

native tribes, partly to sustain the British in the Cape and partly with a view to protecting British strategic hegemony in that part of the Indian Ocean area. But the weakness of their backing from the Scanlan government at the Cape, the divisions among the tribal chieftains in the border lands and the ruthless expansionism of the Boers, together with their military readiness and bland deceit in negotiations, made 'paramountcy' a difficult matter to define, let alone enforce. Kimberley and Derby emerge weak reeds, Gladstone as a consummate politician, fully capable of defending a lost cause with magnificent orations about British concern for South Africa which won the cheers of the House and the encomiums of the daily press, but which were meaningless in practical terms.

Dr Schreuder shows clearly that the official mind of imperialism, at least in Whitehall, was much less purposeful and much more easily distracted than has hitherto been allowed. Ireland especially, Egypt, the Sudan, New Guinea, the Hebrides and the Queen all plagued ministers simultaneously with the South African troubles. Ministers sought solutions to one in terms of their experience in dealing with another and were bewildered when the fancied solutions did not work. The richness of the papers available to Dr Schreuder has enabled him to convey at length that rare thing in political history, a sense of the daily grind of officials and ministers at work on problems and persuasion. The hopeless task of simultaneously placating the Boers, fobbing off the missionaries and native protectionists and devising some minimal, cheap protection for the tribes, defeated Kimberley and Derby in turn. In the end 'paramountcy' was to be exercised indirectly through the medium of the local Cape and Boer provincial governments and the slide to war had begun.

Kruger and the ominous Rev. S. J. du Toit come through much less clearly. No doubt the evidence about their intentions and deliberations on policy is less full than that for the British ministers, but this lack unbalances the book and deprives it of the dramatic clash of personalities promised by the title.

Nonetheless, the book is a must for students of South African history and anyone interested in Gladstone and British politics of the 1880s will find it fascinating. The portrait of that formidable proconsul, Sir Hercules Robinson, the one man with practicable ideas, will also interest Australian and New Zealand readers. Incidentally, 'New South Wales' on page 49 should read 'Victoria'.

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Origins of European Settlement in Kenya. By M. P. K. Sorrenson. Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1968. 320 pp. East Africa price: Sh. 30/-.
Land Reform in the Kikuyu country. A Study in Government Policy. By M. P. K. Sorrenson. Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1967. 266 pp. East Africa price: Sh. 20/-.

THERE ARE few more delectable places than the highlands of Kenya. From atop the Ngong hills near Nairobi one can look south to a panorama of

great volcanic upheavals culminating, if one is lucky, in the twin peaks of Kilimanjaro. Eastwards lies the Rift Valley, with its terraced sides, dropping to the valley floor with its own extinct volcanoes, and its string of marvellous lakes (some with their eye-catching pink flamingos). Northward lies the Kikuyu forest, and the serrated tops of Mount Kenya. Only the characterless spill that is Nairobi to the northeast mars the beauty of the land, which, for all its physical drama, is, like its climate, gentle and softening in its impact. It becomes hard to think that this has been a land of twentieth century conflict, and remarkable to recall that two quite different policies for its development have engaged the energies of governments during this time.

Professor Sorrenson's two books need to be read together. So different in focus, they deal with the same general region, at points in time just half a century apart. The first discusses the alien, European, large-scale settlement, mostly out in the open country, in the first and second decades of this century. The second deals with the indigenous African — here specifically Kikuyu — small-scale, resettlement mostly up on the higher ground, in the fifth and sixth decades. The whole of the story is not to be found here. For a start parallel studies of the more strictly agricultural and economic aspects are needed: closer analysis of the social composition of those involved is called for; the ethos imbuing each story has still to be captured; and so on. But both stories turned in large part upon the myriad intricacies of land policy, land allocation, land legislation, land administration, and, thanks to Professor Sorrenson's mastery of these, the path has been cleared through these matters for others who would aspire to tackle the other dimensions.

