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THE UGANDA OFFER, 1902-1905

A STUDY OF SETTLEMENT CONCESSIONS IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA

by

MICHAEL S. CLINANSMITH

I have been called the apostle of the Anglo-Saxon race, and I am proud of the title. I think the Anglo-Saxon race is as fine as any on earth. Not that I despise other races....There is, in fact, only one that I despise - the Jews, sir. They are physical cavarás.

-- Joseph Chamberlain

The Roots of Mau Mau (An Introduction)

The disruption caused by Mau Mau (i.e. the Kenya Land and Freedom Army) in the early 1950s was the culmination of a tripartite conflict over a single issue—land. The presence of white settlers upon the better agricultural lands had been bolstered by an attitude of racial and economic superiority to the African population. The African populations were the victims of the alienation of this land and the increasing influence of European immigrants. Finally, the British Colonial Office tried to create a situation conducive to cohabitation by both races. Explicit in the dual policy in Kenya were two doctrines: the paramountcy of African interests and the encouragement of economic development of Kenya.

The purpose of this study is to examine the roots of this conflict over land. This will be facilitated by an investigation of a massive land grant offered to the Zionist movement in 1903. In the ensuing actions, all three groups - the official community, the settlers and the Africans- made a contribution to the development of land policy in Kenya and other "protectorates". The central question to be answered is whether later positions of these three groups are perceivable at this time (1903). This, in turn, leads to a consideration of how land policies were shaped in colonies with significant number of non-African immigrants.

This study is undertaken with the most favorable circumstances for historical research. Many of the participants in

the actions described below have left voluminous personal observations or their biographers have included much of their subject's thoughts and actions in their published works. These accounts are supplemented by Confidential Prints of the Foreign and Colonial Offices and two command papers on this subject. Finally, many general histories of this region and the development of European Settlement have broached the subject, but, because of considerations of time and space, have presented only passing sketches of these events. The discussion that follows will be as exhaustive and concise as possible, recognizing all major inputs. The result, it is hoped, will clarify these complex historical events.

Kenya in 1902

The crusade against the East African slave trade brought in its wake the partition of the Sultan of Zanzibar's domains between the Germans and the British. Represented by Karl Peters, the German Empire succeeded in acquiring (by 1890) protectorates and concessions which occupied much of present-day Tanzania. At the same time British merchants led by Sir William Mackinnon succeeded in establishing the rule of the Imperial British East Africa Company (I.B.E.A.C.) along a ten mile-wide strip of the modern nation of Kenya. They had been granted a charter by the Crown in 1888. The last vestige of Zanzibari sovereignty was destroyed in 1890 with the proclamation of a British protectorate over Zanzibar in that year.

Numerous factors prevented the I.B.E.A.C. from surviving the rigors of the African reality. First among these limitations was the financial instability of the Company. Beginning with only 250,000 pounds (sterling), they were only able to acquire (by 1889) a like sum by public subscription. These funds were not enough to overcome the lack of an infrastructure that made commercial contact with the interior possible. All commerce had to be carried on by human porterage because of the lack of navigable rivers into the interior. In addition, few commodities, excepting ivory, were available by which trade could be encouraged. Consequently, with an increasing debt and poor management evident, the Foreign Office proclaimed a protectorate status over the I.B.E.A.C. concession (on June 15, 1895), thereafter called the "East Africa Protectorate."

Appointed to take over the administration of this vast area³ was Sir Arthur Henry Hardinge, who had been Consul-General at Zanzibar since 1894. During his five year tenure, Hardinge appointed able subordinates and began the building of the Uganda Railway in 1896. Both actions were designed to fill a void of knowledge about the new protectorate. By the time of the appointment of Sir Charles Eliot as his successor

(1901), the infrastructure that the I.B.E.A.C. had needed was being completed. As it neared this completion, the improved facilities began to attract new residents to Kenya.⁴

In his report for 1897-98, Hardinge noted that the Uganda Railway, which was designed to open up the interior to commerce, had only advanced 175 miles from Mombasa and "...has not so far had any appreciable effect on trade as regards exports, nor is it likely to do before it reaches Kikuyu, a distance of 300 miles, where it is expected next May." This was not well appreciated news at home, because expenditures, which had been originally estimated at £1,755,000, had climbed to £3,000,000 by August, 1896, and an additional £1,930,000 and £600,000 were to be required in 1900 and 1902, respectively, before the railway reached its destination at Kisumu on Victoria Nyanza.

The exports could be of no help since they were minimal. Hardinge noted that ivory, the most marketable item, was very limited in trade not only because of the stigma attached to it by its relationship to the slave trade but because of Government restrictions" which require the killers of elephants to deliver half their spoil to Government." The result of these mounting deficits, accentuated by the draining of funds to the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa, caused a growing uneasiness in the Foreign Office. Just as the railway project was thought to be necessary to improve the commercial value of the protectorate, so also was the encouragement of immigration to the protectorate gradually sought as a panacea to the ever increasing debt accumulated by the railway.

Land Alienation

Many of the accounts of the European settlers begin by justifying the alienation of African land by a statement similar to that appearing in White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Naking of Kenya:

It is not correct to visualize it [the Highlands] as a swarming hive of prolific Bantu. Immense stretches were totally unoccupied.

This sort of claim is repeated by other adventurers, such as Frederick Lugard and Frederick Jackson. Lugard's account described the "Masai plain" as an area which was,

Uninhabited, and of great extent; it consequently offers unlimited room for the location of agricultural settlements or stock-raising farms. Here, if anywhere in Central Africa, in my opinion, would be

the site upon which to attempt the experiment of European settlements. [stress is Lugard's] 10

These descriptions, because of Lugard's influence and no contrary published opinions, have been accepted as established fact They are, however, erroneous.

