

Africans Resist Colonialism: The Mau Mau Story

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“Mzungu Arudi Ulaya, Mwafrika Apate Uhuru”

The Rise of Anti-Imperialism



- Most colonies had an African elite who had a European education → initially supportive of mother country but later became leaders of independence
- During the world wars, the colonies were needed to provide resources (foodstuffs) **AND** soldiers
- European powers promised reforms (and greater independence) for colonies if they helped the mother country
- The reforms never came and after the Great Depression, the colonies were given no assistance or aid → led to resistance

Africa is a Continent: Highlighting Kenya



- British established the East Africa Protectorate in 1895
- Considered as a settler colony – white settlers took the best land for their own and moved native groups to reserves
- In 1920, it became known as the Kenya Colony
- Kenya received its independence in 1963

Mau Mau Uprising - Review

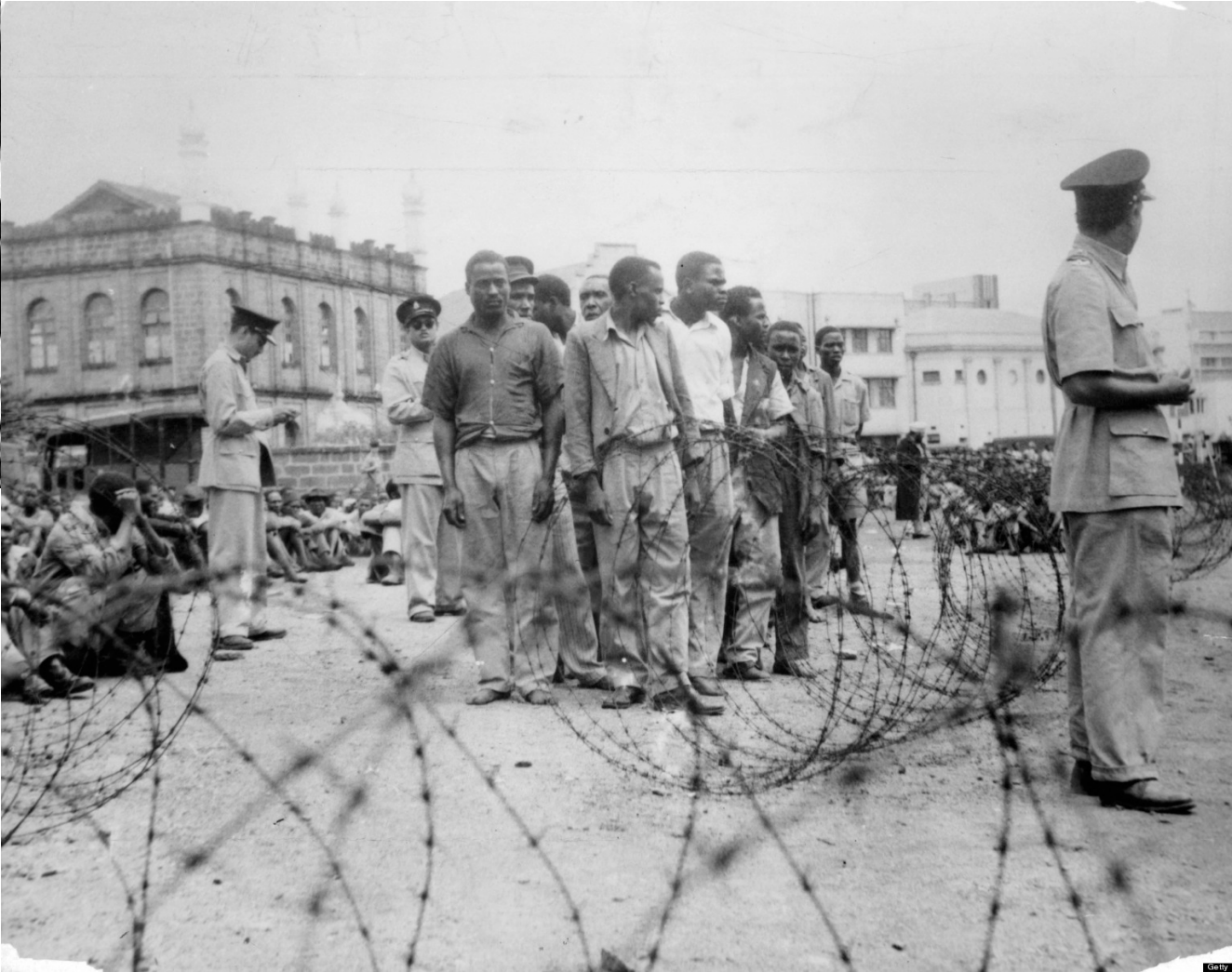
- Initiated by an ethnic group known as the Kikuyu but grew to include many different ethnic groups in Kenya
- Biggest frustration: LAND → supposedly “vacant” land was taken over by the British settlers
- Africans, especially the Kikuyu who traditionally occupied the most fertile lands, were forcibly removed and placed in resource-poor areas
- Initial attempts at peaceful negotiations failed → resistance became violent as British resorted to detention camps and the Mau Mau became a mythical source of inspiration to many Kenyans

