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## **S.4 A History P1 Notes**

### **MAU- MAU REBELLION (1952 - 1956)**

This was a clandestine (secret) nationalistic movement in Kenya.

It was formed by extremist ex-soldiers of World War II in 1946 to fight the colonial government.

The phrase MAU-MAU is an abbreviation of a Swahili slogan “Mzungu Ayende Ulaya Mwafirika Apate Uhuru” loosely translated as the white man should return to Europe and the African gets independence.

The rebellion effectively began in 1952 and ended in 1960.

#### **Causes of the rebellion**

Loss of land to the white settlers angered the Africans especially the Kikuyu and that's why they joined the movement in large numbers.

Africans were pushed into reserve camps where conditions were unfavorable for instance they were overcrowded and lacked schools and medical centers.

Mau-Mau fighters were struggling for the independence of Kenya i.e. most of the ex-soldiers had a negative view about colonialism.

Poor labour conditions also forced Africans to join the Mau Mau movement i.e. Africans were denied employment as better jobs were given only to the whites.

Restrictions imposed on the growing of cash crops also angered the Africans i.e. it was only the whites that were allowed to grow cash crops.

The return of the World War II ex-soldiers led to the formation of the movement. When they compared the situation in Europe with that of Kenya, it was still backward.

Africans were also against the introduction of the Kipande (Identity cards) because it denied Africans freedom of movement.

The Mau Mau resistance was also as a result of unfair taxation i.e. the British introduced poll tax which was too high for the Africans.

Africans were denied a chance of trading with their neighbours, Asians and the coastal people because the trade was dominated by Indians or Asians.

Mau -Mau fighters also hated the European attitude towards African traditional beliefs and cultures e.g. missionaries attacked the Kikuyu female circumcision.

Africans were denied a chance of attaining western education and this was a deliberate move to keep them backward.

Africans also hated racial segregation in education Institutions, residential areas, and medical centres and in government offices hence caused rebellions.

The emergence of able leaders also led to the formation of the movement i.e. leadership was provided by Elites such as Jomo Kenyatta, Harry Thuku, Bildad Kaggia, Dedan Kimathi, General China (Waruhiu Itote).

Africans were also tired of the settlers influence on Government decisions and policies i.e. the settlers wanted to turn Kenya into a settler colony like Rhodesia and South Africa.

The Mau Mau fighters were not pleased by the revelations of the British government to affect constitutional changes in Kenya i.e. they wanted greater African representation on the legislative council.

### **Course of the rebellion**

Mau -Mau started in 1946 as an underground movement in Kenya to fight the colonial government and bring independence as soon as possible.

It was formed by the Kenya African Union extremists (KAU) including the ex-soldiers of World War II.

The movement was basically a tribal rebellion of the Kikuyu and when fighting intensified, the rebellion spread to other communities such as Kamba, Meru, and Embu e.t.c.

Mau -Mau guerillas and their supporters took oaths that bound them to obedience, secrecy and support of the movement.

The supporters of the movement sang hymns in which the name of Jomo was substituted for Jesus Christ.

By 1950, the Mau Mau fighters started to act violently and the British government declared the militant group illegal and unlawful.

After being declared illegal, the guerillas retreated to Aberdare Ranges and slopes of Mt. Kenya where they launched attacks on the colonial government and white settler farms.

They formed gangs which could steal arms, destroy plantations and committed arson (burning property that belonged to the settlers) e.g. plantations, homes e.t.c.

Many chiefs who opposed the movement were hacked to death e.g. in October 1952 chief Waruhiu Kiambu was murdered for being loyal to the government.

On 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1952, the British governor Sir Evelyn Baring declared a state of emergency.

Sir Evelyn Baring called in the Kings African Rifles (KAR) to suppress the movement and by the end of the year, more soldiers had been flown in from Britain.

In April 1953, Jomo Kenyatta and other leaders of the movement especially the Kikuyu were tried and sentenced to 7yrs in jail.

In 1954, several Kikuyu were arrested for not giving a convincing reason for being in Nairobi at such a time.

In 1955, General China was arrested but Dedan Kimathi continued with the resistance up to October 1956 when he was also captured in the Aberdare forest.

By 1956, the movement had been weakened seriously but the hunt for Mau -Mau fighters continued up to 1960.

### **Effects of the rebellion**

The rebellion was so costly to the British government i.e. The British spent over 50,000 pounds to suppress the movement.

Many African leaders and activists were arrested for opposing colonialism e.g. Jomo Kenyatta, Dedan Kimathi, General China e.t.c.

The rebellion taught the British that Kenyans seriously wanted independence and couldnt settle for anything less than that.

There was massive destruction of property e.g. shops were looted and gardens belonging to the white settlers were destroyed.

Many families and clans disintegrated as a result of the chaos during the course of the movement.