What appeared to Lugard and, subsequently, to all Europeans interested in this land, was not an "uninhabited land," but the consequence of several factors that had substantially reduced the population resident on the plateaux. Alfred R. Tucker, a missionary to Uganda, published an account of his journey across the same area during 1892. Descending into the Lake Naivasha area (see map, Appendix I), this more impartial traveller reports his reception by the Masai:

Our reception by these redoubted le warriors was characteristic. As we emerged from the mountain pass by which we gained access to the valley in which lies Lake Naivash, we saw in a moment that our entrance into Masai land would not pass unchallenged. About midway between ourselves and the lake we saw a knot of figures, whom we knew at once to be Masai...!

Tucker, accompanied by these Masai warriors, continues toward the Masai thorn boma (i.e. "settlement" or "outpost").

No sooner were we encamped than large numbers of Nasai men and women, old and middle-aged, made their appearance with firewood and donkeys for sale. The latter we were especially anxious to get.... To such sore straits were these poor people reduced that they were willing to sell their donkeys for an amount of flour valued at one penny of English money each. 12

The passage quoted above begins to give a better understanding of what had really happened in the areas that Lugard perceived as devoid of populations. What had happened was not a withdrawal of African populations from this fertile area, but natural catastrophes had, in fact, diminished the existing peoples into "knots of figures." More elaborate details are supplied by Hardinge from reports of his subordinates.

First, there had been rinderpest plagues in the 1880s and in 1891-92. The Masai, whose society was based upon cattle-herding, found their herds devastated. This is collaborated by Hardinge's report for 1897-98, which also cites periodic

droughts ['twelve months have elapsed since it (the rain) has fallen in any quantity."] as a contributing factor to their impoverishment. \(^{13}\) Added to the woes of the Masai were small-pox epidemics that were reported to have wiped out up to 70 per cent of the population of the plateaux. \(^{14}\) Finally, as a consequence of these natural disasters, a famine occurred in 1898 and Hardinge described the extent of it as being "more severely felt in the Province of Ukamba [the eastern side of the plateaux] than in the other portions of the territory.\(^{15}\) Taken collectively and compared to the relatively dense areas of the Buganda to the west, these factors created the situation that led both Delamere and Lugard (as well as many others) to assume that the Mau plateau was devoid of population and thus open to European settlement. To Hardinge's successor, Sir Charles Eliot, this "fact"offered little comfort.

Sir Charles Eliot was, like Hardinge, a career diplomat. A graduate of Balliol, he had entered the foreign service as third secretary at the British Embassy at Petrograd (1886-92) and had served at Constantinople (1893-1898); as charde d'affaires in Morocco (1892-93), Bulgaria (1895) and Serbia (1897); first secretary at the British Embassy in Washington (1898); and as High Commissioner of Samoa (1899). In 1900 he was appointed High Commissioner for the East Africa Protectorate and arrived at Mombasa, the administrative center, in early 1901. Eliot's position was, quite often, contradictory. For example, Eliot was reported as refusing Lord Delamere's initial request for land in Naivasha Province "on the ground that its alienation might result in hardship for the Masai", but in September, 1903, he sent the Commissioner of Customs, Arthur Marsden, to South Africa to encourage immigration to East Africa by South African farmers. Prospective residents also began to enter from other areas.

The settlers came from near and far. Indian laborers, recruited to work on the Uganda Railway, were the first to apply for grants and remain as traders. In the Final Report of the Uganda Railway Committee it was revealed that 6,724 Indians had exercised this option and 2,000 remained in the employ of the Railway. For the Europeans seeking concessions it was much more difficult because Hardinge had restricted their movements and delayed a decision on the policy to be followed. By an Order in Council of July 18, 1898, the Commissioner and Consul-General (i.e. Hardinge) had received the power over all the lands of the Protectorate

in trust for Her Majesty, or if the Secretary of State at any time or in any case by Order under his hand so directs, in such other trustee of trustees for Her Majesty, as the Secretary of State may appoint. 20

The conferring of such powers on the East Africa Commissioner may seem to have allowed the wholesale selling of lands to the "man on the spot". In fact, it was not as allencompassing as it appeared. A similar Order in Council of July 7, 1897, had greatly restricted the territorial limits under High Commission control. 21 Noteworthy is the territorial limitation which put Kisumu and Naivasha Provinces outside the jurisdiction of the East Africa Protectorate and in the Uganda Protectorate. 22 These were the areas most coveted by the prospective concessionaires who descended on Nairobi after the completion of the Railway (December, 1901). This preserved status was not to last, however, and on March 5, 1902, an Order of the Secretary of State transferred these coveted lands to the High Commissioner. 23

As Eliot began to deal with these various groups, a larger, more influential company undertook an initiative with the Colonial Office and the dominating politician, Joseph Chamberlain. The result was a bizarre tale of a "humanitarian" colonization scheme involving a large East European population.

The Genesis of the Uganda Offer

Throughout his tenure as Secretary of State for the Colonies [i.e. Colonial Secretary, 1895-1903], Joseph Chamberlain dominated the Salisbury regime. Confronted by wars in the Sudan and South Africa and hostility from many European countries and the United States, "Joe" Chamberlain had a unique opportunity to literally control the entire foreign policy of Britain. It was, however, a domestic problem that caused his downfall in 1903. In the eight years he was in office he left voluminous materials for the Empire historians to extricate numerous intrigues in an attempt to decipher Chamberlain's enigmatic career. 24

Joseph Chamberlain *might* have been influenced by many writings of his contemporaries, especially Sir Charles Dilke and J.R. Seeley, ²⁵ but it is more likely that his close friends had a profound impact on his policy. ²⁶ It does not appear odd, then, that Theodor Herzl's (the Zionist leader) interview with Chamberlain in late 1902 was held.

The connecting factors between the "professed anti-semite" Chamberlain and the Zionist leader were two brothers--Alfred Charles and Nathaniel Mayer de Rothschild. The first was a

close confidant of Benjamin Disraeli and the second was Lord Rothschild, the leader of the Jewish community in England. In addition, Lord Rothschild was one of Chamberlain's associates in the Liberal Unionist days of the 1880s and Alfred de Rothschild's residence, Seamore Place, was often the site of Conservative dinner parties attended by Joseph Chamberlain. 27 It was the situation in Eastern Europe that offered Herzl an opportunity to meet the British Colonial Secretary in late 1902 and propose a plan.

