chelal arap Sitienei who had thirty acres under cultivation illustrates the resilience of some Keiyo in challenging settler attempts to monopolise large-scale crop-production.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the Keiyo in the highland zone reserve owned tracts of land which were only suitable for cattle grazing and no cultivation. The alienated areas suited crop production. Thus the Keiyo of the highland zone grew their crops particularly maize, millet and sorghum on the Elgeyo escarpment ledges and watered areas of the Kerio Valley.

What further impeded Keiyo agricultural production was the influence the settler community had over the colonial administration. The railway was sited through European areas along Ainabkoi, Kipkabus, Kaptagat, Plateau and Eldoret. Roads built in European areas were financed by government grants, while those in African areas were left to the Local Native Council or forced labour. The mobus (convicts) who failed to pay tax or attend a chief's meeting were required to dig roads to link various parts of the Keiyo with the areas of European settlement and administrative centres particularly chief's and headmens' offices or residence. In addition, the administration made available good number of efficient extension workers for settlers. For instance under their direction, were established, equipment distributed and at times the settlers obtained high quality seeds and even livestock. The settlers thus operated in a ~~protected~~ environment.<sup>19</sup>

Pitted against the above odds, the Keiyo attempted to make the best of the an unfavourable situation. Reaction differed within the three ecological zones inhabited by the Keiyo. In the highland plateau there was individual holding of land after the 1920s. Paddocking of land was introduced with separate areas of grazing and the growing of cash crops like pyrethrum, wheat, maize and potatoes. For the first time the Keiyo also released their milk for sale in the market particularly to the settler farms who had processing machines.

This popularised the use of bicycles for transporting milk. Kibiab Sawe who was a headman from the 1930s is regarded to have been one of the first Keiyo to own and encourage the keeping of exotic grade cattle (nusut) as opposed to the humped Zebu cattle (Kipkaa) kept in the middle and lower parts of Keiyo country. Growing of maize by random broadcasting of seeds was discarded in place of planting in rows, a phenomenon adapted from settler plantations. Unlike in the other two zones, planting, weeding and harvesting was no longer the reserve of women. Since livestock were now paddocked, grazing was controlled depriving the men of their traditional responsibility. The men therefore apart from clearing the ground also participated in whole year farming cycle. The proximity of the highland Keiyo to the settler farms had commercial implications. It encouraged highland Keiyo to grow market crops particularly maize and potatoes. Hides and skins also constituted a major trade commodity from the Keiyo to middle-men traders particularly Indians, and Kikuyu forest squatters from Kaptagat, Kipkabus and Ainabkoi. These were later sold to European farms or individuals.

As for the Keiyo inhabitants of the escarpment ledge and the Kerio Valley floor, colonial agricultural impact was limited. Land in both zones remained communal. The men determined the inheritory rights of the land while the women had the usufruct rights. Women's participation rate in cultivation was higher than the men's. The men only cleared

and burned the ground, leaving the women to dig, plant weed and harvest. Seeds were broadcast at random with eleusine millet being popular. Maize was common in the middle ledges and the lower part of the escarpment. However, these were not for the market but basically for domestic consumption. Since grazing was available, livestock became a major source of income unlike for their counterparts in the highland plateau whose grazing had been limited after 1923 by the E.M.S. Grogan Concession. Over a period of time economic differentiation emerged with the highland Keiyo having easy access to markets and multiple commodities for exchange while the Keiyo of the escarpment ledges had solely to rely on livestock for exchange in the market economy. In addition, unlike the other Keiyo; the highland Keiyo easily migrated to the settler farms in search of employment. Some were able to accumulate a surplus with which they used to start businesses.

By 1933 the highland Keiyo farmers had reached a point where they posed a serious threat to the settlers. This was manifested by the formation of the Sergoit-Moiben Valley Farmers Association (S.M.V.F.A.) under the chairmanship of Sergeant W.A.C. Bouwer. In their first meeting, they passed a number of resolutions which were intended to curtail the economic success of the Keiyo. This Association pressed for the requisition of labour and other demands which included a number of resolutions.

1. "That no "native" be allowed to export from settled areas by road or rail without written permit from the local authority.
2. That no miller be permitted to mill any "native" owned produce without a permit from the employer stating the amount to be milled.
3. That no trader to receive produce from a "native" without permit from his employer or "native" council stating the amount. And,
4. That no "native" in the settled areas be allowed to possess a posho mill."<sup>40</sup>

These steps were, however, not fully successful. Beginning from 1926, for instance, one Keiyo whose name was given only as Chepkon'ga had already opened a bank account with the Post Office, Eldoret. After saving enough money, he bought a first class breaker plough and a trek gear. He extensively ploughed land where he grew wheat and maize in large scale. A hauling contract was offered to him in addition to ploughing the ground for his neighbours.<sup>41</sup> The result was that the highland Keiyo began to cultivate various crops for sale like maize, tobacco, potatoes, wheat and pyrethrum. The plough replaced the hoe which greatly increased the acreage under cultivation. The highland Keiyo acted as a granary during periods of famine providing food for the Keiyo in the valley floor and the escarpment ledges.

The availability of maize mills and ploughs helped popularize maize growing. In 1929 five Keiyo had become plough owners, a process which alarmed the colonial administration at Tambach. Permits to purchase these two items were restricted with the argument that it would lead to the depletion of land and a shortage of grazing.<sup>42</sup> It appears the restriction was not enforced for by 1936 24 Keiyo owned ploughs. There was also a combine-harvester and six ox-carts. One Entrepreneur was in possession of a diesel engined maize grinding mill while several had hand grinding mills.<sup>43</sup>

In 1945, the District Commissioner, at Tambach, Mr. D. Storr Fox banned the use of ploughs. He argued that the plough enabled the Keiyo to cultivate up too much grazing land in the hope of getting a quick return for cash. He further maintained that ploughing left insufficient grazing for stock leading to unbalanced agriculture, soil erosion and food deficiency.<sup>44</sup> However, according to Kiptoo Chirchir, D. Storrs Fox was alarmed by the number of wealthy Keiyo as a result of large scale growing of wheat and maize which embarrassed the settlers in the plateau. The most bitter settlers he claimed included Forster at Kaptagat, Wellwood at Kaptagat, Douglas and Jorgensen at plateau and Van Hey Den at Kipkabus.<sup>45</sup>

The colonial administration at Tambach further demanded that whatever had been produced had to be sold to government appointed agents. For example, the Uasin Gishu Commodity Distribution Board and Nandi Hill Butchery were appointed by



the administration to purchase potatoes from among the Keiyo. In a circular letter to all chiefs, D. Storr Fox, the D.C. warned that "Watu wakiuzia wengine viazi ovyo wataweza kukamatwa"<sup>46</sup> (If potatoes are sold to buyers indiscriminately, they will be arrested). Such threats were usually a good indication that a good deal of 'illegal' selling was going on for example at Kaptagat and Kipkabus where the Keiyo sold their potatoes to Kikuyu forest squatters who even offered them a higher price than the appointed agent.

