How Did Colonialism Affect Kenya?

A Document Based Question (DBQ)
World History
Hook Exercise Unit VIII
How Did Colonialism Affect Kenya?
Clarifying Personal Responses

Change in K Town

You live in an old working-class part of the city called K Town. You have a loving family — father, mother, three kid brothers and sisters. You were born in the house you live in and most of the neighbors have been around for years. Your family owns the home. It has been hard for your parents to make ends meet, but you’re getting by. There is some gang activity in the community, especially over on Keeler beyond the park, so you pretty much stay in at night.

Your dad comes home from his landscaping business in Poshdale. He’s heard some bigshot developer is buying up most of K Town. Many of your friends and neighbors rent, so it would be hard to stop their landlords from selling. The old church, the old YMCA, the local grocerias are all likely to be torn down. Your dad says that in two years K Town is going to be fancy houses, high-rise condos and a supermall with a waterpark and cinema complex. They call it gentrification. The developer is promising some new affordable housing over by the tracks to the old residents. You will still be in the same school district if you move to the new housing.

Next Tuesday there’s going to be a block meeting at Maria’s Nueva Leone restaurant. Your dad says some neighbors want to stop the development. He also says the whole family is going to the meeting.

What will you say at the meeting? To get ready, write down some of the pros and the cons of the proposed gentrification. Be ready to discuss your thinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Did Colonialism Affect Kenya?

Directions: In the late 19th century the British were the world’s biggest colonizer. As the saying goes, the sun never set on the British Empire. If it was nighttime in British Bermuda it was daylight in British India, or British Zanzibar, or British Ceylon. The question before you is what kind of an impact did this British presence have on the people Britain controlled.

It is suggested that you follow these steps:
1. Read the Background Essay.
2. Skim through the documents to get a sense of what they are about.
3. Read the documents slowly. In the margin or on a Document Analysis Sheet record the main idea of each document.
4. Organize the documents by analytical category. The first few may be context documents. Other categories might deal with classic analytical divisions like government, religion, or economics.
5. Within each category, gather information and develop opinions about the effect of colonialism on the people of Kenya.
6. Develop a summary answer to the question.

The Documents:
Document 1: Tabula Rasa
Document 2: Africa, 1900: Selected Ethnic Groups (map)
Document 3: A Kikuyu Chief Speaks About Pink Cheeks
Document 4: Some African Acceptance of Colonial Rule
Document 5: Kenya’s New Leaders
Document 6: Religion Among the Kenyans
Document 7: Abaluyia Creation Story
Document 9: The Missionary School Teacher
Document 10: Education in the Kenya Colony, 1955 (chart)
Document 11: Roads, Railroads, and Postal Service in Colonial Kenya (maps)
How Did Colonialism Affect Kenya?

Introduction

What happens to people's lives when their country is a colony of another country? This was an important question to Americans in the eighteenth century when they were ruled by Great Britain, and it is an important question today when countries find themselves controlled by more powerful outsiders. By looking at Kenya's experience as a colony of Great Britain, you can get an idea of what being colonized meant both to the people being controlled and to those who control them.

Colonialism occurs when one nation takes control of another. By 1800 Europeans had colonized about 55% of the earth's surface; in 1878, 67%; and by 1914 about 85%. Colonialism directly affected the great majority of the earth's population for well over a century, and the effects remained even after colonial rulers gave up control.

Historians disagree on what those effects were. In one respected history of England by Walter Hall and Robert Albion, we read that "... On its good side this rule of the white minority meant order, efficiency, discipline, and comparative peace." But another historian, Basil Davidson, writes: "What the central consequence of colonial rule proved to be was not the modern reconstruction of Africa, but the far-reaching dismantlement and ruin of the societies and structures which the invaders had found." Our documents will tell you what Africans, as well, thought about their country being a colony.

Though each colonized country was different in some ways, there are some things that seemed to happen in them all. The study of Kenya's history as a colony will help you see how colonialism works and thus understand an important part of the human story.