The pogroms staged in Russia and Eastern Europe during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century had a secondary effect on England. Julian Amery, one of Chamberlains' biographers, reports that nearly 100,000 Russian Jews settled in England during the first years of the twentieth century. Research The Fact that many Jewish immigrants went to London was not lost to Chamberlain, whose "plans for the development of the Empire depended for their realisation upon the support of the big finance houses." The Rand, which dominated both Chamberlain and Milner's plans for the reconstruction of South Africa, was one example of financial support by the Jewish community. It is not surprising, then, that Joseph Chamberlain began to use his influence to try to stop Jewish persecution in Eastern Europe. To the Roumanian Bulletin he wrote (in a letter of July 24, 1902) that

I am consistently opposed to all persecution on account of religious belief, and deeply regret the unreasoning prejudices in so many countries directed against the Jewish people. 31

Under such circumstances, Theodor Herzl arrived in London on July 5, 1902. As philosphical leader of the Zionist movement, he visited Lord Nathaniel Rothschild, who prepared an interview with Chamberlain for some date after the summer recess of Parliament.³²

After the summer recess, Joseph Chamberlain sent a telegram confirming an interview with Herzl on October 22.33 Herzl enters in his diary that

Jedenfalls macht es mich sehr nervös. Es ist ja die Existenzfrage. Ich will versuchen, heute ein Feuilleton zur Entschadigung für meine Reise zu schreiben, da ich Chamberlain erst morgen sehen soll. 34

Herzl presented the Colonial Secretary with a plan for Jewish settlement in one of three places--Cyprus, the Sinai Peninsula, or El Arish in Palestine. Negotiations with the Sultan of Turkey had been undertaken by Herzl, but he considered them too lengthy: "Now I have time to negociate [sic], but my people has [sic] not. They are starving in the pale. I must bring them an immediate help." 35 Egypt and Palestine were under the titular sovereignty of Turkey (i.e. the Ottoman Empire). For this reason both El Arish and the Sinai were dismissed as unavailable for colonization and properly handled by the Foreign Office. Cyprus was immediately dismissed by Chamberlain because

That island was inhabited by Greeks and Moslems, whom he could not evict for the sake of new-comers On the contrary, he was duty bound to take their side. If the Greeks...were to resist Jewish immigration, the deadlock would be complete. 36

Under such circumstances, Herzl could not be expected to be generous towards his host. His entry for October 23 describes Chamberlain as "a man without literary or artistic resources, a man of affairs" 37 and "a sober screw-manufacturer who wishes to extend the business..." 38 Chamberlain might have perceived this restlessness. He began to make apologies:

He was, however, willing to help if he could; he liked the Zionist idea, etc. Ah, if I could show him a spot in the British Dominions where there was no white population yet, then we could talk! 39

Chamberlain agreed to talk to Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, and schedule a new interview for the following day (October 23). Amery asserts that Herzl's argument that a Jewish community at El Arish would extend British influence into Palestine had made an impression:

Hitherto his interest in Zionism had been chiefly humanitarian. He [Chamberlain] now saw in it more positive opportunities for British policy. By supporting Zionism, Britain would enlist the sympathies of world Jewry on her behalf. She would also secure Jewish capital and settlers for the development of what was virtually British territory.

Leaving Herzl to talk to Lansdowne, Chamberlain departed London in December, 1902, to make a goodwill tour of South Africa, where an uneasy peace followed the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging. 41

The itinerary of Chamberlain's journey to South Africa was changed twice. From London the entourage of Chamberlain

swtiched course to Cairo and, then, along the east coast of Monbasa and hence to Cape Town. His sojourn at Mombasa gave Chamberlain an opportunity to travel inland to Nairobi and the end of the railway line on a specially constructed seat on the engine buffer. He encouraged Indian colonists to settle in this country which he compared to Sussex downs. 42 On December 21, 1902, Chamberlain recorded in his diary the embryo of his scheme:

If Dr. Herzl were at all inclined to transfer his efforts to East Africa, there would be no difficulty in finding suitable land for Jewish settlers. But I assume that this country is too far removed from Palestine to have any attraction for him. 43

Herzl had another conference with Chamberlain on April 23, 1903. Lord Cromer had informed the Foreign Office that a Jewish settlement in or near Egypt was impossible. Chamberlain then told Herzl of his trip and his plan:

In the course of my journey I saw the very country for you....That's Uganda. The coast region is hot, but the farther you get into the interior the more excellent the climate becomes, for Europeans too. You can plant sugar there, and cotton. So I thought to myself: that would be just the country for Dr. Herzl. But then, of course, he only wants to go to Palestine, or somewhere near.

Herzl reiterated that "our starting point must be in or near Palestine...,"45 but he did not reject the plan outright. His mind was on other events.

The Kishinev Pogrom (1903)

Herzl's attitude toward Chamberlain's offer may be viewed in several ways. First, Herzl had already opened negotiations with the Sultan of Turkey and was, as his Der Judenstaat 46 indicates, more interested in the Middle East region, especially Palestine. The whole Zionist movement had been based on the assumption that Zion was equated with Palestine. Second, there was no large body of information available on the East Africa area and ignorance of the Protectorate had caused many misconceptions, inluding the idea of vacant land. Third, it was not for Herzl to make this decision to accept or reject such an offer. The annual Zionist Congress was the only representative of world Jewry. Herzl was just the Zionist theoretical leader. The casual atmosphere of the Chamberlain-Herzl meeting could be more accurately attributed, though, to the lack of crisis situation where need overshadowed these more practical

considerations. The calm tenor of these negotiations was suddenly torn asunder by events in Russia.