A Supply Board for the purchase of cattle was also set up. This was followed by the reluctance of the Keiyo to auction their cattle particularly those living in the escarpment ledges and the Kerio Valley floor. The colonial administration argued that livestock requisition would reduce soil erosion and lessen Keiyo ~~demand~~ demand for the return of the Grogan Concession. To achieve their goal, the colonial administration directed livestock for requisition to be branded. The Keiyo were bitterly opposed to the branding of their cattle for sale. They hid their best and large oxen from being branded. Cattle were hidden in the Kerio Valley where they were inaccessible to government agents.<sup>47</sup> One cattle trader R. Fletcher of the Supply Board wrote a letter of complaint to the District Commissioner Tambach stating that:

Most of the natives in this part of the country appear to do just as they please and unless measures are taken to knock a little discipline into them, the job of buying cattle amongst them is

a thankless one.<sup>48</sup>

This indeed is good evidence of the inability of the government to control livestock trade. In fact evidence adduced indicates that the Keiyo managed to create lucrative markets within Baringo, Pokot, Marakwet and even as far away as Kampala in Uganda.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, as the Keiyo showed signs of adopting progressive agricultural methods the colonial administration at Tambach attempted to confine Keiyo agricultural production within limits that would complement but not compete with settler agriculture. We have demonstrated here that the Keiyo were not side-lined. They applied appropriate technology like the plough and sought markets far away from their immediate environment. Crops like wheat, maize, potatoes, pyrethrum and beans were adopted which threatened settler monopoly. Restrictions which were designed to curtail Keiyo productivity failed because the Keiyo sought other markets. Nonetheless, these changes were voluntary for instance Keiyo reluctance to accept the requisition of their cattle. Beginning from 1923 there was, however, a relative decline in the significance of a cattle economy to a mixed economy where farming in the three zones took centre stage.

#### Keiyo demand for Education: Constraints and Opportunities up to 1939

Education is one of the strongest instruments of change.<sup>50</sup>

According to W. Rodney. education is crucial in any type of

society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of its social structure.<sup>51</sup> In the annual report of Elgeyo District for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1918 four 'native' councils are mentioned. However, these councils kept neither records, minutes, resolutions nor even how the council was composed. In addition, there was no evidence of funds raised or of expenditure incurred.<sup>50</sup> But by 1925 a Local Native Council to serve the Keiyo and Marakwet had been established. It represented the colonial government's first attempt to provide an administrative agency through which certain amount of African development could be secured.<sup>51</sup> The LNC wanted a secular education geared towards literacy for the Keiyo as opposed to the government and missionary type of education which was technically oriented and evangelical. Missionaries viewed western education as a vehicle for spreading the gospel. On the other hand, the government's interest in African education was motivated by the needs of the labour market. One specific feature was that the few settlers who favoured education for Africans emphasized the importance of technical training as a means of preparing Africans to work on European farms and estates. In this connection, the education demands made by the Keiyo with the colonial government set them on a collision course. By the time Tambach School became a reality in 1927 both attempted to use education to effect the changes they thought were necessary for the achievement of their goals. Though the aims

of the Keiyo and the government were diametrically opposed, the Keiyo were able to gradually reap the benefits of literacy.

The Keiyo on realising that education had been provided to neighbouring districts, Kericho (1924), Kapsabet (1925) and Kabarnet (1926) provided the LNC with its first assignment. According to the 1919 annual report there were no literate Keiyo.<sup>52</sup> Members of the LNC which included chiefs and other district representatives felt that they too needed a school to enlighten its members. One of the greatest stumbling blocks to the achievement of their goal was the negative attitude of the Director of Education based in Nairobi and even the district officials at Tambach who did not consider education as a priority for the Keiyo at the time.

Faced with the deprivation nature of colonialism, the Keiyo turned to the Local Native Council to oppose any imposed change and to demand goods and services which they were deprived of by the colonial state. In the Annual Report of Elgeyo District for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1918, four 'native' councils are mentioned. However, these councils kept no records, minutes, or resolutions, nor is it known how they were composed. In addition, there is no evidence of funds raised or of expenditure incurred.<sup>53</sup> By 1925 a Local Native Council (LNC) to serve the Keiyo and Marakwet had been established. It represented the colonial government's first attempt to provide an administrative agency through which a

certain amount of African development and representation could be secured.<sup>54</sup> It was highly welcomed by the people as a forum to express their needs and complaints. The burning issues of the day were the return of the Grogan Concession and the development of education facilities.

Among the Keiyo, the Local Native Council did much to tip the balance in their favour but not without a protracted struggle. It was so because the Keiyo, like other semi-pastoral groups inhabiting the Rift-Valley were to suffer uneven distribution of educational facilities.<sup>55</sup> Colonial prejudice towards the Keiyo and the name-tag of "cliff-dwellers" and being described as people simply prone to raids, famine and drought did little to convince the colonial government that education among the Keiyo was a priority. Pre-colonial Keiyo education is analysed to place Keiyo reaction and response in a clear perspective.

#### Pre-Colonial Keiyo Education

Prior to the introduction of a western type of education, it has been argued that East African societies socialised and educated new generations without schools in the modern western sense. Education functioned primarily to sustain knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and aspirations within a given society.<sup>56</sup> Informal education for the Keiyo was a life-long process of being educated by older members of the society. Among the Marakwet who share a common affinity with the Keiyo,

Kipkorir states that:

Within the framework of the larger society the individual is born and develops in a polygamous (virilocal) family. This is the focus, which meet the lines of the unseen powers, the clan and the age-set to model such individual differences as are permitted in a homogenous society.<sup>57</sup>

Keiyo elders concur with Kipkorir's assertion. The basic requirement of every member of the community was to go through various vigorous rites of passage. The most important being initiation into manhood or womanhood by circumcision or chtorictectomy respectively.<sup>58</sup>

These socialization processes among the Keiyo were centred on the family, lineage, clan and age-set. The age-groups for practical purposes traversed the family, lineage and clan boundaries. Social functions and control depended on the above variables assisted by taboos and individual sanctions as the sole guides of one's conduct and behaviour. Unlike western education which was programmed by a day to day time-table, Keiyo education was a life-time process in which an individual progressed through pre-determined stages of graduation from birth. Ritual transformation from child to adult went through various ceremonies which included, naming of the child, extraction of two incisor teeth, circumcision and wedding among others. In these rites of passage, education was aimed at children as they grew into adolescence and then adults. Children played an important part in perpetuating society and their education was given the seriousness it deserved. In addition, children played an

important role in economic activities like sowing, weeding and harvesting. Herding and domestic duties played an even greater part, which may partially explain the reason why most Keiyo were reluctant to send their children to school.

More than any other institution, the age-set reinforced values of responsibility, cooperation and defence. Keiyo activities, social, economic and political encompassed the whole society. Periodically, all the people of the same age-set were initiated into a single set and remained members of that for life. The age set gave every man a chance of participating in decisions at one level or another. As a result close relationships with others outside the kinship group were established. At a certain stage, there was a handing over ceremony called saket ab eito (sharing of the bull) to pass over responsibility from one ageset to another. For example in 1925 the saket ab eito ceremony was held which elevated the Maina age-set to warriors while the Nyongi became elders in place of Kipnyikew who retired from active participation in society's affairs. Two years later Tambach School was opened which fundamentally demanded a re-organisation of pre-colonial Keiyo educational needs.

#### The Case of Tambach School, 1927-1939

The establishment of Tambach School in 1927 presents us with an example of a people's determination to imbibe what they felt was to be a valuable asset to their society.

