

“Mau Mau: The Face of International Terrorism in the 1950s in Contemporary Perspective”

A Public Lecture by Bruce Berman, Professor Emeritus of Political Studies and History, Queen’s University



For more than 30 years until the end of the 1980s, Mau Mau in Kenya was to the Western world the terrifying face of African savagery. This image of Mau Mau was vigorously propagated by the British through the Western media, and was used to justify one of the first counter insurgency campaigns against anti-colonial terrorism. In contemporary perspective, what Mau Mau suggests is the shared origins of the far more violent and ideologically extreme movements from Boko Haram and al Shabaab to the Arab spring and ISIS in the catastrophic impact of capitalist modernity on the underclass of indigenous societies. What we can learn from Mau Mau is what one veteran told a visiting researcher, that he joined the movement “to get land and become an adult.” At the same time, we can recognize the contemporary circumstances that have both made contemporary terrorism more ideologically extreme and violent while limiting the response of Western powers, in particular, to repression and destruction.

Thursday, November 9th, 2017

3PM - 5PM

Location: Natalie Zemon

Davis Room, SS2098

Bruce Berman is Professor Emeritus of Political Studies and History at Queen’s University. He was the director and principal investigator of the Ethnicity and Democratic Governance Program from 2006 to 2012. He was the Smuts University Research Fellow at Cambridge in 2012-13 and is a continuing Visiting Fellow of Wolfson College. He is the author of *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya* (Gregory Prize, 1991) and, with John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (Reese Prize, 1995). His most recent books are *Secular States and Religious Diversity*, edited with Andre Laliberte and Rajeev Bhargava (UBC Press, 2013), and *Moral Economies and Ethnic and National Claims* edited with Andre Laliberte and Stephen Larin (UBC Press, 2016). He and John Lonsdale are completing *The House of Custom: Louis Leakey, Jomo Kenyatta and the Modern Kikuyu* (CUP, forthcoming).



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