The Scramble for Africa

The story begins in the nineteenth century. As strange as it seems, the African nation of Kenya was created by Europeans. Its boundaries were drawn about four thousand miles to the northwest in Berlin, Germany. Representatives of fourteen European nations met in 1884 and 1885 to carve up the African continent. No Africans attended the Berlin Conference. All of Africa was placed under European control except Liberia and Ethiopia. Seven countries were given the right to "own" a particular territory. This takeover left most Africans under European rule for the next eighty years. Enslavement of Africans by Europeans ended after the agreement made at Berlin, but indigenous Africans soon found themselves controlled by outsiders in different ways.

Great Britain already had colonies around the world when the Berlin Conference met. They bragged that "the sun never sets on the British Empire." What Britain wanted from Africa were raw materials such as wool, copper, and tin to supply their factories; cash crops such as tea, coffee, and cocoa to fill their cups; and diamonds and gold to decorate themselves. In addition, they wanted new markets in which to...
sell their products. What they felt they gave to Africans was the Christian religion, a "superior" form of government, and what they considered a more developed civilization.

The People of Kenya

The territory that became the British colony of Kenya contained within its borders at least twenty-seven ethnic groups with different cultures. It did not begin like England and Spain, for example, where most of the people shared the same language and culture. All Africans did not feel the same way about the British settlers. Those who made their living from farming were angry because their land was being taken from them. On the other hand, groups who did not get along with their neighbors often wanted the help of the powerful British against their enemies.

Government of the Kenya Colony

Before World War I, Kenya was ruled from Britain by a legislative council. This group was helped by Kenyan headmen, or chiefs, who had some control over local government. Appointed by the British, these African leaders acted as both rulers of a local area and go-betweens with the British. Sometimes this person had the respect of his people — a true "headman." In many cases the chief was not a real chief among his people and was thought of as a puppet of the colonial rulers. During World War I thousands of Africans served the British government in World War I, mostly as "carriers" rather than soldiers, but they still suffered around 50,000 casualties.

After the war, Kenya became harder to rule. Led by Harry Thuku, a clerk in the Treasury, African Kenyans began to organize and protest British practices. First, there was the "kipande" — a pass carried in a small metal container which usually hung from the owner's neck on a piece of string. Not carried by whites, the pass reminded Africans that they were considered second class citizens. Then there was the "hut tax," an annual payment made by each African household. The British felt that the Africans benefited from roads and schools that were built, so it seemed logical that they should help pay for them. This tax was raised shortly after the war at a time when wages were being cut. Added to these problems was the hardship brought on by a terrible influenza epidemic in 1919 and the constant loss of African lands to Europeans. Adding to the tension, Thuku was "detained" by the government for nine years.

Because of protests by Africans, in 1923 the British said that in the future, African needs would come before white settlers' desires. In 1925 "local native councils" were created to
Colonialism/Kenya DBQ

5 of 12

give Africans a part in the rule of Kenya. To some people this seemed to be a step toward self-rule for Africans, but others saw it as a way to use more educated Africans to keep protesting Africans under control. Thuku's followers wanted to get their lands back and have more development in Kenya. Cooperation broke down when the Kenyans defended the tradition of female circumcision against protests of Christian missionaries. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the British government returned to the policy of supporting the white settler farmers. More African farmers lost their land and either became "squatters" or moved to the cities. At this time a new leader appeared, Jomo Kenyatta. Born Kamau Ngengi, Kenyatta started out as an employee of the Nairobi Water Department and later spent years in London arguing for change in Kenya.

World War II slowed the movement for change in Kenya, but it also set forces in motion that would eventually lead to the end of British rule. Africans served Britain again but this time as armed soldiers. Many fought outside of Kenya in India. These soldiers witnessed Europeans fighting and killing one another and no longer stood in awe of European power. When they learned that the war was being fought to preserve liberty and democracy around the world, they could not help but question life in Kenya under colonial rule.