Missionary enterprise had failed to neither convert the Keiyo to christianity nor built a school for them as was the case in other parts of Kenya. Among the Keiyo the LNC only witnessed numerous letters from various mission societies requesting for land only to fizzle out when the same was granted. For instance in 1919 the African Inland Mission (AIM) established a mission station at Tambach but managed only five converts who later backslided and the mission was abandoned in 1926.<sup>59</sup>

In 1927, Kiptoo Kisabei, Kipteimet Chesanga, Chief Kiburur, Chief Cheserem Kimoning, Arap Bartai and Cheptorus arap Lenja among other prominent Local Native Council members voted pound 2500 for the establishment of a school at Tambach for the children of Keiyo and Marakwet. The LNC had two sources of revenue namely; a local rate at Sh.1 per hut was set, but more rewarding was the royalties accruing from the Elgeyo Saw Mills which were left by the colonial officials at Tambach at the disposal of the LNC. Despite the indifference of the colonial administration, Tambach School was set-up, ignoring the flat refusal by the Director of Education that a school was "very obviously beyond the means of the tribe ... whose demand for school has come from the small boys who forced the elders to agree to it."<sup>60</sup> However, by 1927, the director accepted the Keiyo petition for a school arguing that "there appear to have been some misunderstanding" and "now quite ready and anxious to assist in obtaining this."<sup>61</sup> In March, 1927 the acting Director of Education, Mr. Biss visited



Tambach and approved the site proposed and the scheme submitted. He promised that a technical adviser would "shortly" be sent to make a start with the buildings. Nothing more was heard from the department until 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1927 when they sent pound 150. Of the total sum, pound 100 was retained in Nairobi for the purchase of materials.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, this sum not being sufficient, the LNC enthusiastically voted in pound 2500 which saw progress in the construction of the necessary facilities. By the end of 1927 sufficient sun-dried bricks had been made for a teachers house and a classroom. This was the foundation of what was to become the oldest academic institution in Keiyo and Marakwet district. It was officially launched in 1928 and named the Government African School, Tambach. The first headmaster was G.A. Berriage but the school's real foundation was laid down by R.H. Howitt who was at the helm from 1930 to 1939 with only a short break in 1936.<sup>63</sup>

At its inception the school under G.A. Berriage was intended to achieve various objectives. First, the school was to provide technical education for thirty Keiyo and Marakwet students a year. Second, reading and writing had to be looked on as necessary evils and the "natives" to be educated with a view of not being learned clerks capable of signing work tickets but artisans useful both in their own reserves and to the colony in general. And finally, it was proposed that the school should try to use and improve first the materials and

methods existing in the reserve. For instance, it was proposed that since the Keiyo kept bees, it was hoped to introduce through the school better and more economic beehives to foster the beeswax industry and to introduce for sale some good honey. According to John Chebbet a pioneer student at the school in 1928, the school situation was like this:

I went to school when I was 14 years old. Our curriculum comprised of carpentry, tailoring, masonry and joinery. These went hand in hand with reading and writing. Chief Cheptarus Lenja took me to school from my home despite protestations from my father. We were fed, housed, clothed and given free tuition. After graduation I did not want to be a mason. I wanted to be a teacher. I joined Kapsabet where I qualified as a teacher. I taught in so many schools until 1960 when I was appointed a District Officer in Nyeri. Kiptoo Chirchir was my classmate and the first African President of African District Council (ADC).<sup>64</sup>

In essence, the colonial administration, unlike for example among the Kikuyu, did not attempt to train the Keiyo for careers as clerks and teachers. Basically, they were trained in what was termed as industrial work, in carpentry, tailoring, masonry and joinery. The lack or casual teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic concepts did not please the LNC who felt betrayed by the school's administration. The government following LNC pressure realised too that the objective of merely training the Keiyo to serve the colony could not succeed without the ability to read, write and understand simple arithmetic. By 1939 the three subjects had become part and parcel of the curriculum but the main emphasis remained on vocational training.

Initially Tambach had thirty pupils mostly sons of LNC members, chiefs and headmen, and two African teachers. The teachers were housed in brick and corrugated iron-sheet houses while the students stayed in thatched houses with enough space for eight boys each. According to Kiptoo Chirchir the boys were quite old ranging from twelve to twenty-five years old.<sup>65</sup> Water was conveyed by a pipeline to the school using a nearby stream; emanating from the Elgeyo-escarpment using the force of gravity. The LNC had in 1927 felt that their objectives would not be fulfilled without a qualified administrator and made plans to engage a European headmaster with experience. The new headmaster arrived in July 1928 and according to the annual report, "under his energetic direction building operations have gone ahead in a manner distinctly gratifying."<sup>66</sup> His salary was partly paid by the LNC and partly by the government.

By 1930 the school was offering a five-year course in masonry and carpentry. The final year being spent at the Native Industrial Training Depot (NIDP) Kabete. From only thirty students in 1928 the numbers had risen to a hundred in 1930 following the arrival of Mr. Howitt as the headmaster. In 1930 the colonial government provided Sh.19,886/= while the LNC provided Sh.22,400/= towards capital and recurrent expenditure. The average cost of each pupil worked out at Sh.58/= per tuition and Sh.172/= for boarding and lodging totalling Sh.230/= per annum.<sup>67</sup> At the end of 1931 three of

the senior boys were transferred to Kapsabet and twelve transferred to N.I.T.D. Kabete for advanced training.<sup>68</sup> In 1933 out of 28 students who sat for the elementary examination, two qualified as carpenters while eleven obtained certificates.<sup>69</sup> According to Kiptoo Chirchir, all these changed in 1933 with the posting of James Mbotela as headteacher while Howitt remained principal. As he himself recalls:

James Mbotela really motivated the Keiyo on the importance of education." He could address the members of the LNC on the need to send children to school as was happening among the Kikuyu and in the coast. The growing of maize, bananas, beans, pineapples, cabbages and onions took secondary importance. He impressed upon us the importance of cleanliness, punctuality and hardwork. More important, he encouraged all the students to report back with at least one student from our villages after vacation."<sup>70</sup>

The 1934 annual report began to assess the contribution of the school saying that; "The school at Tambach has become a prominent and popular local institution. It makes a useful contribution to the progress of this district under the control of Mr. Howitt. Howitt has won the confidence of this conservative people to the extent that applications for admission are considerably in excess of the number of vacancies."<sup>71</sup> The AIM had by 1934 established a school at Kapsowar for girls while the Mill Hill Catholic Mission had also began construction at Kamariny and Tambach thus breaking the L.N.C. and government monopoly for the provision of

education among the Keiyo and Marakwet. The LNC was reluctant to vote some of its funds. According to Joel Oloibe, the LNC distrusted mission schools because they discouraged circumcision and demanded the renunciation of some of the society's traditional values like offering sacrifices, taking beer and participation in traditional ceremonies like dances, and feasts.<sup>72</sup> In addition, the LNC were not eager to educate girls since their roles were at variance with western education since in traditional society women were subordinate to men. Infact in 1936, the Mill Hill Catholic Mission at Tambach and Kamariny had been abandoned with no progress at all.

In 1937 the school would boast of twenty-two successful former students who had completed Tambach School. Of these eleven were at N.I.T.D. Kabete, six carpenters, three masons and two blacksmiths. The school was, however, greatly hampered by a shortage of qualified teachers. In 1938 there were reported to be eighty-four boys at the school with forty in primary school, forty-four in elementary section, four attending an elementary teachers course at Kapsabet, one at Bukura Agricultural School and two were apprenticed to the Nakuru Tannery.<sup>73</sup>

Inspite of making such progress the school continued to be handicapped by various problems. The first standard eight class sat for Kenya African Preliminary Examination (KAPE) in 1939 and it was reported that none of the students passed the

primary examination.<sup>74</sup> This was attributed to a lack of foundation being made in the "bush" schools which acted as feeder centre for Tambach School. Another problem arose because most of those attending school were too advanced in age. Most parents were unwilling to release their young children and most insisted that they could do so only after "herding hours".<sup>75</sup> In addition, AIM schools had failed to hold ground, mainly because the LNC distrusted schools under their management mainly due to their anti-circumcision attitude adopted by the AIM, a view no Keiyo could agree with.

