

HISTORY

The region now known as Kenya was visited at an early date by the Arabs, its proximity to Arabia having invited colonization as long ago as the eighth century. A sizable Arab community exists in Kenya today. The Arabs were followed seven centuries later by the Portuguese, then by the British. Until east Africa was partitioned among the European powers toward the end of the 19th century, most of the coast was under the rule of the Sultan of Zanzibar, although trade at the principal ports was controlled by British and Indian merchants. Later German agents acquired concessions in the region. A series of frontier agreements concluded between 1886 and 1893 fixed the boundaries of the respective east African spheres of influence of Germany, Italy, and Britain. In 1887, the Sultan of Zanzibar granted to what later became the British East African Co. a 50-year concession covering his mainland possessions not falling within the German sphere. In 1895, the British Government purchased the company's rights and appointed a commissioner to the area, thereafter designated the East Africa Protectorate. The name was changed to Kenya Colony and Protectorate in 1920. Upon independence on December 12, 1963, the country became a member of the British Commonwealth, recognizing the Queen, represented by a Governor General, as head of state. One year later, on December 12, 1964, Kenya became a republic.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

A colonists' association to look after their interests was founded by the early European settlers who came to Kenya in the first years of the century. In 1907, a nominated Legislative Council was established, and in 1919 the selection of most of its members was placed on an elective basis. Until 1944, when the first African was nominated to the Legislative Council, Africans had no direct participation in the Central Government's legislative or executive institutions. The first direct elections for Africans, under a restricted multivote franchise, occurred in 1957. From October 1952 to December 1959 Kenya was in a state of emergency arising from the bloody and costly Mau Mau rebellion.

Partly because of the emergency and of the important political role played by the European settlers, Kenya's constitutional development lagged behind that of its east African neighbors, Tanganyika and Uganda, which became independent in 1961 and 1962, respectively. A major forward step came in early 1960 when, following a constitutional conference in London, agreement was reached giving Africans a majority in the Legislative Council for the first time. However, internal political quarrels and tribal distrust that have long plagued Kenya's politics made cooperation among African politicians exceedingly difficult. Thus, when the next round of constitutional change came up for discussion in 1962, differences between the Kenya African National Union (KANU), which drew its principal support from the larger tribes, and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), a political party with support from many of the smaller tribes, resulted in the talks dragging on for many months.

The vexing constitutional issues were not finally settled until early in March 1963. The complicated Constitution finally agreed upon established a quasi-federal system under which regional and even local governments had considerable powers. In this latter respect the Constitution reflected the small tribes' fears of domination by the Kikuyu and Luo, Kenya's two largest tribes.

After its overwhelming victory in the May 1963 elections, KANU formed a new government headed by Mr. Kenyatta, and Kenya entered the phase of full internal self-government. Several months later KANU demanded and received certain modifications in the Constitution which strengthened the Central Government's powers, especially over the police and the civil service. This modified document became the Constitution for Kenya upon its independence. Since the 1963 elections, a number of former KADU supporters have crossed the floor to join KANU, which has resulted in a substantial weakening of the minority party.

ECONOMY

Economic development of the country was stimulated by the completion in 1901 of a railroad from the coast to Lake Victoria. Some 35,000 Indians were brought to east Africa for the construction of the railroad, and many of them remained in the country after its completion. When it had been demonstrated that the land traversed by the railroad was suitable for agriculture, hundreds of settlers arrived from Britain and South Africa to establish homesteads on the