Wenzel von Plehve was appointed the Czar's Minister of the Interior in 1902 under increasingly difficult circumstances. A German resident of the Russian Baltic area, he was known for his strong-willed rule. As revolutionary activities continued to build, Von Plehve became more reactionary and sought to ease the pressure by indirectly sponsoring pogroms against the Russian Jewish population.

In Bessarabia, Von Plehve subsidized the newspaper Bessarabetz and its anti-Semitic editor, Krushevan. The anti-semitic character of his attacks led Krushevan into other extracurricular activities including the distribution of tracts also openly anti-Semitic. The fruition of these activities was a pogrom in Kishinev, the capital of Bessarabia.

On Sunday, April 6, 1903, a teenage mob attacked and looted Jewish homes and shops while the local police did nothing. There were many cases of mutilations and deaths among the Jewish population: 86 were wounded or crippled. The Russian intelligentsia had been outraged and mass Jewish-Christian demonstrations throughout Europe caused swift reaction. 47 Von Plehve telegraphe the local army officials at 5:00 P.M. on April 7 to put down the disturbances.

Chaim Wizmann, the then future first President of Israel, was in Russia on vacation from his position as chemistry professor at the University of Geneva during the months of March and April, 1903. He noted that

The pogrom developed from section to section of the city with almost military effectiveness. There was no chance of improvising a defense. 48

During August, 1903, Herzl visited St. Petersburg to propose to the Russian government several schemes by which it could influence the Turkish government. The core of all these plans was an attempt to have the Turks cede part of Palestine for a Jewish immigrant colony. Nothing was substantially determined and Herzl departed on August 15 to attend the Zionist Congress at Basel.

The Zionist Congress and the "Uganda" Offer

There were many issues to be discussed at Basel by the Zionist Congress. The Russian government's official sponsorship of another pogrom in the Pale of Settlement had again directed the attention of the delegates to the urgent need for a solution. 50 Herzl's visit to Russia and talks with Von Plehve was also openly discussed. 51 What was finally to prove the great issue of the Congress was the "'Uganda' Offer" of Joseph Chamberlain. 52

When Herzl departed London in April, 1903, he left Leopold Greenberg, the editor of the Jewish Commonwealth, as his agent. On May 20, 1903, Greenberg succeeded in obtaining a renewal of Chamberlain's offer. A formal letter, dated May 25, 1903, asked Chamberlain to

be so kind as to let me [Greenberg] have the particulars as to the exact territory to which you referred, as well as any details you are able to supply, as to the extent and nature of its present population. 53

Chamberlain's reply did mention the "most favorable territory" for settlement as the Naivasha plateau between Nairobi and the Mau Escarpment,

but that, if Dr. Herzl is disposed to consider the matter, it would be necessary that his Agents should visit the Protectorate and made their asn report on the most suitable spots. 54

This appeared to highlight the lack of knowledge available to both the Colonial and Foreign Offices concerning Kenya. Herzl's actual proposal to the Zionist Congress was to send such a fact-finding group to East Africa to determine where the Jewish immigrants could safely settle.

Despite the carefully written and presented speech which Herzl used to announce the "Uganda Offer", tempers were ignited by Herzl's opening speech. The more pro-Palestine delegates immediately foresaw this offer as a conflict between Palestine and "Uganda" as the "Zion" of the Jewish community. Behind the podium and above the dais, in the place usually reserved for the map of Palestine, a rough map of the East Africa Protectorate hung. "The symbolic action [map of Uganda] got us on the quick", Weizman states, "and filled us with foreboding".55

A deep, painful and passionate division manifested itself on the floor of the Congress. When the first

session was suspended, and the delgates scattered in the labies, or hastened to their caucuses, a young woman ran up on the platform, and with a vehement gesture tore dawn the map of Uganda which had been suspended there in place of the usual map of Zion. 56

The offer made to Herzl was for

an autonomous Jewish settlement in East Africa with Jewish administration, Jewish local government, with a Jewish Governor at its head, all of course under British suzerain control. 57

Cautiously he stated that "this offer was made in such a way as necessarily to contribute to the improvement and alleviation of the lost of the Jewish people, without our being required to abandon any of those great principles upon which our movement was based." 58 What the individual caucuses were to decide was whether "to elect a small Sub-Committee to deal with the whole matter." 59 Herzl, clearly, saw this as a temporary measure, a **Rachtasyl* or "night shelter", but many delegates saw it otherwise.

In the Russian caucus, which also included a semi-autonomous Polish caucus, the reception of Herzl's suggestion was mixed. Nahum Sokolow, the patriarch of the Russian Jewish community, recorded that-

The most ardent Zionists believed that it meant that Zionism was to give up its efforts for the acquisition of Palestine and to regard the settlement in East Africa as its goal, and they accordingly, and rightly, opposed this presumed alteration of the original programme. Others maintained that this alteration was never contemplated. British East Africa was not to take the place of Palestine, but only to serve as a place of temporary refuge for those unfortunate Jews who, under the horrible conditions imposed upon them, could not live in the unfriendly countries of their birth, and wait there until Palestine became a Jewish country. 60

Weizmann, serving as a Russian delegate, confirmed this analysis. 61 Chaim Weizmann's own father was "pro-Ugandist", while his son was bitterly "anti-Ugandist". Sokolow refused to commit himself. Chaim Weizmann made a speech in which he violently attacked the "Offer" and concluded with the statement that "If the British Government and people are what I think they

are, they will make us a better offer."62 The majority of the Russian delegates voted against the sub-committee proposal and, presumably, against the "Uganda Offer".

The record of the Sixth Zionist Congress, as reported by The Naccobaean, 63 was one of continual reference to the "Uganda Offer". In every major speech it was attacked or defended. The divisiveness of the issue led to distrust of Herzl and the steering committee (i.e. the "Action Committee"). Leopold Greenberg's speech of August 26 ended the debate and he announced that the grant considered by the Foreign Office was "a piece of land comprising 200 to 300 English miles." 64 That afternoon, with the majority of the Russian delegates voting against the "Uganda Offer", the Congress supported Herzl's suggestion by a vote of 295 in favor and 177 against.