During the twelve years under review from 1928 to 1939 the foundation was laid for future Keiyo educational requirements. The graduates of the school became respected individuals. Kiptoo Chirchir one of the early pupils had vivid memories of the school. In 1926 Chirchir was a gardener on the farm of a settler Van Hey Den, popularly known as Kipukan. His main duties on the farm included being a loader and slasher-harvester for wheat. He was also in charge of the bullocks which ploughed most of the land. Recrimination by Van Hey Den made him desert and join Tambach School as a student where he studied as far as standard eight. Kendagor Bett, also a former student of Tambach informed Dr. Kipkorir in an interview that he went to Tambach School on his own in order to learn to weigh pyrethrum flowers and thus get employment on neighbouring European farms.<sup>76</sup>

The case of the government African School Tambach shows that the emphasis on education was the work of the Keiyo themselves. In a letter to the Provincial Commissioner Nzoia, the District Commissioner Tambach states that the education department reported favourably about the school's progress.<sup>77</sup> In particular the students from the school had already made their mark at the N.I.T.D. Kabete. Howitt who was headmaster of the school for ten years from 1930 to 1939 deserves a special place in the establishment of a successful academic institution among the Keiyo and Marakwet. Other headmasters of the school upto 1967 included:<sup>78</sup>

TABLE 11 Government African School, Tambach - former  
Headmasters

NAME	PERIOD
G.A. Berriage	1928 - 1929
R.H. Howitt	1930 - 1936
R.C. Wilson	1936 - 1936
R.H. Howitt	1936 - 1939
W.H. Oglemy	1939 - 1940
J. MacMunn	1940 - 1944
H.T. Woodhouse	1944 - 1946
M. Loveland	1946 - 1946
M. de Lainy	1946 - 1949
A.J. Baymer	1950 - 1954
J. Mellin	1954 - 1954
J.L. Crawford	1955 - 1957
H.P. Smith	1957 - 1959
J. Flockhart	1961 - 1964
M.A. Jade	1965 - 1965
N. Oloo	1965 - 1967

For those who knew Howitt, he was regarded as a strict disciplinarian who encouraged agricultural and vocational training which saw the school registering students for the Kenya African Preliminary Examination (K.A.P.E.) in 1939. He was, however, biased towards agriculture introducing a wide range of crops like cassava, onions, coffee, tomatoes,



pineapple, groundnuts, oranges, lemons, pawpaws, maize and other vegetables. This emphasis meant that instead of the Keiyo sending their children to schools like Alliance,<sup>79</sup> they were to contend with N.I.T.D. Kabete, where agricultural and industrial vocations were preferred.

The growth of the school can be exemplified for instance in 1933 when the school had managed to attract eight African teachers and instructors.<sup>80</sup> These were:

1. Mathaka Nthonswa - Headteacher - ex-Machakos
2. Musyoki Mkola - ex-Machakos
3. Kigen arap Cheptum - (The local mail runner's son) an old boy of the school trained at Kapsabet as a teacher.
4. Onyango Onyudi - Mason instructor, ex-N.I.T.D
5. Juspino Kiharu - Blacksmith - Instructor, Swahili - ex-N.I.T.D.
6. Alfred Ogola - Carpenter Instructor - ex-N.I.T.D.
7. Kibina arap Birech - A Nandi - ex-AIM
8. Abdul - Kipsigis - Tailor Instructor - ex-N.I.T.D.

Together with Howitt, they drew up a timetable which the boys had to follow to the letter. A day's time-table could be as follows:

- |              |   |                     |
|--------------|---|---------------------|
| 6.45         | - | Drill and cleaning  |
| 7.30         | - | Breakfast           |
| 8.30 - 10.30 | - | Reading and writing |

10.30 - 12.30	-	<u>Shamba</u> (farm) work
12.30	-	Lunch
2.30 - 5.00	-	Masonry, tailoring and Carpentry
5.00 - 6.00	-	Football <sup>81</sup>

Such organisation drew praise from the acting supervisor of technical education, Mr. G.J. Stroud in 1933. He described the students as "clean and smart at class work, technical work and drill. The boys were evidently cheerful and contented."<sup>82</sup> Stroud, however, failed to appreciate Keiyo dislike of a wholly technical education. Small boys who would be gracefully herding their father's livestock were made to contend with heavy machinery while ploughing. Several of them deserted the school as a result. The school's administration would not let in and described their mission as being to "produce sound peasant farmers ... and to produce artisans capable of carrying out simple carpentry or building either in their own homes or in employment on the neighbouring European farms."<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, education administrators were also quick to appreciate the importance of a literary education. H.O. Weller, the supervisor of technical education described Mr. Kigen arap Cheptum a former student of the school and of Kapsabet as a "very good teacher indeed. His teaching manners were excellent.... He was clean and neat in appearance. His teaching was good tempered."<sup>84</sup>

There was indeed a divergence between the aspirations of the LNC members and the majority of the Keiyo towards the educational spectrum. By 1939 facilities for girls' education was virtually non-existent. According to informants, the only objective of the existing AIM mission stations at Kessup and Kapsowar was it was argued to provide wives for christian husbands rather than literary education for the girls.<sup>85</sup>

However, the establishment of Tambach School, led to tendencies by 1940 towards building of other schools which were attended by both boys and girls. Among these early feeder schools were Kamariny, Kapteren, Chebororwa, Kaptarakwa and Muskut. In retrospect, upto 1939 few Keiyo save for children of LNC members and chiefs had begun to appreciate the benefits to be gained by sending children to school. Most were content to let their children attend to livestock herding and domestic chores. Some distrusted the L.N.C.'s taxing of a extra shilling from them just as the colonial administration at Tambach were doing. Others resisted because the children who attended school had the habit of shaving their hair clean. For the Keiyo this was customarily unacceptable. Hair was only shaved following the death of a relative or during initiation period. On the other hand, instead of appreciating the Keiyo dilemma, the colonial administration described the Keiyo as a "stay at home people".<sup>86</sup> In spite of all this, the establishment of Tambach as a learning institution saw the beginning of a gradual transformation of the Keiyo into a

literate society.

### Conclusion

The chapter has tried to answer one fundamental question: What factors brought about social and economic life during the colonial period before before 1939? There were three avenues of change to Keiyo society: (1) migrant labour; (2) creation of new markets; and (3) western education.

Migrant labour led to accumulation of wealth which in turn led to investments in businesses like in livestock trade, butcheries, shopkeeping and maize milling. Chiefs were instrumental in the creation of markets where commodity exchange between the Kikuyu, the Somali and the Keiyo traders took place. It has further been demonstrated that the highland Keiyo took faster to agricultural innovation more readily than the Keiyo of the escarpment ledge and the Kerio Valley floor. The highland Keiyo experimented in new food and cash crops like maize, wheat, pyrethrum and potatoes. These were for trade purposes. The highland Keiyo also applied new farming methods. Instead of digging with a hoe, the plough was now used. Maize which were traditionally planted by random broadcasting was now planted in rows which ensured a higher yield. And finally, despite the colonial government's reluctance to establish a school for the Keiyo, through the L.N.C. the Keiyo were by 1928 able to establish Tambach School through their own initiative and funding. This saw the

beginning of a gradual transformation of the Keiyo into a literate society.

In the final analysis, these three variables show a gradual economic and social differentiation of society. The concept of mogorio (wealthy man) changed from the ownership of large herds of livestock to ownership of large-scale farms growing wheat and investments in new market centres as businessmen. The competition challenged the European farmers who always relied on the colonial administration for assistance. The colonial administration took measures which the Keiyo rationalised were intended to leave them in a low social and economic position. Keiyo success in re-shaping their institutions was due to the fact that they were able to circumvent colonial restrictions and to borrow new concepts without compromising their traditional values.