The essentials of the first story are well known. A one-horse British chartered company tried in the last two decades of the nineteenth century to develop an imperial estate inland from Mombasa. Its only achievement was to propel the British Foreign Office into establishing British dominion over the clutch of African kingdoms eight hundred miles in the interior, and into building a railway that ran from the coast to nowhere in particular. When the Company went bankrupt the wretched Foreign Office assumed charge of its dominion. Somehow the railway, and the fragile edifice of British administration that accompanied it, had to be made to pay its way. There was little or no African commerce on which to build; and it would have been an odd theory at the time to have suggested that African peasant farmers could come to the rescue. Settlers from India were thought about (and there was even a settlement of Utopians, and a plan for a Jewish homeland). Astride, however, the Rift Valley in the interior British visitors slowly began to think that there were possibilities here for that nineteenth century superman, the European settler. The highlands (so the able, ebullient 'Commissioner' Sir Charles Eliot, came to declare) could be 'pre-eminently a white man's country'. Since both human and animal disease, as well as civil war, had carved inroads into the warrior peoples, the Masai, who dominated the open space hereabouts, Eliot was able to flag the first cohorts of European settlers, most of them from South Africa, into great open spaces that looked to be largely 'empty'. As a result the decade of the 1900s saw the area centred upon the old railway workshops of Nairobi become the pivot of a deliberate endeavour to effect economic development in this area by bringing in as many British, and even Boer,

settlers who would come. Sometimes they came in waves, and overwhelmed the exiguous Land Office with their importunities. Basically, however, there were never enough of them to make their efforts a cumulative success. They were seriously undercapitalized; and they spread themselves far too thinly across the land that was taken. Five men in succession (initially with the title of Commissioner, later of Governor) presided over the formative years. Girouard, who served from 1909 to 1912, like Eliot was forceful and able. Like Eliot, too, his term was cut short when he resigned after a bitter dispute with the Colonial Office over some of his allocations of land. The other three (one died, one was thankfully transferred) were lightweights, and worse. In 1907, however, there was a visit to relieve the torpor from the rumbustious Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, Winston Churchill; and a little later on one of those angry marches on Government House without which no self-respecting colonists' history is complete.

All of this Sorrenson tells. His focus, however, is upon the inevitably hideous complications of the effort to create a system of European land tenure. There were not just the usual problems of lack of surveys, dummying, development changes, registration, auctions, rights of resale; nor just another outbreak of the old conflict between protagonists of the big man and protagonists of the small man. There was, for a start, the fact that the territory was not a British *colony*, only a British *protectorate*, which meant, so the legal pundits advised, that there could be no allocations in freehold. And there were then breast-beating attempts by the Colonial Office (which after 1905 took over from the mystified Foreign Office) not to repeat all the mistakes which its officials were persuaded their predecessors had made in Australasia. Not until 1915 (by which time the London correspondence on the subject was entering its twentieth year) was the seminal Crown Lands Ordinance eventually promulgated. It represented, so Sorrenson concludes — and his meticulousness with the details establishes confidence in his judgment — an almost total victory for the line which the settlers' champions had taken. It was 'very different from the measure originally envisaged by the Colonial Office'. Leases, which by 1908 had been for 99 years, were now to be for 999 years. Although there was to be some revision of rentals over time, its limits were strictly laid down. At the same time:

There were to be no restrictions on transfers once the full purchase price had been paid, unless the transfer was between different races when it could be vetoed by the Governor in Council. The attempt to prevent the accumulation of land had been abandoned. Land was to be disposed of by auction and as leasehold only, except in special cases. There was to be no restriction on building, except that the conditions of auction could state whether non-Europeans would be permitted to bid. Nor was there to be any restriction on the number of farms a person could purchase. The purchase price — the price bid at auction — could be paid at once or spread over ten years.

And so on. On all this Sorrenson's account is thoroughly authoritative.