When the figures were announced the Russian members of the Actions Comite [sic] dramatically quitted the hall in protest. They were followed by about one hundred and fifty other delegates, mostly Russians. 65

"The delegates from Kishinev," wrote Weizmann, "were against the Uganda offer! "66 Despite this vitriolic statement, Chaim Weizmann agreed to sit with Leopold Greenberg and seven other Jewish leaders on a committee to prepare an expedition to East Africa. 67 Nonetheless, the Zionists remained bitterly divided.

The Exodus and "Kenyan" Resistance

The reception of the news of both Chamberlain's offer and the Zionist Congress' action in Kenya (i.e. East Africa Protectorate) was one of immediate overt hostility by the settler community. This antagonism was generated by the enlargement of the immigrant community. These prospective settlers were augmented by significant numbers of South Africans, who had come north in the aftermath of the economically disruptive Anglo-Boer War. The Uganda Railway had allowed them easy access to the frontier town of Nairobi and, thus, the highlands to the west. Hindered by the severe limitations placed on the disposal of lands by the Foreign Office, they felt threatened and, possibly, deliberately excluded by an adamant British administration.

Until this time, the settler community had been badly divided against itself, thus allowing substantial control by the local administration. In one instance, however, all saw their collective goal threatened. "The greater part of the accessible highlands," wrote the overly sympathetic Elspeth Huxley, "were to be handed over, without their having been

asked for, to non-English-speaking aliens who were admittedly poverty stricken and certainly not agriculturalists." 68 It is on this argument that the settler community proposed to fight the Foreign Office.

Several rather diverse elements created the European opposition to the Zionist settlement scheme. The Anglican Church in Kenya, headed by W. G. Peel, the Bishop of Mombasa, decried Jewish settlers who would not be concerned with "lifting their heathen neighbours into the elements of *Christian* civilization." [italics mine]⁶⁹ Instead of the Zionists, Bishop Peel sought to encourage "Christian settlers...as living examples to the benighted Africans of the Christian life and Christian civilization." Joined by the Church of Scotland Mission, these *Christian* settlers held a meeting at Nairobi. Mrs. Huxley began to admit the truth when she wrote that

To the settlers whose title-deeds had been delayed a year or more, to others who were told that they must wait indefinitely even for an occupation licence while some doubt dout native rights was being investigated, to all who had to pay for or to rent their farms, it seemed a little hard that the very land they were anxious but unable to occupy - and a great deal more that had not even been opened up by the Government but which was ideally suited to white settlement - should be suddenly handed over, free and in toto, to Jews from the ghettos of Russian and Polish cities. [bold letters mine]

The opposition created by these land hungry and, seemingly, aristocratic elites was led by the actual aristocrat Lord Delamere.

Lord Delamere, a real aristocrat, took the lead in fighting the proposed Jewish immigration scheme. Elected president of the settler opposition (under the title of the "Anti-Zionist Immigration Committee"), Delamere at once tried to use his influence in England by cabling the *Times* on August 28, 1903:

Flood of people of this class [i.e. Jews] sure to lead to trouble with half-tamed natives jealous of their rights. Neans extra staff to control....Englishmen here appeal public opinion, especailly those who know this country, against this arbitrary proceeding and consequent awamping bright future of country.

This telegram was specially designed to play on the official fear over an increasing debt and the use of armed forces,

possible to quella "rising" of the "natives", which would increase such a debt. It also resembles a "fair play for Englishman" theme while also drawing in fears of upsetting the "paramountcy of native interests" official view, which was stated subsequent to these events, but was apparent to the settlers. The also attempted to negate the Antisemitic charge. "No prejudice exists in East Africa against Jews as such", wrote Delamere. "It is the fact that the intended immigrants are paupers and, above all, speak a foreign language, that is chiefly objected to, and that they are not going of their own accord, but are being introduced by the Foreign Office." The content of the co

When reading the correspondence that ensued between the white settlers and the Foreign Office and other persons, the impression which lasts longest must be the presumptive nature of the newly-arrived immigrants from England and South Africa. Their attitude, which pervaded all this correspondence was one of "manifest desting", that the white man had a duty based on some fore-ordained judgment that transferred Africa from the Black man to the white settler. It was not the recalcitrance that was to surface under the stress of Mau Mau. It was a quasi-aristocratic assertion of a not too stable minority who thought they had to always be consulted first and all advantages were to be reserved to them. George Bennett writes that

While there have been among the Kenya Europeans...
eccentric, and even outstanding, figures the majority
of them would undoubtedly prefer to be judged as men
who 'built a country', who carved out farms from the
virgin bush and in so doing believed they were making
a contribution to the future. Unfortunately for them,
they lived as quasi-aristocratic landlords, aloof from
and not understanding the world of the Africans around
them.75 [Bold letters are Bennett's]

Two years later, a Colonists' Association offered arguments similar to Delamere's. As part of a petition sent to Lord Lyttelton, Chamberlain's successor in the Colonial Office, they "protest with all their strength against the proposal to hand over any part of the country to aliens," and argued that since the Uganda Railway was built with British tax revenues "British subjects should have a preferential claim over any aliens to the land rendered available for settlement by such expenditures." To this argument the High Commissioner, Sir Charles Eliot, had (in 1903) rebutted:

It is almost absurd for the present settlers to talk about their rights. They are so faw, and as taxpayers so unimportant, that they can hardly claim to have a voice in deciding the destinies of the country against the Government which expends hundreds of thousands on it each year. But if you will induce a larger number of satisfactory settlers to come...the case would be much stronger [bold letters mine]⁷⁷

It is through this last proposal that the settlers and Sir Charles Eliot sought to change official policy.

Sir Charles Eliot: A Case of Duplicity?

In the continuing historical controversy concerning the powers and impact of the "man on the spot" (i.e. the local administrator), it has been too readily assumed that the official in a stated locale could shape and even determine official policy on a given subject. This is based on the assumption that he was the only one who could collect and collate information and also determine what in this massive data would be sent to London. If this was so, Sir Charles Eliot was a feeble practitioner of the lost art.