Notes

1. Wolff, R.D., Britain and Kenya, 1870-1930 pp.132-139.
2. Soja, E.W., The Geography of Modernisation in Kenya, a Spatial analysis of social, economic and political change, Syracuse University, 1968, pp.3-4.
3. O.I. Kiptoo, Chirchir, 26.12.1989.
4. Republic of Kenya, Enumeration Instructors Manual, Kenya Population Census, 1989, event calendars, Rift Valley Province, 1979, p. 31.
5. The study of Markets and Trade in East Africa has been covered well by G.N. Uzoigwe in his topic "Precolonial Markets in Bunyoro-Kitara" in Economic and Social History of East Africa Hadith 5 by Ogot, B.A. (ed), K.L.B., 1979 pp.24-66.
6. O.I. Micah Tireito, 17.12.1989.
7. O.I. Chemaiyo Sawe, 18.12.89.
8. Huxley, E., A New Earth: an Experiment with Colonialism, Chatto and Windus, London, 1961, pp. 56-57. Huxley was a strong supporter of the settlers in Kenya. He wrote a number of books concerning the settlers, most notable being Whiteman's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya, which is in two volumes.
9. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1991.
10. Ibid.
11. See footnote 5 article by Uzoigwe, G.N. op.cit.
12. Chesang, I.C., "The superstructure of the Semi-Pastoral Keiyo" pp. 6-7.
13. KNA DC/ELGM/1/1 1919-1921 Elgeyo-Marakwet Handing over Report, pp. 1-11.
14. O.I. Arap Birir, 22.10.1989.
15. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/1, 1919-1921 Op. cit.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. O.I. Kiboit Chelimo, 16.10.1989.

19. KNA DC/ELGM/1/1 1925-1927, Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report, p. 5.
20. Huxley, E., A New Earth, pp. 53-54.
21. O.I. Salim Chepkaitany, 22.10. 1989.
22. The same concept is alluded to in Morris, P. and Somerset, A., African Businessmen: A Study of Entrepreneurship and Development in Kenya, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1971, p. 63.
23. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989 and Chemaiyo Sawe, 17.10. 1989.
24. O.I. arap Birir, 22.10.1989.
25. Ibid.
26. KNA DC/ELGM/1/3 1936-1940 - Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report. pp. 3-8.
27. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 12.11.1989 and Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989.
28. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/3 Op. cit.
29. A similar case has been discussed in; Ndege, P.O., "Economic change in Kasipul-Kabondo, 1800-19621", an unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1987, p. 257.
30. KNA DC/ELGM/1/3/1936/1940 - Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report, pp. 17-22.
31. Tignor, R., The Colonial Transformation of Kenya, p. 300.
32. O.I. Salim Chepkeitany, 22.10.1989.
33. KNA DC/ELGM/1/3/ Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report - 1940, p. 12.
34. Massam, J.A., p. 5.
35. Ogotu, M.A., "Agriculture and the Development of Markets in the Western Province of Kenya, 1930-1960", in Ogot, B.A., (ed) Ecology and History in East Africa, KLB, Nairobi, 1979, pp. 217-218.

36. O.I. Tororei Tuilonget, 10.11.1989, John Chesire, 13.11.1989 and Chepkuto Kimunji, 16.11.1989.
37. Massam, J.A., pp. 5-7.
38. KNA DC/ELGM/1/3 Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report of 1940, p. 12.
39. Wolff, D., pp. 88-94. For a detailed analysis on the monopolistic advantages enjoyed by settlers see Leys, C., Under-Development in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, 1964-1971, Heinemann, London, 1975, p. 34. See also Yoshida M., "The Protected Development of European Agriculture in Kenya", in Journal of Rural Development, 1971, pp. 76-102.
40. KNA, DC/Tam/2/1/18 Administration Conferences Farmers Associations 1933-52.
41. O.I. Salim Chepkeitany, 12.9.1989. Another informant, Elijah Chemweno however, stated that the first Keiyo to own a plough was Kite Tiren.
42. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/4, Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual Report, 1927-1936, p. 13.
43. Ibid.
44. KNA, DC/Tamb/1/9/8 Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual Report - 1944-45, p. 1.
45. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989. Chirchir states that at the African District Council meeting in 1945, he informed D. Storr Fox about his displeasure on the banning. The D.C. was, however, not willing to lift the ban.
46. Op. cit.
47. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 22.12.1989.
48. Op. cit.
49. O.I. Arap Chelelgo, 13.12.1989.
50. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/1 Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual Report, 1918-1919.
51. KNA, Native Affairs Annual Department Report 1925, p. 4.
52. Op. cit.



53. Mutua, R.W., "The Development of Educational Administration in Kenya, 1846-1963" unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Nairobi, 1971 p. 1. See also Anderson, J.. The Struggle for the School, Longman, 1970, pp. 1-8.
54. Rodney, W., How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, p. 261.
55. T. Zeleza, in "The establishment of Colonial Rule, 1905-1920" in Ochieng, W.R., (ed) A Modern History of Kenya, argues that the responses of various groups and regions to western education was conditioned by the penetration and development of capitalism and its articulation with previous modes of production.
56. Gulliver, P.H., (ed) Tradition and Transition in East Africa, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1969, p. 148.
57. Kipkorir, B.E. The Marakwet of Kenya, pp. 44-47.
58. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 16.11.1989, Kipn'gatib, 21.11.1989 and Elijah Chemweno, 23.10.1989. See also the excellent article by Welbourn, F., and Kiprono entitled, "Keiyo Initiation" in Journal of Religion in Africa Vol. 1, Fasc. 3, 1968.
59. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/2 Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual Report, 1926, pp. 1-3.
60. Ibid. The school was established in 1927 but was opened in 1928.
61. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/2 Elgeyo Marakwet District Annual Report 1927-1932, pp. 4-5.
62. Ibid.
63. It is important to point out that primary data for this section was difficult to obtain. The Headmaster denied me access to any past school files. The names of pioneer students were not even availed to me making it difficult to trace past students to interview. However, I managed to trace two, John Chebbet and Kiptoo Chirchir who were of invaluable assistance. I am, however, grateful to the Deputy Headmaster Mr. Katete who gave me a parent's day speech which included a short history of the school.
64. O.I. John Chebbet, 6.1.1990.
65. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989.
66. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/2 op. cit.

67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/3 Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual Report 1933-1937. We are not given the full name of the examination in the annual report.
70. O.I. Kiptoo Chirchir, 26.12.1989.
71. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/3 Op. cit.
72. O.I. Joel Oloibe, 7.1.1990.
73. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/4 Elgeyo Marakwet Annual Report, 1938-1939.
74. The fact of the standard eight class sitting for KAPE for the first time in 1939 was given to me by Mr. Katete, the Deputy Headmaster of the school on 6.11.1989. However, the information of en masse failure was obtained from KNA, DC/ELGM/1/4 Op. cit Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report, 1939.
75. KNA, DC/ELGM/3/1 Elgeyo-Marakwet District Political records, 1937.
76. Kipkorir, B.E., "Alliance High School and the Making of the Kenya Elite", unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Cambridge University, 1969, p. 127.
77. KNA, DC/ELGM/1/4 Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report 1938-1939, p. 9.
78. The list is found outside the administration offices of Tambach School, taken on 7.11.1989.
79. Kipkorir, B.E., op, cit.
80. KNA Ref. No. 34/Adm./15/10 D.Cs office Tambach 21.1.1933 to P.C. R.V.P. Nzoia, Eldoret, p. 2.
81. Ibid.
82. KNA Agr. No.1/3/36 Report of Acting Supervisor of Technical Education on 30th December, 1933.
83. KNA Ref. No. F 2429 5/1/13 Norman Larby Educational Development in the R.V.P. 1933/66, p. 1.
84. Ibid.

85. O.I. Kipchamasis Tireito, 22.12.1989 and John Chesire, 12.11.89.
86. Op. cit.

CHAPTER SIXCONCLUSION

This study has been concerned with the impact of colonial rule on Keiyo society during the period between 1902 and 1939. The study has demonstrated that the Keiyo were not the hapless victims of an alien government. While grudgingly paying tax when cornered, and moving out as migrant labourers for the shortest period possible, they succeeded in eluding many aspects of colonial rule. They sought the provision of educational and health facilities, and the building of roads. And they participated actively in trade and business.

