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Primitive Accumulative of Capital Njia Mbili Mbele kwa kenya Katika Uhuru

Birth of UMOJA at the London Unity Conference (1987)

Trade Unions as the Motive Force for Resistance in Kenya, 1900 – 1950

Class Struggle in Kenya and Search for 'Uhuru'



Never Be Silent Simama Imara

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Editors: Shiraz Durrani and Kimani Waweru
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Uni.Way House, Second Floor, University Way
Next to Lilian Towers Hotel
P.O. Box 746-00200
Nairobi
Kenya
info.vitabkske@gmail.com
<http://vitabooks.co.ke>

The Kenya Socialist aims to encourage free flow of information, knowledge and discussion which can lead to a better understanding of socialism. It will seek to:

- Promote socialist ideas, experiences and world outlook
- Increase awareness of classes, class contradictions and class struggles in Kenya, both historical and current
- Expose the damage done by capitalism and imperialism in Kenya and Africa
- Offer solidarity to working class, peasants and other working people and communities in their struggles for equality and justice
- Promote internationalism and work in solidarity with people in Africa and around the world in their resistance to imperialism
- Make explicit the politics of information and communication as tools of repression and also of resistance in Kenya

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Editorial : Class Struggle in Kenya

Class Struggle in Kenya and the Search for 'Uhuru' is the title of the first article in this issue of *The Kenya Socialist*. It is a review of *Two Paths Ahead*¹ by Tom Odhiambo, which first appeared in the *Saturday Nation* of April 1, 2023. No, it was not an April Fool's Day item, but a proper review of a serious book that looks at the struggle between socialism and capitalism in Kenya. This was perhaps the first admission in recent times in the public domain that there are classes in Kenya, that there is a class struggle in Kenya and that the search for *uhuru* continues. This may come as news to some, but not to the working people who have been reduced to dire living conditions by capitalism ever since it was imposed by Jomo Kenyatta -- with the support of imperialism -- at independence. Capitalism has caused the poverty, unemployment, lack of housing and medical care, landlessness and many other life-threatening features of life today. The struggle against capitalism and for socialism has also been sidelined by the dictates of the ruling class. *TKS* is therefore pleased to include the review of the book in this issue.

The headlines and the review of the book are, therefore, an important milestone in Kenya. *The Kenya Socialist* is pleased to highlight this fact by including another article on the struggle. It is the Kiswahili translation of the article, *Two Paths Ahead for Kenya: Capitalism or Socialism* by Otsieno Godrick whose first Kiswahili translation was carried in our last issue².

Kimani Waweru then takes up an important topic — accumulation of capital, as it is the basis of capitalist exploitation of workers. No meaningful struggle against capitalism can be waged without an understanding how the system of exploitation works.

Literature as a learning tool needs to be taken more seriously by those actively fighting capitalism. It is an under-valued resource by the Left, whose normal focus is on the more serious ideological and theoretical studies. Novels, short stories, poems can help to deepen the understanding of the reality of capitalist

exploitation and people's experience in resisting it. The History and Ideology section starts with another chapter of the underground resistance in the 1980s and 1990s, looking at the formation of Umoja in London in 1987. This is the third article in a series, the others being on the December Twelve Movement, and MWAKENYA.

Understanding the role of trade unions in the liberation struggle is yet another area needing serious study. It is particularly important to see how the East African Trade Union Congress (EATUC), under Makhan Singh and Bildad Kaggia, skillfully combined industrial struggle with political struggle. Workers' struggle for wages and decent work conditions cannot be won without becoming active in the political field as well as the 'normal' trade union work. The enforced withdrawal from political struggles as a key aspect of trade union work is a major shortcoming of trade union movements in Kenya and elsewhere, and the lessons from the EATUC need to inform today's struggles.

Celebrating the life and work of Pio Gama Pinto has now become a normal feature of life in Kenya. It is common now to see the youth visiting his gravesite to learn about Pinto and to remember his struggle and sacrifice for working people or public meetings to discuss how his legacy can be realised. This year there was an additional event that took the life of Pio Gama Pinto to the public through a public exhibition. Zahid Rajan and Zarina Patel report from the Exhibition. This is followed by selected PowerPoint slides from *The Pio Gama Pinto Story: Legacy of Resistance in Kenya, based on the book Pio Gama Pinto: Kenya's Unsung Martyr, 1927-1965*.

Dorphan Mutuma is a well-known figure among youth and activists in Kenya. *TKS* is pleased to include two of his poems. This issue ends with a brief Book section.

Shiraz Durrani
12-05-2023

¹ Shiraz Durrani (2023): *Two Paths Ahead: The Ideological Struggle Between Capitalism and Socialism in Kenya, 1960-1970*. Nairobi: Vita Books.

Tom Odhiambo: Class Struggle in Kenya and the Search for ‘Uhuru’¹

Will Class Struggle in Kenya Ever be Resolved?