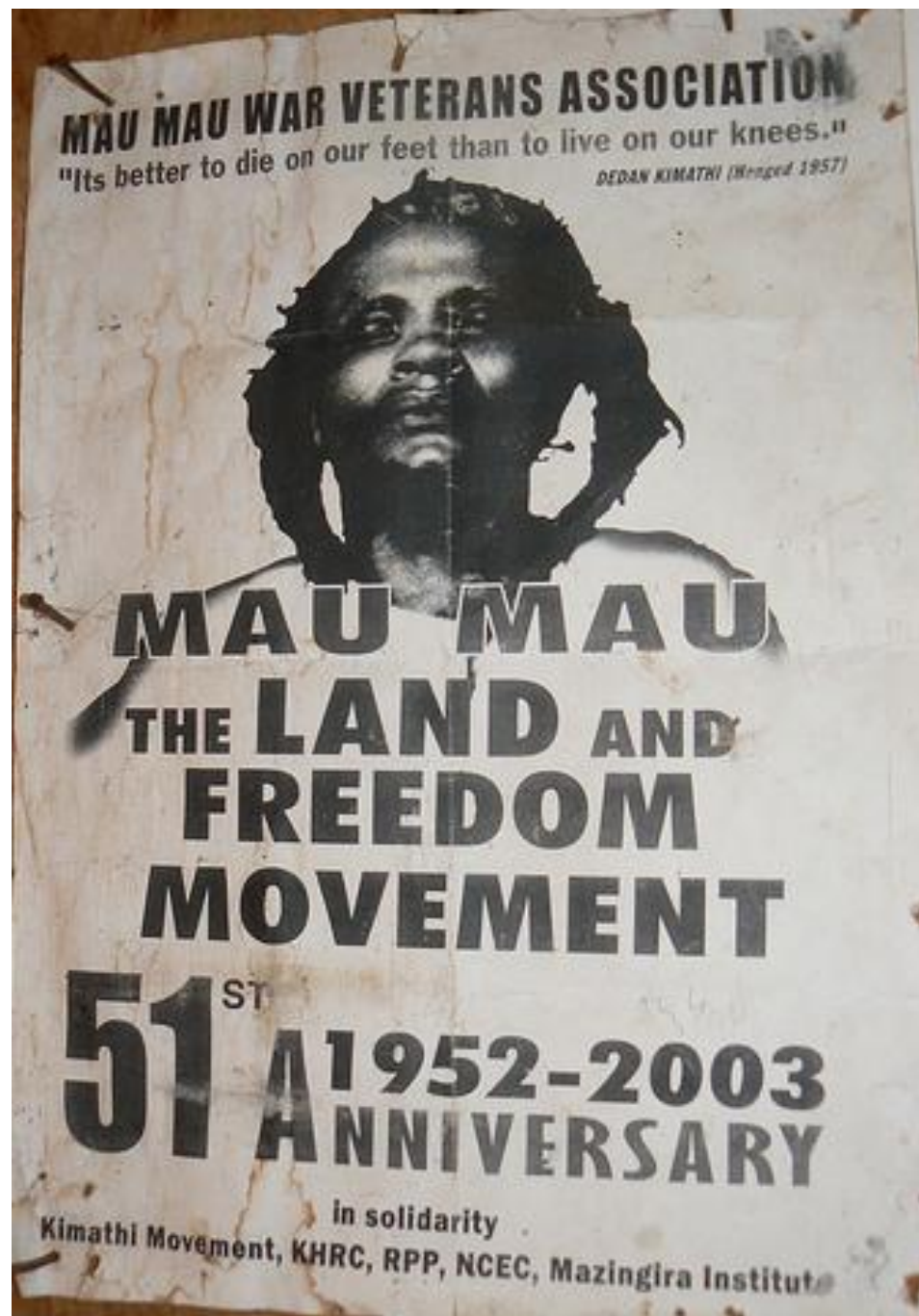


The Mau Mau Rebellion (1953-56): A Case Study

Resistance – An Ongoing Struggle

- In the 1940s – members of the Kikuyu, Embu, Meru, and Kamba tribes took oaths to fight for freedom
- Increasing British concern about the resistance led them to jail Jomo Kenyatta (future 1st president of Kenya) as a leader of the Mau Mau in 1953.
- Led to a state of emergency being declared – Oct 1952 – Dec 1959
- Officially, the number of rebels killed included 11,000, including 1,090 hangings. The Kenya Human Rights Commission says 90,000 Kenyans were executed, tortured or maimed during the crackdown, and 160,000 were detained in appalling conditions.
- Only 32 white settlers were killed.





Impact of the Resistance - Legacies

- Undoubtedly the Mau Mau rebellion contributed to the expediency of Kenyan independence
- 2013 - legal suit against the British government on behalf of the Mau Mau survivors → paid out £19.9m to 5,228 Kenyans who were victims of torture
- 2016 - new legal suit against the British government on behalf of those affected by additional offenses (e.g., false imprisonment, forced labor, interruption to their right to education)