It must be admitted that Eliot was working under one handicap. Because of the large deficit accumulated by the construction of the Uganda Railway, the Foreign Office, which was anxious to recoup those losses, paid special attention to Eliot's domain. This was the reason behind the Foreign Office's departure from Hardinge's stringent policies and its support.

The Jewish Colonial Trust, which had been set up by the Zionists to finance their eventual resettlement in Palestine, had an accumulated capital of £ 2,000,000 to support such a venture in East Africa. The Foreign Secretary was delighted to offer assistance. It was assumed that such a Jewish community would be an immediate boom to the Protectorate's financial stability. This may be the reason for Eliot's reversal of the Foreign Office dictum concerning land sales.

At the same time that Eliot suggested to Delamere that he encourage white settlement in Kenya, Arthur Marsden, Eliot's Chief of Customs and Protector of Immigrants, was in South Africa. His ostensible reason for this sojourn was to inquire about possible markets for East African produce. In actuality, he had been sent by Eliot "to make known the suitability of the East African Highlands for white Immigration and to encourage their colonisation by desireable settlers." [italics mine]⁷⁹

One result of this venture involved a scheme by two South Africans, Robert Chamberlain and A. S. Flemmer.

In September, 1903, both Chamberlain and Flemmer arrived in Mombasa in response to Marsden's visit to South Africa. After investigating the Highlands they made their proposal. They would settle one hundred colonists on 500,000 acres, while reserving for their exclusive use an additional 150,000 acres. Each settler would have a ninety-nine-year lease and pay a rent of one anna per acre per year. To supplement their initial income, each settler was required to have £ 1100 cash when they landed at Mombasa.80

Larsdowne doubted whether one hundred colonists could be enticed to Kenya and ordered Eliot to end all such activities:

In any case, the demands made by the promoters for their personal advantage are large, and, in view of the liberal experiment which is being made with...the Jewish colonization scheme, it may be prudent to postpone the consideration of further land grants on a large scale.81

This was not done and later correspondence revealed that Chamberlain was still pressing his claim.

If this tact appeared as a failure, Sir Charles Eliot was willing to risk even more. In 1904 he resigned and requested a full investigation of the circumstances under which he quit. 82 Finally, having not been exonerated, Eliot published an "authoritative" work designed to attack the Foreign Office and the Jewish immigration scheme. In the "Preface" to The East Africa Protectorate, 83 Eliot stated that he resigned "because I was ordered to cancel grants made by me to private persons in conformity with my general instructions. "84 Eliot might have been talking of lesser grants, but, when he tried to give grants in excess of 634 acres, he was violating the two Orders in Council. 85

In the text of this work, Eliot seemed to reproduce two settler arguments against the Jewish immigration scheme. Having chosen the Uasin Gishu plateau for the proposed Jewish colony because of its distance from other white settlers, Eliot turned around and stated that

Though I am no anti-Semite, I greatly doubt the expediency of putting in the midst of them [settlers of British descent] a body of alien Israelites. To do this is to reproduce that distribution of population which has been the bane of Eastern Europe and Asia

Ninor, namely, enclaves of races with business capacity, such as Jews and Armenians...with the result that racial hostility is almost inevitably produced. Neither can I see how the scheme is likely to benefit the Jews. 86

Of the latter point, Sir Charles Eliot elaborated with a string of irrelevancies:

...the proposed transfer would be too drupt and defeat its own ends. I have never seen a case where Jews are really agriculturalists. But admitting that they can become so, their agricultural capacities are certainly not highly developed, and considering how many ordinary conveniences are wanting in East Africa, and how much immigrants are thrown on their own resources, it would seem to be a country rather for those who have hereditary and personal expersience of agriculture than for those who are new to the pursuit. 87

The actions of Sir Charles Eliot showed that he had begun to side with the European settlers, the quasi-aristocrats of Kenya. If the "man o the spot" was important to the home Government, Charles Eliot bungled in his plans. He failed to perceive that this was a deal of much higher import-beyond the realm of his influence. This may indicate an important prerequisite for effective actions by the "man on the spot". To substantially influence the colonial policies of Britain, there had to be a vague policy, usually of critical importance, which could be decided by information supplied by the local "authority".

Elict was clearly "out of his league" in taking on both Lonsdowne and Joseph Chamberlain. For this error of judgement, Charles Eliot had to forfeit his position and go into semi-seclusion. 88 His duplicity may or may not have been discovered, but his ineffective challenge to his superiors made that unimportant.

The Decision (1904-1905)

One distinquishing characteristic of both imperialism and colonialism is the reliance upon alien rule to control lands and peoples. To Africa and Africans this meant that, irrespective of the number of non-African settlers, the control remained in London or Paris or Brussels, etc. For Kenya in these early days the connotation was quite apparent from this episode.

Despite the protestations to the contrary, the Foreign Office let it be know that they would not be swayed by the settler harangues. This is obvious from the length of time during which the "Uganda Offer" was held open. From April 1903, to August 1905, Chamberlain's offer remained open despite Chamberlain's resignation in October 1903, and Herzl's death in July 1904. 89 Although their good intentions were attacked from all sides, not just from the settlers in Kenya, the most important actions were undertaken by the Jewish community.