The study has first shown that the Keiyo were an amalgam of a plurality of clans, who emerged as a result of migration from various places and interaction with its neighbours. These various clans settled on the escarpment ledge and the Kerio Valley floor, and eventually absorbed an earlier population of the Okiek, Sirikwa and the Terngeny. In reconstructing ethnic origins, Mwanzi's argument of the evolution of the Kalenjin is taken as opposed to the theories of migration. We therefore postulate other variables to explain the emergence of a distinct Keiyo society. The Keiyo are presented as a hybrid society through interaction with the Tugen, Nandi and the Maasai. This interaction, within and without Keiyo land, was made possible because of symbiotic relations, famine and intermarriages. Such relations were possible because the Keiyo and their neighbours shared a

common environment. The escarpment ledge was easily defensible and acted as a sanctuary against cattle raiders.

Keiyo society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is presented as remarkably egalitarian. The Keiyo practised varying modes of subsistence. The escarpment ledge was ideal for hunting, gathering and honey collection. Crops such as sorghum, millet and tobacco were grown along the foothills of the escarpment. In addition, livestock such as goats, sheep and cattle were kept. The tsetse flies and mosquitoes limited the utility of livestock in the Kerio Valley floor. On the political angle, matters that affected local communities were solved by local elders at the Kokwet council. Issues that affected all the Keiyo were settled at the Bororiet council. The Councils held ad hoc meetings only when it was essential. In addition kinship ties and age-groups gave the people a sense of belonging and solidarity. While all these factors helped to create a homogenous society, it was the colonial administration from the twentieth century that contributed greatly to the consolidation of a distinct Keiyo society.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Maasai threats to the Keiyo from the Uasin Gishu plateau had declined. This made it possible for the Keiyo to move to the upper ledges of the escarpment for grazing and cultivation. Bamboo forests were cleared between the escarpment and the Uasin Gishu plateau for habitation. However, this gradual movement never resulted in complete occupation of the plateau due to the

arrival of British settlers in 1904.

In 1902 the control of the Eastern Province of Uganda was transferred to the present Kenya. This area included those parts inhabited by the Keiyo. The Keiyo were then administered from Eldama Ravine until 1912 when Marakwet station at Kapsowar was established as the administrative centre for the Marakwet and the Keiyo. In 1919 a sub-station was established at Kamariny to administer the Keiyo separately. This station was later moved to Tambach in 1927.

The entrenchment of colonialism affected the Keiyo in a very profound manner. First, a Keiyo reserve was created in 1905 with the sole purpose of inducing the Keiyo as wage-labourers and to force them pay tax. And finally, by 1923, 328 square miles out of 400 square miles of the highland plateau was alienated from the Keiyo by the E.M.S. Grogan Concession. The Keiyo were thus deprived of vital grazing land. A forest reserve was created from Kaptagat to Kipkabus to stop the Keiyo from grazing or occupying the vacant land. Faced with these constraints the Keiyo devised ways and means of grazing in the concession while exploiting other opportunities that presented themselves. Second, in 1910 the Keiyo were forced to pay taxes that were taken to the District Commissioner at Eldama Ravine. Initially very few people paid. Keiyo villages were scattered while at the same time, the escarpment ledges were not easily accessible. The Keiyo played a game of hide and seek with the settlers and the

colonial administration in its attempt to maintain its interests against a more powerful force.

The colonial administration is shown in the thesis as assisting the settlers in their various demands on the Keiyo. The settlers in Uasin Gishu required cheap Keiyo labour, and they sought to monopolise of trade and business and cheap commodities. The administration and the settlers agreed on the need to perpetual side-lining of the Keiyo as "cliff-dwellers". The Keiyo reacted by evading tax collectors. In addition, the Keiyo resisted recruitment as migrant labourers, and turned to illegal grazing in the E.M.S. Grogan and forest concessions and even theft of settler livestock and goods. From 1926, the Local Native Council championed Keiyo rights by demanding for education and health facilities, as well as the lifting of the quarantine on livestock and the creation of a road network. At the same time Keiyo migrant labourers were able to accumulate wealth and skills which were later used in the creation of businesses and as traders in butcheries, shops, maize milling and livestock trading. The farmers adopted the use of the plough and the concept of planting seeds in a row as opposed to the system of random broadcasting. The Keiyo further adopted the growing of cash crops like wheat, maize, potatoes and pyrethrum. In this way they challenged the settler cash crop monopoly and forced the settlers to seek help from the colonial administration in banning the Keiyo from participating in a market economy.

Faced with this settler challenge, the colonial administration declared the district closed to all outsiders and anyone who wished to get in had to declare his or her interests. This attempt to isolate the Keiyo however, is shown not to have overwhelmed them. They ignored colonial demands and sought markets among the Tugen, Kikuyu and the Somali, while at the same time resisting colonial attempts at cheap requisition of their livestock on the pretext of avoiding the ecological crisis, which was itself a colonial creation.

This thesis has therefore told the story of a rural people's adaptation and initiatives in the face of alien intrusion. Attempts to make the Keiyo an appendage of colonial economy were not fully successful. Instead the Keiyo offered the settler monopolists a challenge which could only be halted by resorting to use of laws. The Keiyo, responded to the market conditions in the organisation of production of trade commodities like maize, pyrethrum, wheat and potatoes. They also turned to keeping grade cattle which yielded more milk than the local zebu. These initiatives permitted solutions to drought at all levels of society. The Keiyo took advantage of alternative ways of survival following the change from a subsistence economy to a monetary economy. This introduced a new dimension to the previously pastoral and agricultural society with certain categories of people accumulating money and investing in various businesses. Within the highland plateau there was a shift from communal



land use to individual land ownership thereby providing some Keiyo with access to full exploitation of land without reference to kinship ties. Division of labour was no longer exclusively based on gender, for both sexes applied their energies in producing goods and services for the market economy. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the fundamental unit of production and consumption was the household land. As the colonial period progressed the women were left to manage the homestead while the men laboured on the various other activities.

Thus during the early decades of colonial rule the society had not been unduly affected by alien politics and religion. The Keiyo had, however, been affected by economic changes such as migrant wage labour, business and accumulation of wealth. The Keiyo were able to exploit the opportunities created by colonialism to better their lives through trade, markets, agriculture, business and education. Despite the loss of land through the Grogan Concession which left a greatly reduced area for grazing, the Keiyo managed to maintain a considerable degree of economic viability in serious competition with the settlers. By 1939 Keiyo society had undergone certain social and economic changes, while at the same time maintaining its traditional organisation, values and institutions. It is argued the new circumstances of the Keiyo came about as a result of their resourcefulness and ability to adapt to change.

