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MAASAI RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM.

(1895 - 1930)

ABSTRACT: The Maasai traditional way of life. The study therefore The entire aim of this study is to examine the Maasai way of life in the context of present day Kenya, in order to establish the extent the Maasai resisted colonialism during this period, 1895-1930. This is to ascertain, in the light of the colonial contact, events in the lives of these people, why it is believed that they are unchanging in contrast to other Kenyans. Out of the thirteen sections of the Maasai in Kenya, representatives of only five sections were interviewed. This included selected Maasai personalities from the Kaputiei, Ildalalekutuk, Ilkeekoryokie of Kajiado, the Loita and the Punko of Narok Districts. These people, who to-day live on the periphery of Maasailand, were within reach, limitation of time and funds prevented my going further a field. However the information gathered was broad enough to apply to all Kenya Maasai.

The paper begins with the background of the Maasai, dealing with geographical and traditional setting of these people. This is done in the endeavour to understand the Maasai as a people and their culture

in comparison with other Kenyans. This is to help in determining the extent the coming of these foreigners disrupted the Maasai traditional way of life. The study therefore examines the impact, social, political and economic events had on the Maasai during the period, 1895-1930. It deals with invasion by foreigners and the epidemics of the 19th Century which weakened the Maasai, hence the British entrenchment and the creation of 'Maasai Reserve'. The establishment of the 'Maasai Reserve' particularly the administrative policy adopted by the British colonial government led to the underdevelopment of Maasailand. This interfered with the social particularly education, political and economic progress of these people.

In order to arrive at some conclusions on the basis of my research, finally the study examines what factors in particular during this colonial time have contributed to the Maasai resistance if at all, and the underdevelopment in comparison with other Kenyans. On the whole the Maasai resistance to colonialism was not as militant as was expected by the colonialists, instead it was mainly passive and this included cultural resistance.