

# New Crisis Looms in Kenya

by I. Cox

BEFORE Maudling gave up his position as Colonial Secretary in the recent British Cabinet changes to become the new Chancellor, he delivered two parting shots which are bound to create a new crisis in Kenya. The first was to announce that new elections would not be held until 1963. There would then be a long period of internal self-government, with real power in the hands of the British Governor. No date has yet been fixed for Kenya's independence, and unless the British Government is forced to concede it earlier, it is now not likely until the early months of 1964.

The second parting shot was to announce a free hand-out of R36 million to purchase one-third of the three million acres of European mixed-farming land in the White Highlands during the four years 1963-67. The Government case is that this scheme will provide farms for 70,000 African landless families during this period, namely one half of the existing 150,000 landless families.

These two declarations are part of a single strategy, the first to buy more time to enable the British rulers to put their land scheme into operation, and the second an attempt to commit in advance the new independent Kenya to continue paying out millions to the European settlers.

Both of them are certain to create new serious tension in Kenya and to aggravate the present critical economic situation.

## Sabotage of Independence

It was expected that Kenya would have new elections in September this year, with the prospect of independence before the end of 1962. Maudling's visit to Kenya in July (only four months after the London constitutional talks) was designed to prevent this. In the elections of March 1961, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) won 550,000 votes on a restricted franchise, in contrast to the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) which polled only 150,000 votes.

Though both parties prior to the elections were pledged not to form a government until Jomo Kenyatta was released, KADU broke this pledge and joined hands with Sir Michael Blundell (Britain's chief mouthpiece) and other Europeans and formed a minority government. From that moment KADU has been the chief instrument of British strategy to create and widen the divisions in Kenya. At the end of the London talks in March, 1961, Maudling presented an ultimatum that the leaders of KANU and KADU must form a coalition government and come to an agreement on the future

constitution before any date could be fixed for Kenya's independence.

Maudling's experience in Kenya convinced him that KANU was bound to sweep the poll if elections took place this year. Even Lord Colyton (one of the Tory backwoodsmen) had to admit in the House of Lords in May this year:

"It seems to be widely taken for granted that Kenyatta is the undisputed leader of the majority of the electorate". To safeguard against this Lord Salisbury (close friend of Welensky and Tshombe) emphasised that:

"It should be made clear to the African political leaders, and to the European population and everyone else, that there will be no general election in Kenya until the details of a new constitution have been agreed....."

## Maudling's Strategy

Maudling's strategy is in line with that of these noble lords. KADU knows it has no chance in any new elections, and that its vote will be smaller even than in March 1961. So its leaders are doing everything possible to prevent an agreement with KANU on a new constitution and to hold up new elections as long as possible. During Maudling's visit in July it voiced a demand for a permanent coalition, and that this should be entrenched in the new Kenya constitution. This was too blatant even for Maudling, who prefers to move one stage at a time to hold up Kenya's independence.

## Millions for Settlers

Maudling's plan to hand over a free gift of R36 million to European settlers in the next four years is not entirely new. For years the settlers themselves have put forward far more ambitious schemes, but to most of them this is a step in the right direction.

Lord Delamere (son of the original land grabber in 1903), the chairman of the Kenya National Farmers' Union (Euro-

pean) lost no time in declaring "I think this is an excellent practical start to the problem" (Financial Times, 11th July, 1962), though on the same day the Guardian expressed the view that "it is an expensive operation". At the same time, many Europeans are not satisfied and regard the Maudling plan as "inadequate and lacking in urgency", and urged the settlers to sell out now for the highest price and to get out of Kenya without delay.

Due to the serious economic situation in Kenya, land values are falling, and it's extremely doubtful whether most European settlers would get a bigger price from private sales than what is now offered by Maudling. The most urgent need in Kenya is to press ahead with substantial economic development but Maudling made it clear that this scheme to hand over R36 million "will be the first charge on development funds made available to Kenya over the period when the scheme is operating".

This means that the interests of the European settlers are given priority over the urgent need to improve the economic situation in Kenya. Moreover, Maudling's aim is to commit any future government in Kenya to continue this scheme, but most Europeans realise that it won't be worth the paper it is written on after Kenya becomes independent.

## African, Landless

Nor is there any evidence that the scheme will provide any real solution for the problem of the 150,000 African landless families. Similar schemes (on a smaller scale) have already been in operation during 1961-2. Up to the end of this year the plan is to take over 250,000 acres, which are expected by that time to provide small holdings for 5,000 African landless families, but with an expected annual cash income of only R80. The declared aim of the new scheme is to provide for 17,000 families in each of the next four years.

Even if this is achieved, there will still be more African landless families at the end of four years than there are now. On July 17 Mr. Tom Mboya (now Minister of Labour) pointed out that 31,500 Africans were thrown out of work during the ending June 1961, and among these were 20,000 in the white Highlands. At this rate there will be 80,000 extra African landless families in four years — more than the total provided for in Maudling's scheme. There are now at least 300,000 Africans unemployed in Kenya, and the number is increasing each year. From this it is clear that the Maudling scheme is no solution for Kenya's problem, and that British policy has no solution at all. Indeed, it is most likely that British ruling circles welcome the worsening economic situation in Kenya in an attempt to justify the maintenance of British rule.

## Shameful Record

European land robbery is the most shameful record of British rule in Kenya. Now it is proposed to reward the robbers for what they have stolen from the Africans.

Soon after the British annexed Kenya in 1892 the European land grabbers started operations. In 1901 there were only 13 European settlers. By 1905 there were 886. They grew to over 5,000 in 1914, dropped rapidly during the First World War, rose again to 2,000 before the Second World War and are now over 2,000.

Land reserved for Europeans in the White Highlands covers an area of seven million acres, most of it ranches and plantations (owned by big private companies) which are untouched by Maudling's scheme. The new plan applies only to mixed-farming land, which is about three million acres — one-third of which is to be purchased in the next four years.

Under the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902, nearly 6,000 square miles was taken from the Africans

and given to Europeans between 1902 and 1915. After 1915 more than 10,000 square miles were taken, most of it on leases of 999 years at rents of 2½d. an acre up to 1945. Between May 1903 and December 1904 there were 220,000 acres transferred to 342 European settlers, 100,000 acres to Lord Delamere, 350,000 acres to the East African Syndicate (a monopoly firm); and in 1920 the East African Lands and Development Co. acquired 310,000 acres. By 1951 this latter firm had sold all but 300 acres of its land. It paid a dividend of 100 per cent, during 1947-50, and 33 per cent in 1951.

## Settlers Make Big Fortunes

After the First World War, returned British soldiers were encouraged to settle in the White Highlands of Kenya to take over farms ranging from 160 to 300 acres. Until 1945 the rent per acre was only 2½d, but in recent years has increased to over 40 cents. Since then speculation in the sale of land has become the greatest occupation of the richer European farmers, and the market value of land has jumped to between 10 and 20 times its real value.

After making huge fortunes both as occupiers and sellers of land, the European settlers are now promised even bigger fortunes by the British Government. Their appetites are insatiable, and both Maudling and Sandys (the new Colonial Secretary) are anxious to satisfy and appease them before the Africans are in control of an independent Kenya.

Jomo Kenyatta has made it clear that an independent Kenya will accept no responsibility for handing over free gifts to European settlers, for "KANU does not believe in any land policy designed to persuade immigrant farmers to stay after self-government." But under the present coalition government in Kenya, the British grip is still strong. The Maudling scheme is a threat to the future of Kenya for it is designed to sabotage the advance to independence.