GLOSSARY (all Keiyo words, unless indicated otherwise)

Asis	Sun
Bikap Oret	Lineage
Bakule	a circumcision mate
Bororiet	Council of Elders
Biret ab beek	Splitting of water
Borietab tai ne bo Jerman	First World War
Chebo Kipkoiyo	God
Cheptaillel	God
Chesawiloi	Spirits
Hongo	tax
Ilchet	drought
Ilat	thunder
Kip-Keiyo	a place of birth
Kipkeiya (singular)	hermit(s)
Kipkeinik (plural)	
Kon'gasis	East
Korget	Middle zone
Kimolik	type of fruit
Kiton'gik	Ironsmiths
Kemeub Kimakatoi	Famine of skins
Kemeub Kipsigirio	Famine of donkeys
Kokwet	Council of Elders
Kiptaiyat	Messenger
Koroit	Colobus monkey
Kapkoros	Sanctuary
Kokob-oi	Mother of all spirits

Kenyitab Kibichotit	Year of locusts
Kap-blue	Squatter farms
Kipnyabaraindet	Foreman
Kimnyet	Pudding made of maize flour
Kipkaa	Original
Lon'gno	Arrow with two protruding points
Mosop	Upper zone
Mursik	Curdled milk
Mboket	hoe
Mobus	prisoner
Mogorio	wealthy
Nyakanek	root tubers
Nyamtutik	nice smelling medicinal plants
Ngoki	evil
N'genda	salt lick
Nusut	exotic cattle
Oret	clan
Orkoiyot	Nandi ritual leader
Oiik	spirits
Posho (Swahili)	maize flour
Ringet	sickle
Safari (Swahili)	tour
Soin	valley floor
Saket ab eito	sharing of the bull
Setanik	war medicine (potion)
Tulwop Kony	Mount Elgon

Terngeny		dwarf
Tarketi		Somali
Ugali	(Swahili)	see Kimnyet

BIBLIOGRAPHYA. Oral DataBiographies of Major Informants

1. William Kiptoo Chirchir was interviewed on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1989, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1989, 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1989 and 6<sup>th</sup> January, 1990. The informant stated that he was 76 years of age. The interviews were done at his farm at Kaptagat, (Chirchir centre) except on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 1990 when the interview was done at Eldoret. Chirchir was one of my most committed informants. He claims to have been born in 1913, by 1926 he was already a labourer. He later joined Tambach School and was educated up to standard eight. By 1936 he was a politician. He presented his memorandum to the Carter Land Commission in 1932 as a member of the Local Native Council. He later became a member of the African District Council and the Legislative Council (Legco).

Chirchir states that he was a personal friend of the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and Sir Michael Blundell. Unlike other Kalenjins who joined K.A.D.U., Chirchir remained in K.A.N.U., claiming that K.A.D.U. was parochial. He was so helpful and since he spoke in fluent English, communication was very easy. First, his father was among those evacuated from Uasin Gishu plateau in 1923 to leave room for white settlement. Their land was occupied by a settler called Douglas. Second, he remembers by name almost all the settlers that occupied Keiyo lands. Third, his knowledge of all Keiyo chiefs from 1910 was most helpful. Fourth, he was very clear in his mind of all Keiyo land boundaries before colonial alienation. Fifth, he was aware of the process under which Grogan was allocated Keiyo lands. He was a signatory to the 1957 Memoranda in which the Keiyo demanded the return of the

Grogan Concession. Sixth, he provided information that led to the 1919 Koopke expedition by the British. Seventh, as a member and pioneer of the Local Native Council, he was knowledgeable about its creation, responsibilities, duties, problems and achievements. Eighth, Chirchir fought for the rights of Keiyo soldiers in Malaysia during the second world war from 1939-1945. Ninth, as one of the Keiyo to be educated in 1928, he spoke competently about education and missionary endeavour during the colonial period. And finally Chirchir kept all appointments and required the assurance that all information given should not be divulged to the press. He died on 23.8.93.

2. Noah Kipchamasis Tireito was interviewed on 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1987, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1987 and on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1989. The informant was interviewed at his home, Kaptagat (Flax) and stated that he was born in 1904 and has had no formal education. He only learnt to read and write while in prison for stealing a goat. Tireito is regarded by all my informants as the most knowledgeable person in Keiyo pre-colonial history. He has been fondly nicknamed as Professor Kuko (grandfather). He was very articulate on various aspects of Keiyo history. These include a history of Keiyo origin, migration and pattern of settlement. In addition Tireito is rightly referred to as a "mobile depository" of Keiyo traditions, customs, values and social, economic and political organisation. The inter-ethnic relations between Tugen, Nandi, Marakwet, Sirikwa and Maasai were made clear by Tireito. Indeed the various methods of Keiyo worship sacrifices and venerations were his pet subjects. Other aspects included Keiyo oaths, inheritance, marriage, death, medicine and other social phenomenon. He worked for the settlers as a gardener, cook and an agitator for Keiyo land rights, particularly the return of the E.M.S. Grogan

Concession. Like Chirchir, he was very appreciative. He too was a member of the African District Council and also the District Court and Tribunal.

3. Salim Chepkeitany was interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1990. The interview was done at his farm Kipsiriende, a few kilometres from Eldoret. A Muslim, Chepkeitany is highly regarded as knowledgeable in Keiyo pre-colonial history. He stated that he was about 83 years of age. He was a former colonial chief, a councillor and a pioneer businessman and farmer. His experience on early Keiyo traders and farmers was most helpful. In addition, he gave me a lot of information on Keiyo land tenure systems, the squatter phenomenon, the duties of chiefs, the Grogan Concession, the growth of Tambach School and livestock trade.
4. Job Cheburet was interviewed at his home Katuiyo on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1989. He states that he was born in about 1910. He worked for a settler nicknamed as Kipukan (Van Hey Den) for about 40 years until Van Hey Den left the country in the 1960s. Cheburet provided insights into the various origins of the Keiyo clans and particularly the role of famine in dispersing the Keiyo. He narrated to me various aspects of Keiyo migrant labourers in terms of methods of recruitment, rate of pay, accommodation, rations and the general characteristics of squatter labour.
5. Elijah Chemweno was interviewed at his home Chepkorio on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1989. He estimated his age to be more than 70 years. He was appointed Chief of Soy location in the 1950s and he retired in 1972. Chemweno was one of the first Keiyo to be converted to the Christian religion (A.I.C.) at Kessup. He had initially laboured in the European farms and also attended Tambach School.
6. Kiboit Chelimo who was interviewed on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1989, stated that he was now about 85 years of age. The

interview was conducted at his home Simit in Kerio Valley. A veteran of the Second World War in Malaysia and Burma, Kiboit joined the then Kenya African Rifles (K.A.R.) in 1920s. He was recruited at Tambach and knew well the various Keiyo people who joined the K.A.R. and their conditions of work. In addition, Kiboit was a young boy at Koopke during the 1919 British expedition and witnessed British punitive actions against Keiyo.

7. Chebokel Kipkenei was interviewed on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1990 at his brother's home, Cherota (incidentally he is the writer's grandfather). In 1930, following a shortage of grazing for livestock, he migrated to Cherangany. He has since then lived there. The circumstances under which he left the reserve illuminate the impact of the 1923 E.M.S. Grogan Concession on the Keiyo.
8. Henry Chemweno passed away in 1990 at 47 years old. Interviews with him commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1987 and until his death we both shared the same commitment of writing Keiyo history for posterity. As a former primary school teacher, he had in his possession a number of scripts on various aspects of Keiyo history. He assisted in interviewing other informants for this thesis in addition to being interviewed himself.