Due to the destruction of crops, food stores and the unsettled life, agriculture declined and famine broke out.

The rebellion led to a decline of Kenyas economy since trade and commerce came to a standstill.

The rebellion shattered the white settlers dream of turning Kenya into a settler colony like Rhodesia.

Land that had belonged to the Africans before was reclaimed as the British changed the land policy.

Africans were allowed to grow cash crops and schools, hospitals; roads were built to cool African tempers.

The rebellion led to the emergence of leaders like Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, Daniel Arap Moi e.t.c who spear headed the independence struggle in Kenya.

Political parties were formed and allowed to operate e.g. K.A.N.U (Kenya African National Union) and this spear headed the campaign for self rule or independence.

The rebellion created a period of confusion and uncertainty among the people e.g. between 1952 — 1960, Kenya was in a state of emergency.

The British came to good terms with Africans. From this time, African interests gained supremacy over Asian and white settler interests.

Both Africans and Europeans lost their lives during the rebellion.

### **Why did the Africans lose against the British in the rebellion?**

Europeans were military superior compared to Africans they had better guns while Africans used traditional weapons like spears, bows and arrows.

Disunity among African societies also weakened their struggle against the imposition of colonial rule and therefore they could not form a united front against the colonialists.

The teachings of the Christian missionaries weakened African societies. They softened the hearts and minds of Africans to the extent that some could not see the need to fight the whites.

Collaborators who supported colonial powers also weakened those resisting because they used to leak information to the colonialists.

Many African societies were hit by diseases The Kikuyu, Maasai, Nandi were for example hit by rinder pest, long periods of drought and famine that weakened them and therefore made their fights against European rule ineffective.

Poor military tactics. African societies lacked military strategies.

Many African chiefs were ignorant of the intentions of the Europeans. They thought that the whites were just visitors who were here for only a short period and as such took them to be their friends.

The Spirit of nationalism was lacking in many African societies at the time. Many rebellions were therefore tribal or regional wars, lacking the support of their neighbours.

The weak economies of many African societies contributed to their defeat. Many of these couldnt support full- scale wars.

Too much belief in superstition and traditional religion also blind folded Africans.

The death and imprisonment of inspirational leaders also undermined African rebellions.

The Europeans also employed the divide and rule policy whereby they played one society against the other.

### **Revision questions**

1. How did the following respond to colonial rule in East Africa?

(a) Semei Kakungulu (b) Nuwa Mbaguta (c) Laibon Lenana (d) Sir Apollo Kaggwa

2. a) Why did some African societies collaborate with Europeans ?

b) What were the effects of their collaboration?

3. a) Why did some African societies resist colonial rule in East Africa?

b) Why did African resistance against colonial imposition fail?

4. How did the following respond to colonial rule in East Africa?

a) Chief Mkwawa b) Abushiri c) Rwoth Awich d) Kabaka Mwanga e) Omukama Kabalega

5. a) Why did Semei Kakungulu collaborate with the British colonialists before 1914?  
b) What were the results/effects/outcomes of his collaboration?
6. a) What were the causes of the MAU-MAU uprising in Kenya?  
b) Describe the organization/course of the uprising?
7. a) Why did the Kikuyu stage a rebellion between 1952 to 1960?  
b) How did this rebellion affect Kenya up to independence?
8. a) Describe the course of the struggle that took place in central Kenya in the 1950s.  
b) Why did the Europeans emerge victorious over the Africans?
9. a) What were the causes of the uprising in Southern Tanganyika between 1905-1907?  
b) How did it affect the peoples of Southern Tanganyika up to independence?
10. a) Describe the course/organization of the Maji-Maji revolt of 1905-07.  
b) What reasons led to the failure of the revolt?
11. a) Describe the response of the Nandi to the imposition of colonial rule in their area?  
b) What were the effects of their response to colonial rule?
12. a) What were the causes of the Nandi uprisings of 1895 to 1906?  
b) Why were the Nandi able to resist the British for so long?

13. a) Why did it take the British so long to defeat the Nandi?  
b) Why were the Nandi finally colonized by the British?
14. a) What were the causes of Chief Mkwawa's resistance against German rule?  
b) What were the effects of his resistance?
15. a) Why was there a rebellion in southern Tanganyika between 1890-1898?  
b) Describe the course of the rebellion during that period.
16. a) What were the reasons for the failure of the Hehe rebellion?  
b) How did it affect the affairs of Tanganyika up to independence?
17. a) Describe the course/organization of the Abushiri revolt between 1888-1890.  
b) What problems did Abushiri face during this revolt?
18. a) What were the causes of the rebellion along the coast of Tanganyika between 1888-1890?  
b) How did it affect the peoples of Tanganyika up to independence?
19. a) Why were the Germans able to suppress the Abushiri revolt of 1888-1890?  
b) What were the effects of this revolt on the affairs of Tanganyika?