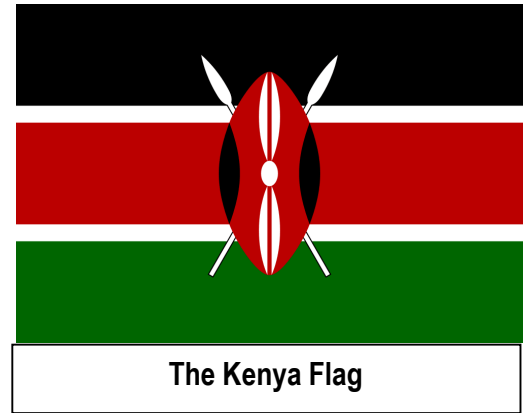


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

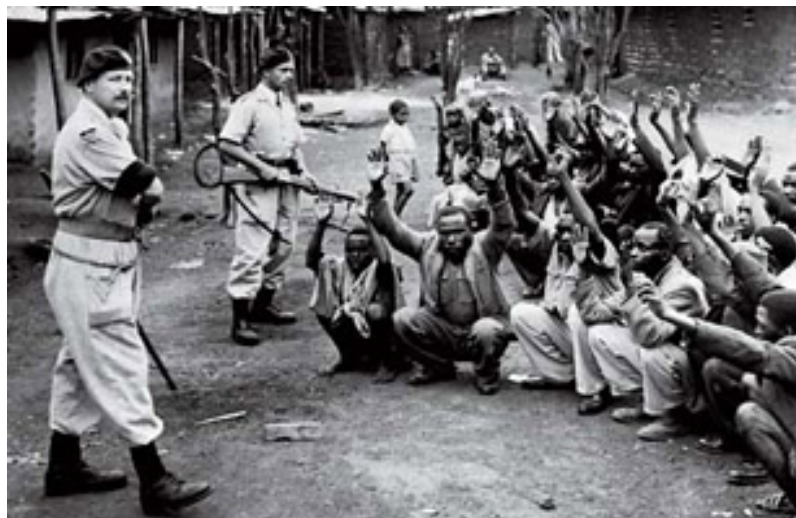
## Resistance to Colonization – The Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya (1953-56)

Kenya was colonized by Great Britain between 1901 and 1960. British settlers, who came to Kenya because of its resources and comfortable climate, forced indigenous farmers and herders onto infertile land or made them work on European-owned farms and plantations. They created unprecedented ethnic conflict between various groups in their divide and conquer campaign. British rule in Kenya was characterized by unfair labor practices, structural racism, and forced resettlement based on the desires of the colonial settlers.



As a result of the growing discontent, during the 1950s there was a sustained rebellion against colonial rule. The British claimed the rebels were part of a secret and savage society known as the “**Mau Mau**,” whose members had supposedly pledged to slaughter Europeans and drive them out of Africa. The British war against the **Kikuyu**, who represented the largest group in the rebellion, was ruthless and justified by charges that the rebels were terrorists. The British created **detention camps** for people suspected of being associated with the Mau Mau, including the elderly and children, and used methods of extreme torture to find information and to limit uprisings. Over one million Kenyans were forcibly removed from their homes and put into the camps. Many of these people were innocent, though.

Initially, the Kikuyu ethnic group, which was affected by the British **land grabs** the most, started their protests against colonialization peacefully. However, by the mid-1950s they became more radical and decided they could not achieve independence through peaceful means. Members who joined the Mau Mau movement, whether or not they were actually from the Kikuyu tribe, were required to take **an oath of allegiance**. As resistance grew so did repression and the situation became violent on both sides. The Kikuyu resorted to **guerilla warfare** and the British used propaganda to convince Western powers and other ethnic tribes in Kenya that the Mau Mau were fanatical, secretive, and the common



Kenyans at gunpoint in one of the British detention camps.

enemy of both the British and the rest of the indigenous Kenyans. At the core of the Mau Mau movement was access to basic rights: higher wages, increased educational opportunities, return of alienated lands, and African self-determination. The movement was eventually defeated by the extreme measures taken by the British. Although the Mau Mau rebellion was eventually put down, Kenya’s eventual independence in 1963 was undoubtedly a result of the political and economic pressures created by the Mau Mau.

OVER.  
PLEASE

**Directions:** Read the article on the Mau Mau resistance in Kenya. Answer the following comprehension questions.

- 1. What were conditions like for Africans in the Kenyan colony under the British?**
- 2. Who were the Mau Mau?**
- 3. How did the British react to resistance to their colonial rule and how did they justify their reactions? Be specific.**
- 4. How did the British use propaganda to undermine the Mau Mau rebellion?**
- 5. What were the core motives driving the rebellion?**
- 6. Although the Mau Mau rebellion was eventually defeated, how did the movement help lead to Kenyan Independence in 1963?**