Weizmann and Herzl's opponents continued their attack by conversations with the Foreign Office in 1904. 90 Chamberlain's position at the Colonial Office was taken by Alfred Lyttelton, who voiced grave concerns over the scheme. 91 The procrastination of Lyttelton resulted in a delay in sending the East Africa Commission until December 1904. In June 1905, the report of this commission was handed to both the Colonial Office and the Zionist Congress. 92

The Seventh Zionist Congress met in Basel, Switzerland, during August 1905, and received the report of the Foreign Office's commission. The findings were not enough to encourage the Zionists already divided by internal dissensions. On August 5, 1905, Lord Acton had written the Marquess of Lansdowne that the Zionists had accepted a resolution that stated, in part,

That the 7th Zionist Congress adheres to the principle of the Bale programme (1st Congress, 1897) which states that Zionism advocates the establishment of an autonomous Jewish State in Palestine, guaranteed by international law, and rejects, both as a means and as an end, all colonizing activity outside Palestine and its conterminous [sie] countries....93

This was confirmed by a letter from Leopold Greenberg on August 8, 1905. In addition Greenberg stated that

I am to convey to you the sincerest appreciation of the Congress for the offer that was made, evidencing as it aid the very high and noble sentiments of the Covernment tawards Jews, and to express the hope that we may rely upon the continued goodwill of the British Covernment in any effort which Zionists may make in endeavouring to ameliorate the condition and raise the status of the Jewish people."

Obviously relieved, Lansdowne cabled to Sir Donald Stewart, Eliot's successor: "Zionist Organization cannot accept offer of land, which need not be reserved any further." 95

Conclusion: The Formation of Land Policy in Kenya

In 1905 the East Africa Protectorate became Kenya Colony and came under Colonial Office supervision. The change was more than symbolic. It was admission of the failure of the Foreign Office to deal with the budget and land problems.

The land policy was revised to meet the budget crisis. There were many inducements to white settlers including a more liberal land grant policy. The expected immigration did not materialize and at the time of Mau Mau only about 60,000 white settlers were in Kenya. They had alienated over 5,000,000 acr of the Highlands by 1916, though. This led to African demands from the beginning of the 1920s, for the return of those lands; and it was land that was the main reason for the reactions culming in Mau Mau.

By 1905 the characteristics associated with the troubles of the 1950s had already begun to surface. The unity found by the white settlers to fight the Jewish colonization scheme created an arrogance for power and a recalcitrance of a quasi-aristocracy. As a landed gentry they thought that their opposition had led to the ending of the Uganda Offer. Filled with delusions of their own potency, they continued the arrogant assumption the they would be able to "build a country". The result was a false sense of sec ity, which was continually fed by the indecision of the British Government. Even though the East African Commision of 1923 clearly stated the philosophy of the "paramountcy of African interests", it also conceded the economic development was also important and the white agricultural aristocracy was th only hope for this goal.98 The land policy of Kenya was thus created out of a conflict between "humanitarian and economic interests. It was an ad hoc policy created by crises, such as that over the Jewish immigration scheme, popularly known as "The Uganda Offer."

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Notes

- Marie de Kiewiet Hempbill, "The British Sphere, 1884-94," in Roland Oliver and Gervase Mathew (eds.), History of East Africa, I (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 391-432.
- M. P. K. Sorrenson, Origins of British Settlement in Kenya (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 16-17. Hereafter cited as "Sorrenson, Origins."
- To the original ten-mile-wide protectorate on the coast was added the areas of present-day Kenya to Victoria Nyanza and the trans-Jubaland, which was given to Italian Somaliland in 1920.
- 4. Sorrenson, Origins, pp. 18-19.
- Hardinge to Salisbury, August 12, 1898, in Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons and Command), 1899, Vol. 69, C. 9125, p. 8. Hereafter cited as "C. 9125."
- 6. Sorrenson, Origins, pp. 19-30.
- C. 9125, p. 9. Hardinge is here quoting Arthur Marsden, the Collector of Customs.
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- 10. Lugard, East African Empire, p. 419.
- 11. Alfred R. Tucker, Eighteen Years in Uganda and East Africa (London: Edward Arnold, 1911), p. 97.
- 12. Ibid., p. 98.
- 13. C. 9125, pp. 6-9.

- 14. D. A. Low, "British East Africa: The Establishment of British Rule, 1895-1912," in Roland Oliver and Gervase Mathew, History of East Africa (Longdon: Oxford University Press, 1966), Vol. II, p.4; G. H. Mungeam, British Rule in Kenya, 1895-1912 (Longon: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 38 and C. 9125, p. 8.
- 15. C. 9125, p. 9.
- 16. Who Was Who, 1929-1940, p. 410.
- 17. Huxley, White Man's Country, p. 104.
- Ibid., pp. 110-13; G. H. Mungeam, British Rule in Kenya,
 p. 104; East Africa Protectorate, Public Records Office,
 Report of the Land Committee, 1905 (Nairobi), p. 50.
- Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers House of Commons and Command), 1904, vol. 74, p. 13.
- 20. Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, 1897-1898, vol. XC, p. 230.
- Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, 1896-1897, vo. LXXXIX, "Great Britain: British Order in Council, for regulating Her Majesty's Jurisdiction in the East Africa Protectorate, Windsor, July 7, 1897 pp. 357-79.
- 22. Ibid., p. 357.
- 23. Great Britain, Foreign Office, British and Foreign State Papers, XCV, "Great Britain: Order declaring Kisumu and Naivasha Provinces to form part of the British East Africa Protectorate, London, 5th March 1902," p. 616.
- 24. The only autobiographical materials available are his speed which appear in many biographies of his life, and his only autobiographical work: Joseph Chamberlain, A Political Nemoir 1880-92 (London: The Batchworth Press, 1953). The most obvious shortcoming of this work is that it concerns a period brfore Chamberlain achieved real prominence and power.
- 25. Charles Wentworth Dilke, Greater Britain: A Record of Travin English-Speaking Countries during 1866 and 1867 (London: MacMillan and Co., 1869); Charles Wentworth Dilke, Problems of Greater Britain (London: MacMillan and Co., 1890); and J. R. Seeley, The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883).