The "Emergency" and Independence

After the war Kenyans directly challenged the idea that Kenya should remain "white man's country." The Kenya African Union (KAU) was formed and Kenyatta became its president. The Union demanded that settlers' lands be returned to Africans. A group of anti-colonial Africans called the Mau Mau went further. They wanted a total break from the British colonial system. Although Kenyatta denied the charge, the British believed that he was also the head of the Mau Mau organization. He was arrested on October 29, 1952, and a violent rebellion against British rule began, led by the Mau Mau fighters. The British called it "The Emergency." They saw it as a threat to both British rule and the survival of white people in Kenya.

The four-year struggle for Kenya's independence was a bloody one. The British said that the Mau Maus were savage and primitive fighters who attacked innocent people on their farms and in their homes. For their part the British used harsh measures to defeat the mainly Kikuyu Mau Mau and the other ethnic groups who joined them. The Kenyans saw themselves as freedom fighters seeking independence from unfair colonial rule. To them violence was necessary. The struggle was also a civil war. The Mau Mau considered Africans who benefited from and supported British rule to be part of the enemy.

Though the British won the war, their government, in 1958, gave up the idea of Kenya as a "white man's country" and began preparing for African majority rule. The cost of crushing rebellion was more than any benefit they could have gotten out of the colony. In 1960 Africans were given a majority on the Legislative Council, and elections were held in February, 1961. Jomo Kenyatta's party won with the slogan Uhuru na Kenyatta - "Independence with Kenyatta" - and Kenyatta was released from jail. By 1963 colonial rule ended, and Jomo Kenyatta became the president of an independent Kenya.

The Question

What happened to the lives of both the African Kenyans and the Europeans who colonized their land during the colonial era? The answer to that question will help the student of history understand other situations, both past and present, in which one nation attempts to dominate the life of another. Read through the documents that follow. Organize them into analytical categories and develop an answer to the question: How did colonialism affect Kenya?
Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?

2. What terms in the question need to be defined?

3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

Pre-Bucketing

Directions: Using any clues from the Mini-Q question and the document titles, guess the analytical categories and label the buckets. It does not matter that in this Mini-Q you will be writing a speech. The bucket format still works.
We have in East Africa the rare experience of dealing with a *tabula rasa*, an almost untouched and sparsely inhabited country, where we can do as we will, regulate immigration, and open or close the door as seems best.

Doc 1: What is a *tabula rasa*?

What does Sir Charles Elliot's quote say about how he regards East African people?
Doc 2: Does the map support or refute the idea that East Africa was a tabula rasa? Supply detail in your explanation.

Name five Kenyan ethnic groups that appear in the inset map.
It was in these days that a Pink Cheek man came one day to our Council. He came from far away, from where many of these people lived in houses made of stone and where they held their own Council.

He sat in our midst and he told us of the king of the Pink Cheeks, who was a great king and lived in a land over the seas.

"This great king is now your king," he said. "And this land is all his land, though he has said you may live on it as you are his people and he is your father and you are his sons."

This was strange news. For this land was ours. We had bought our land with cattle in the presence of the Elders and had taken the oath and it was our own. We had no king, we elected our Councils and they made our laws. A strange king could not be our king and our land was our own. We had had no battle, no one had fought us to take away our land as, in the past, had sometimes been. This land we had had from our fathers and our fathers' father, who had bought it. How then could it belong to this king?

With patience, our leading Elder tried to tell this to the Pink Cheek and he listened. But at the end he said, "This we know. But in spite of this, what I have told you is a fact. You have now a king - a good and great king who loves his people, and you are among his people. In the town called Nairobi is a council or government that acts for the king. And his laws are your laws."

Doc 3: Who was Kabongo? Who were the "Pink Cheeks"?

According to Kabongo, what kind of government existed among his people before the Pink Cheeks arrived?

What form of government was being imposed on Kabongo's people by the Pink Cheeks?