He is fully authoritative, too, on a number of the corollaries to this story. One of these, as the extract indicates, was that 'Asiatics' were not to have any place in the settlement areas. The Colonial Office gave in on

this matter once an egregious non-racial formula had been found, and the 'Elgin pledges' remained the European settlers' sheet anchor for half a century to come. There was then the protracted hustling of the Masai out of much of the area where their remnants still pastured their cattle. Sorrenson's pithiness here admirably reduces an otherwise indigestible story to its essentials. He usefully summarises too the angling for land by the first missionaries, the first demarcations of African reserves, and, more briefly, the losses sustained by the other peoples of Kenya besides the Masai. Furthermore, he has a stab at both the debate over the preservation of African interests among the colonial administrators, and at how all this European inroad seemed to the Africans affected. These, however, are really subjects for other books — which it must be hoped will be written by someone sometime.

The one doubt which arises is whether all this capitulation to the settlers was really just the consequence of the spinelessness — even the insincerity — in their official opponents to which Sorrenson points. Another view — indeed this reviewer's view — would rather be that there was just no getting away from the fact that somehow the territory and its railway had to be made to pay. The method determined upon was the development of European settlement. There were, however, never enough settlers, or enough capital at their disposal, to make this quickly successful, and the one thing which always made officialdom turn white — if the pun may be excused — was the suggestion that their schemes for European settlement might dry up if the settlers did not get their way. When one of his subordinates warned Sir Charles Eliot of the dangers of an onrush of land speculation and urged him to restrict the sales which were being made of 1,000 acre lots, Eliot replied: 'You quite forget that what we have to do is to *attract* people — your regime would stop settlers from coming.' Sorrenson makes these points, but they are not quite the hinge of his account to the extent that perhaps they should be.

The settlers came to have the whip hand — and it was no less than a marvel that, like their fellows further south, they did not secure full responsible government, as they expected, at some point or other in the 1920s or 1930s. In every other respect, however, they dominated Kenya. But it brought them little comfort. Theirs was never more than a struggling existence. Not only did the economy languish. The Africans upon whose land they had encroached, and upon whose labour they had hoped to rely, proved to be much more energetic and self-willed than they had bargained for. By the 1950s in a tumultuous way two consequential thrusts here converged. On the one hand, the administration, especially the agricultural administration, began to think that they should do something, for the good of the Kenya economy, about African farming and not just about European farming, and the Kikuyu at the centre of the country launched their sulphurous revolt, Mau Mau.

In his second book Professor Sorrenson writes neither about the Swynnerton plan (for the development of African agriculture) nor about Mau Mau, except as they impinged upon his rather distinctive story. Once again he focuses upon land policy, land allotment, land legislation, and land administration. This time, however, the cast was African — even if the producers, playwrights, and managers were Europeans. The land settlement reforms in Kikuyu country in the 1950s and 1960s were the focal point

of an attempt at a major shift in emphasis in Kenya. The prime instrument was to be Kikuyu land consolidation. The purpose was not, as hitherto, to dragoon Africans into labouring on European farms. An effort was to be made to turn Africans — some Africans at least — into prosperous, 'middle-class', yeoman farmers on their own account. That a whirlwind campaign of land reallocation and consolidation should have played so prominent a part in this requires some explanation. No doubt it made a good deal of sense agriculturally — though there were nonsenses as well. More to the point, however, it pandered to the non-technical District Officer's sense that he was 'doing something' within his competence to improve the otherwise thoroughly disheartening agrarian situation which the twentieth century had brought to Kikuyu country, and it had the aura of being a positive revolution in Kikuyuland to counterpoise the negative revolution which the administration saw in Mau Mau.

Sorrenson summarises the prehistory thus:

As long ago as 1934 the Kenya Land Commission had warned that government would be involved in a race to impose scientific use and management of land before the Kenya land unit was ruined through over-population, over-cultivation and over-grazing. Ten years later it seemed that government had lost the race; but so far no solution had appeared other than the unpopular communal terracing. It was not until the fifties that a new solution appeared in the form of consolidation of fragments, registration of titles and an accelerated programme of cash cropping under the Swynnerton plan.