- Dilke was also a close friend. See Chamberlain, Memoir, p. 1.
- Cecil Roth, The Magnificent Rothschilds (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1939), pp. 119-67, 197, 255 and passim.
- Julian Amery, The Life of Joseph Charberlain (London: Mac-Millan and Co., Limited; 1951), vol. 4 (1901-1903), p. 258. Hereafter "Amery, Life."
- 29. Ibid., p. 257.
- 30. Ibid.
- 31. Ibid.
- Theodor Herzl, Tagebucher (Berlin: Judischer Verlag, 1923),
 vol. 3, pp. 215-20. Hereafter cited as "Herzl, Tagebucher."
- 33. Bid., p. 294.
- 34. Did. Translation: "Depite all my power, I am very nervous. There is confusion about the question of my existence. I am not ready to attempt to write a recapitulation of my journey, for I have to see Chamberlain first thing in the morning." [Very freely translated!] Entry of October 21, 1902.
- Ibiā., p. 295. To conserve space and time, all further selections from Herzl, Tagebucher will be those translated by Julian Amery in Amery, Life.
- 36. Amery, Life, p. 259.
- 37. Ibid., p. 261.
- 38. Ibid., p. 260.
- 39. Ibid., p. 259.
- 40. Ibid., p. 261.
- 41. Ibid., pp. 67-97.
- 42. Ibid., pp. 290-291.
- 43. Ibid., p. 263.
- 44. Ibia.

- 45. Theodor Herzl, Der Judenstaat (Berlin: Judischer Verlag, 1896).
- Howard Morley Sacher, The Course of Modern Javish History (New Yrok: Dell Publishing Company, inc; 1958), pp. 247-9
- 47. Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (New York: Schocken Books 1949), p. 80. Hereafter cited as "Wizmann, *Trial"*.
- 48. Herzl, Tagebucher, pp. 460-84.
- 49. Sacher, Modern Javish History, p. 248.
- 50. Weizmann, Trial, p. 82.
- 51. Ibid., p. 266.
- 52. Depite the fact the land offered was actually in the East Africa Protectorate, both Herzl and Chamberlain used the terminology of "Uganda" to describe this proposal. Amery asserts that this was because many comparisons Chamberlain used to draw Herzl's attention on April 23 were between this tract of land and others in the Uganda Protectorate. Herzl, in describing this land to the Zionist Congress, said it was in "Uganda." Hence the name "Uganda Offer." Amery, Iife, pp. 264-5.
- 53. Ibid.
- 54. Weizmann, Trial, p. 83.
- 55. Ibid., p. 85.
- 56. "The Sixth Zionist Congress" in The Naccab aean, vol. V, No. 4 (Tishre 5664 or October 1903), p. 227.
- 57. Ibid.
- 58. Ibid., p. 228.
- 59. Ibid., p. 229.
- 60. Nahum Sokolow, History of Zionism 1600-1918 (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919), p. 297.
- 61. Weizmann, Trial, p. 86-7.
- 62. Ibid.

- 63. "The Sixth Zionist Congress" in *The Maccab aean*, V. 4 (Tishre 5664 or October 1903), pp. 223-59. Hereafter referred to as *The Maccab aean*.
- 64. Ibid., p. 250
- 65. Ibid., p. 252.
- 66. Weizmann, Trial, p. 87.
- 67. The Maccabaeah, p. 257.
- 68. Huxley, White Man's Country, p. 119.
- Eliot to Lansdown, 10 September 1903, enclosure, F. 0. 2/716 in Soorerson, Origins, p. 40.
- 70. Ibid.
- 71. Huxley, White Man's Country, p. 119.
- 72. Ibid., p. 120.
- Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons and Command), "Indians in Kenya," Cmd. 1922 (1923), p. 10.
- 74. Lord Delamere, "The Grant of Land to the Zionist Congress and Land Settlement in East Africa" in Huxley, White Man's Country, p. 121.
- 75. George Bennett, "British Settlers North of the Zambezi, 1920 to 1960" in L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan (eds.), Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960 (London: Cambridge University Press, Press), vol 2, p. 88.
- 76. Great Britain, Colonial Office, Confidential Frints, "Correspondence relating to Concessions in Uganda, the East Africa Protectorate, and Somaliland" C.O. 879/87, June, 1906. D. Stewart to Lord Lyttelton, April 13, 1905, No. 32 (Enclosure), p. 56. Hereafter cited as "C.O. 879/87."
- 77. Charles Eliot to Lord Delamere, September 3, 1903, cited in Huxley, White Nam's Country, p. 122.
- Charles Eliot, The East Africa Frotectorate (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc.; 1966 (1905), p. 177.

- 79. Handrok for East Africa, Uganda & Zanzibar (Mombasa: "Government Printing Press", 1907), p. 70.
- 80. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons and Command), "Correspondence relating to the Resignation of Sir Charles and the East Africa Syndicate," Cd. 2099 (July, 1904), p. 533. Hereafter cited as "Cd. 2099."
- 81. Ibid., p. 534.
- 82. See Cd. 2099.
- 83. Elict, The East Africa Protectorate, pp. ii-iii.
- 84. Thia.
- 85. Ibid.
- 86. Ibid.
- 87. Ibid.
- 88. He became a university administrator at the University of Hong Kong in 1912. Who Was Who 1929-1940, p. 410.
- Chamberlair resigned as a result of his fight over the tariff issue on October 9, 1903. Amery, Life, p. 265.
- 90. See F.O. 2/848 memoranda.
- 91. C.O. E79/87. Colonial Office to L. Greenberg, no. 115, p.
- Colonial Office to Foreign Office, F.O. C. P. 8290, No. 189 27 November 1963.
- 93. Lord Acton to the Marquess of Lansdowne, August 5, 1905,
- No. 151 (Enclosure), p. 139, C.O. 879/87.

 94. L. Greenburg to Colonial Office, August 8, 1905, No. 162,

 P. 147. C.O. 879/87.
- 95. Lyttelton to Stewart, August 24, 1905, No. 162, p. 144. C 879/87.
- 96. Cmd. 2387, p. 148.
- 97. Great Britain, Colonial Office, *Colonial Reports*, "Reports on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya for the year 1952, p. 10.
- Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons and Command), "Report of the East Africa Commission Cmd. 2387 (April, 1925), pp. 168-81.