

This study of the response of the Kipsigis Orkoiik to colonial rule. It is also intended to make an important contribution to the historiography of the imperial conquest of Kenya and seeks to make its own contribution to the theories of resistance and collaboration, and protest.

Chapter one forms the introduction of the thesis. It includes a definition of the problem and of the area of study; literature review; a statement of the objectives; a description of the methodology used in the collection of data and a formulation of the theoretical framework against which the data was interpreted.

Chapter two attempts to trace the origins of the Kipsigis Orkoiik (Talai) and their contact with the Kipsigis people to the eve of colonial intrusion. The effects of the interactions between the two determine the Kipsigis Orkoiik resistance to the British conquest and rule in Kipsigis country. Chapter two attempts to trace the origins of the Kipsigis Orkoiik (Talai) and their contact with the Kipsigis people to the eve of colonial intrusion. The effects of the interactions between the two determine the Kipsigis Orkoiik resistance to the British conquest and rule in Kipsigis country.

Chapter three discusses the arrival of the Europeans (British) in Kipsigis and the Orkoiik response to colonial conquest and the establishment of colonial rule in 1919. In the chapter, Kipsigis clash with the British and the initiative undertaken by the Chief Orkoiyot Kipchomber Arap Koilegen when the British arrived in Kipsigis County among other things will be discussed.

Chapter four analyses the protest and repression in the inter war years. It will study the colonial administration in Kipsigis between 1920 and 1939 and how the Kipsigis Orkoiik protested against the colonial policies imposed on the Kipsigis in this period. It will also consider the culmination of this protest.

Chapter five is devoted to the kind of life the Talai led in exile and the effects of the deportation of the Orkoiik on Kipsigis society and politics. The concluding chapter contains in a summary form the major findings of the study.

The study aimed at analyzing the establishment of colonial rule in Kipsigis country and the response of the Orkoiik, focusing on the interwar years, the upshot of which was the deportation of the latter to Gwasi, in the South Kavirondo District (now Gwasi District). It also sought to examine the impact of the deportation on Kipsigis society and politics up to independence. With the establishment of colonial rule in Kipsigis in 1902. The Chief Orkoiyot Arap Koilegen and his people allied with the British. But as time went by he realized that the primary aim of the British was to occupy his country. This realization made the Orkoiyot to change from being an ally to an enemy of the colonialists. This confirms what the protagonists of the Collaboration and Resistance theories have argued that even the best allies of the Europeans did not know that the colonialists primary aim was to occupy their country and rule them.

The interests of the Chief Orkoiyot and the British soon clashed as each tried to win the loyalty of the local people. The Orkoiyot was now faced by problems that other African leaders had either faced or were facing, with their sovereignty being threatened by outside forces. Hence he had no alternative but to fight to save his threatened dynasty.

Thus the Kipsigis Orkoiik vigorously resisted the occupation of their country by the British. Their initial resistance in the early period of colonial rule led to three leading Orkoiik namely the chief Orkoiyot Arap Koilegei, Arap Singoe and Arap Boisio being exiled to Central Kenya in 1914. The trio died in exile. Their deportation is comparable to that of Jaja of Opobo and Samouri Toure of Mandinka state in West Africa who was ready to be exiled instead of ceding their territories to aliens. The banishment of the Orkoiik leaders confirms Boache's (1958) argument that African leaders were ready to be exiled or killed defending their territories. The indigenous religious beliefs inspired the Orkoiik unrest. Just after the deportation of 1914, there appeared locusts; there was lack of rain and a strange disease passed through the District. These strange supernatural occurrences were attributed to the spirits who were believed to be unhappy and were showing displeasure over the exiling of the three leaders. An irate mob of women numbering about five hundred turned up at the Kericho Mission with a view to punishing the converted Kipsigis who were instrumental in the deportation act. The role of religion in the African resistance was a common phenomenon. The resistance and collaboration theorists have argued that instrumentality of religious beliefs in resistance was not unusual among the African societies, which resisted alien rule.

The deportation of the three leading Orkoiik leaders did not deal a blow to the Orkoiik resistance instead energetic and more powerful leaders emerged who continued to challenge the British rule in Kipsigis country. In 1928, the Orkoiik and the other Kipsigis planned a big revolt to "chase away the whites from Kipsigis country". The discovery of the plot, coupled with increased cattle raids and a state of political unrest in Kipsigis land, made the British colonial administrators to call for the deportation of the whole clan of Orkoiik in order to end their influence over the Kipsigis people. The Orkoiik totaling about 698 males and females were subsequently deported to Gwasi in the then South Kavirondo District following the enactment of the Removal of the Laibons Ordinance on 1st August 1934 by the Legislative Council. The Orkoiik protest in the inter-war period sought to restore the past that had been disrupted by the coming of the British, thus confirming Mazrui's protest theory that African societies engaged in protests of Restoration and Conservation of restore their glorious past and were on the whole a manifestation of disturbed faith.

The deportation of the whole clan in 1934 marked a watershed in the resistance of the Orkoiik and indeed their history. In exile, they led a miserable life and were reduced to a destitute lot. However, they continued to challenge the British rule and as Davidson (1968) argues so long as there is oppression there is no end to protest by the oppressed. When the Orkoiik were finally repatriated to Kericho District in 1962, they had no land to settle on as the other Kipsigis had taken their ancestral land away. As a result, majority of them are now squatters in Kericho Municipal Council and Kipkelion Town.

The fate of the Orkoiik confirms the argument of the Resistance and Collaboration theorists that those who sacrificed most in the struggle against the establishment of colonial rule in Africa lost out compared to the people who had played safe.