Any move, however, by the administration to deal with anything to do with the land in the Kikuyu country invariably resulted by this time in setting off a further conflict for political power in the area between the colonial administration and the Kikuyu leaders. But with most of the latter either caught up in Mau Mau, cowed, or incarcerated, the administration felt itself confronted by a unique opportunity — to use their own words — to 'strike while the iron is hot'. From their point of view — and the administration in Kikuyu country (rather than the agricultural department) was to the fore in all of this — land consolidation in Kikuyu country was not just a matter of helping progressive farmers to consolidate their holdings so that they could enclose and paddock their farms, plant cash crops and rotate their agricultural crops with grass leys. It was to be a reward for loyalists, a means by which a stable Kikuyu middle class based upon the loyalists could be built up, and the starting point, too, for an agrarian revolution in the area led by what the Russians call 'kulaks' — rich peasants. With Mau Mau raging there was greatly increased power in the hands of the government's field officers, and a conviction in their minds that the time had come for aggressive action. So they set to with a will and a verve and an ingenuity as of men possessed.

Upon the basis of full access to government records, Sorrenson details the particularities of the story in the three Kikuyu districts — as well as the antics of those officials in Nairobi who had to deal with the relevant legal conundrums. Consolidation started in Nyeri in 1953, in Fort Hall in 1954, and in Kiambu in 1955. Its most energetic administration was in Kiambu; the greatest of its complications in Fort Hall. Considering that

this was all Kikuyu country it is remarkable that there was so much disparity between the districts — but then, as this suggests again, each district of the British colonial administration (both in Kenya and elsewhere too) was more often than not a world to itself.

Sorrenson concludes, first, that of those who primarily benefited from land consolidation only about half have become full-time professional farmers; second, that next to nothing was done for the landless; and accordingly that the hoped for agrarian revolution did not occur. There is a tendency here to underplay the dramatic increase in production for the market — and not least the world market — which has ensued upon the reforms of the 1950s. But it is a fair comment that 'what is continuing to emerge in Kikuyu land is not so much a middle class as a small landed gentry'.

It is also ironic. For in important respects this was what the earlier European settlement in Kenya had done. It begins to look indeed as if the chief importance of that earlier settlement, about which Sorrenson has also written, was that it provided the model for the more energetic Africans of Kenya when they began to make their own political and economic fortunes — and that the consolidation programme in Kikuyu country, far from bringing about an agrarian revolution in the countryside, was primarily significant because it gave these people a helping hand on their way to enlarging for their own benefit that very aristocratic agrarian regime which the settlers had established. Certainly, from the angle of the early 1970s, it is the affinities between President Kenyatta and his associates — living as he does for so much of his time on his farm at Githunguri — with Kenya's earlier European settlers that is so striking, not the differences.

There are dimensions to the genesis of that irony that lie beyond the scope of Professor Sorrenson's two studies, but, as these others are explored, there will always be the firm foundation of his work to provide at least one of the starting points.

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The Observation of Savage Peoples. By Joseph-Marie Degérando, trans. by F. C. T. Moore. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969. xi, 123 pp. U.K. price: 25s.

DEGERANDO'S *Observation of Savage Peoples*, first published in Paris in 1800 as advice to Baudin's impending expedition to survey the coasts of Australia, is an important though long neglected document in the history of anthropology. We are indebted to Dr Moore for his translation of and commentary on what appears to be the only extant copy of the memoir.

The *Observation* is important because it sets out systematically and for the first time the procedures which have become *sine qua non* of modern anthropology: prolonged fieldwork; participation in the life of the people under observation; the learning of their language; recording of oral traditions; examination of kinship structure and social relations. Critical of earlier explorers who had been content with random comments on the