List of Informants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Arap Kogo Chemjor	Cherota	19.11.89
2. Arap Chepkut Chebii	Kipkabus	9.8.89
3. Birir arap Songio	Chororget	22.10.89
4. Chepsat Samuel	Kapukan	9.8.87
5. Cheburet Job	Kapukan	6.8.89
6. Chemweno Henry	Kaptagat	16.8.87
7. Chesire John	Katuiyo	13.11.89
8. Chepkeitany Salim	Kipsinende	14.1.90
9. Chebaige arap Mandago	Kiptulos	6.10.89
10. Chelagat arap Tomno	Kaptagat	6.9.90
11. Chemwotei Chepchoge	Katuiyo	16.1.90
12. Chemweno Elijah	Chepkorio	11.11.89
13. Chirchir Kiptoo	Kaptagat	26.12.89
14. Cheptulil arap Barno	Simit	17.1.90
15. Chebiego Philemon	Katuiyo	16.12.89
16. Chesang arap Chumo	Iten	19.12.89
17. Chelelgo arap Kogo	Kamariny	13.12.89
18. Chebet John	Chepkorio	1.12.89
19. Kipchamasis Tireito	Kaptagat	10.8.87
20. Kobilo Evelyn	Katuiyo	6.11.87
21. Kipn'gatib Kattam	Kapsoo	17.8.87
22. Kipkenei Chebokel	Cherota	16.1.90
23. Kiboit Chelimo Kimunji	Simit	10.10.89

24.	Katete (Mr.)	Tambach School	6.11.89
25.	Mandago Chemjor	Cherota	6.8.89
26.	Oloibe Joel	Lelboinet	13.11.89
27.	Sawe Stanley	Iten	9.8.87
28.	Sawe Chemaiyo	Eldoret	18.12.89
29.	Toroitich Kandie	Katuiyo	17.8.87
30.	Toroitich Tuilonget	Iten	10.11.89
31.	Tireito Chepkurgat	Nyaru	12.1.90
32.	Tuei arap Kipkenei	Kimwarer	16.10.89
33.	Tireito Micah	Chepkorio	17.12.89
34.	Tanui Kiplel	Nyaru	11.9.89
35.	Tanui Kikono	Muskut	29.11.89
36.	Tomno Barmao	Kapkenda	14.9.89
37.	Uria arap Mokio	Muskut	21.9.89
38.	Walter Sego Kima	Kapchemutwa	27.9.89
39.	Wilson Chelagat	Kipsaos	22.10.89
40.	Wendot S.M.	Iten	20.11.89
41.	Zephaniah Kotut	Plateau	2.9.89

## B. Archival Sources

### Kenya National Archives (KNA)

Most of the available material dealt with the Keiyo and Marakwet in general. However, only material dealing with the Keiyo were considered. Some of the files shown below were recorded as missing or in very poor condition.

1. DC/ELGM/1/1                      1912-1927, The file has the Annual Reports of Elgeyo-Marakwet issued by the DC  
Mr. E.B. Hosking, et al.
2. \_\_\_\_\_                      1928-1932, This file contains the annual reports of Elgeyo-Marakwet issued by the D.C. Mr. E.B. Hosking, et al.
3. \_\_\_\_\_                      1933-1937, This file contains the annual report for Elgeyo-Marakwet issued by the D.C.s Messrs J.M. Silver and L.T. Davenport.
4. DC/ELGM/2/1                      1926-1959, This file contains the Handing over reports.
5. DC/ELGM/3/1/2                      1911-1958, This file is in the form of a Political Record book.
6. DC/ELGM/4/1                      This file contains miscellaneous correspondence on the Keiyo.
7. DC/ELGM/5/1                      This file contains information about the Keiyo land tenure system. More importantly is the Hosking-Barton memorandum in relation to Native (Keiyo) rights in the Grogan Forest Concession - 1921-1956.
8. DC/ELGM/6/1                      1919-1928, This file contains confidential correspondence on the Keiyo and Marakwet.
9. DC/Bar/3/3                      This file contains material on Baringo Political District record book.
10. DC/UG/2/1                      This file is on the Uasin Gishu political record book.

- |     |                  |   |
|-----|------------------|---|
| 11. | DC/TAMB/2/2/10/8 | This file contains material on the Kendur Salt Lick, 1929-1956.                   |
| 12. | DC/TAMB/1/7/1    | This file contains Administration Labour Complaints - 1930-1938.                  |
| 13. | DC/TAMB/1/2/1    | Reports on food shortage in Elgeyo - 1937-1946.                                   |
| 14. | DC/TAMB/1/2/3    | Correspondence dealing with control of price of potatoes, 1943-1948.              |
| 15. | DC/TAMB/1/2/4    | Correspondence dealing with the purchase of poultry.                              |
| 16. | DC/TAMB/1/2/5    | Correspondence dealing with the supply and processing of farm products 1939-1949. |
| 17. | DC/TAMB/1/2/6    | Circulars on bee-hive keeping and crop production in native areas.                |

Files used dealing with general correspondence

- |     |                |
|-----|----------------|
| 18. | DC/TAMB/1/9/8  |
| 19. | DC/TAMB/1/9/9  |
| 20. | DC/TAMB/1/9/10 |

Files reported as missing

- |     |               |   |   |
|-----|---------------|---|---|
| 21. | DC/TAMB/1/9/7 | } | apart from the curiosity on what  |
| 22. | DC/TAMB/1/9/6 | } | information the files may have contained, it otherwise did not limit my research. |

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3. Republic of Kenya, District Atlas Elgeyo-Marakwet, ASAL, Government Printer, 1985.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Elgeyo-Marakwet District Development Plan 1984-1988, Government Printer, 1985.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Kenya Population Census, Enumerators Instructions Manual, Government Printer, 1989.

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13. Ndege, P.O., "Economic change in Kasipul-Kabondo, 1800-1962", MA thesis, University of Nairobi, 1987.
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APPENDIXQUESTIONNAIRE

The aim of the questionnaire was to guide the collection of oral information on the experiences of the Keiyo during the colonial period. Information was required on the following topics. Informants were assured of the confidentiality of information.

Early Colonial Administration

1. When did the first whiteman set foot in Keiyo land?
2. How many were they?
3. Who were they?
4. Which places did they visit?
5. Which age group were in power then?
6. How did the whiteman first set about administering the Keiyo?
7. What was the reaction of the Keiyo to alien rule?
8. Were there any expeditions against the Keiyo?
9. Did the Europeans tax the Keiyo?
10. If yes, when was that? Who was collecting the taxes?  
How did you raise the tax? How much was being paid?
11. Who was the first chief to be appointed for the Keiyo?

Land Factor

1. How was the Keiyo land tenure system organised?
2. In what various ways did the Keiyo acquire land?

3. How was land used among the Keiyo?
4. What was the extent of Keiyo boundaries before colonial rule?
5. Who were living in the area settled by the Europeans?
6. How much land did the Keiyo lose to the Europeans?
7. Was there any negotiation or agreement?
8. Do you have an idea about the Grogan Concession?
9. Which sections suffered most after land alienation?
10. How did the Keiyo community respond to this loss of land?

#### Migrant Labour

1. Following the arrival of European rule which sections of the Keiyo sought labour?
2. What kind of labour was this?
3. What was the name of your European employer?
4. What was his character?
5. How much were you being paid per month?
6. Was he/she providing you with food, shelter and health facilities?
7. Did you work with non-Keiyo?
8. What generally did you do with the wages?
9. Were you a squatter, and explain why?
10. What was the difference between a squatter and a casual labourer?
11. Did you bring your family and livestock with you?



12. What were the benefits and disadvantages of squatter labour?
13. How was life generally in the reserve?

#### Socio-Economic Changes

1. Which crops did you grow before colonial rule?
2. What type of trade were you practising then?
3. Which crops did the Europeans introduce to the Keiyo?
4. Did you plant cash crops?
5. Can you name the first Keiyo cash crop farmers?
6. How did land alienation affect Keiyo livestock production?
7. Who were the first Keiyo traders and businessmen?
8. Where were they first located?
9. Which commodities did they trade in?
10. What was the reaction of the colonial government and the European settlers to emerging Keiyo entrepreneurs?
11. Did you adopt any technological innovation from the settlers or the colonial government?
12. Which was the first school to be built for the Keiyo? Who were the initiators of the project?
13. Can you name pioneer students of the school?
14. What subjects were you taught?
15. When did the first missionaries propagate to the Keiyo and where? What was the Keiyo response?
16. When was a road network first constructed in Keiyoland?

17. What can you say were the most important changes brought by European rule?
18. Can you suggest those Keiyo institutions that persisted after colonial intrusion?