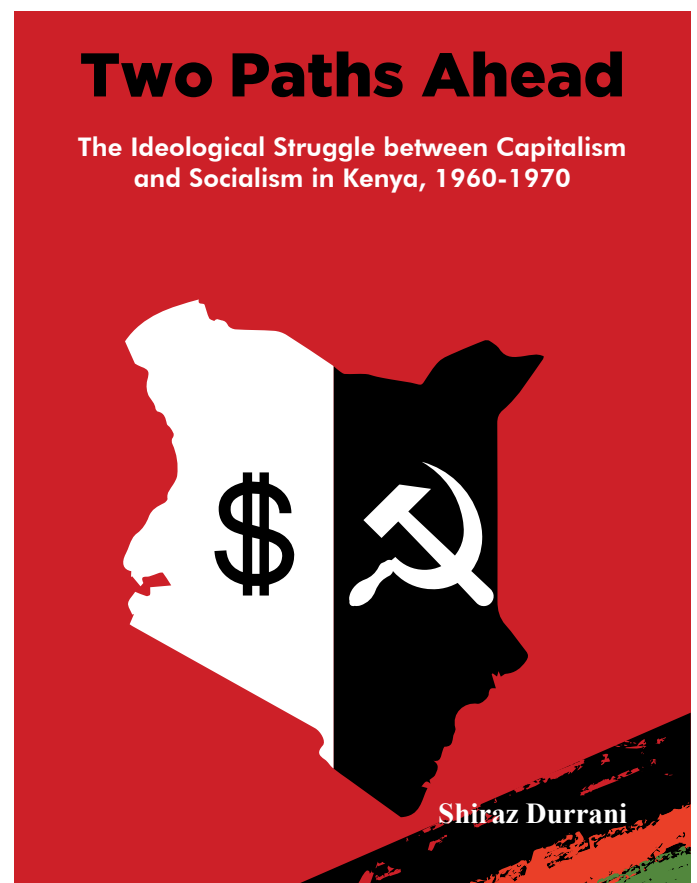
The thrust of the anti-colonial struggles in Kenya was economic and political liberation of Kenyans. Kenyans, especially Africans, wanted to be free of racism, economic exploitation, social exclusion and alienation, and political marginalisation. They didn't want to be third class citizens in their native land. Kenyans – and this included people of other races who had been born in colonial Kenya or had stayed in the country long enough to belong – wanted a country where every citizen, irrespective of their colour, class, creed, or culture had the right to a decent life, right to own property, work and live wherever they wished in the country, and was respected as a human being.

One only needs to read the original KANU manifesto to appreciate how Project Kenya was imagined. KANU declared that its main goal in the fight for independence was ‘the goal of all indigenous people of Kenya ... independence’; KANU declared that it believed ‘in the fundamental rights of the individual and these will be [included in the] Constitution.’ While in power, KANU stated that ‘The individual must enjoy political and economic freedom. KANU will ensure employment, protect the citizen against long hours of work and ascertain a minimum wage which could afford the worker clothing for himself and his family, decent food, education for his children, a little comfort and leisure.’ All this is found in *Two Paths Ahead: The Ideological Struggle between Capitalism and Socialism in Kenya, 1960-1970* by Shiraz Durrani (Vita Books, 2023).

Of course, like all liberation movements, KANU would later renege on most of these lofty promises. The party would drop its pretensions to Africanism (however it defined such) and African Socialism, and morph into a fully capitalistic party. Its (new?) ideology would progressively separate the party from its cadres and the rest of Kenyans, as well as some neighbouring countries, and many of its international supporters. KANU became two parties in one, A and B. KANU-B (the capitalists) would win the battle for

the soul of the party, with KANU-A members being scattered through assassination, imprisonment, exile, resignation, expulsion from the party and cooptation.

In *Two Paths Ahead*, Durrani reminds the reader that the KANU Manifesto, which was released in 1960, ‘was inspired by the militant forces from the trade union movement. Thus, the Manifesto reflected the socialist phase of KANU, before Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya and others turned the party into KANU-B. The active hands of the USA and United Kingdom, through their ambassadors, governors and High Commissioners were behind the party's embrace of capitalism and its rejection of socialism.



Indeed, KANU, which had replaced the proscribed Kenya African Union, had drawn its inspiration from the aspirations of the men and women who went to the forest to fight for their freedom and land, as well as trade unionists with the support of international friends. It is not surprising that the ‘Manifesto

¹ Reproduced from Nation (Nairobi), 01-04-2023. The Editors would like to thank the author and Nation for permission to reproduce this review.

was printed in Cairo by the Dar El-Hana Press' ... because 'colonial policy did not allow easy access to printing facilities for liberation forces.' Durrani notes that the Manifesto was a collective document, which 'reflected the views and wishes of the entire party membership'. He further writes, 'it was presented to the people of Kenya at a mass rally, indicating that the party was democratic and got its legitimacy from the people.'

Yet, after attaining power, the party gradually moved away from its pro-people ideology of pre- and immediate post-independence moments and established policies and institutions that would guarantee that Kenya trod the capitalistic path in later years. For instance, the party and the government, according to Durrani, became less concerned about land redistribution, considering that land was the major factor in the Mau Mau war of liberation, and was still a major factor of production for the majority of Kenyans. KANU and the government didn't resettle or compensate individuals who had been forced off their lands by the colonial government or those who had gone to fight in the Mau Mau war but on returning they discovered that their lands had been appropriated by the government and its collaborators.

But why should Kenyans be bothered about the history of KANU, its internal struggles and the winners in that fight for its control? First, because Kenyans today live with the consequences of KANU's decisions in the 1960s. What the party leaders then did about the economy, politics, education, culture, nationalism, foreign policy, etc, affects what Kenya and Kenyans are today.

How?

Consider the question of land. Today, there are claims that a few individuals acquired huge tracts of land, legally and illegally. That these persons sidelined poor Kenyans who had lost land or had little or none. That 'landed gentry' became the future capitalist class in Kenya since they carried on the colonial economic policies of producing crops for export. Is it surprising that postcolonial Kenyan governments have never seriously considered industrial innovation and production for economic progress? How would a class that was politically and economically nurtured to think about how many acres of land it has – today

it is how many blocks of apartments – would think seriously and creatively about education, innovation and industrial production?

Land will remain emotive throughout the country as the population grows but with little or no gainful employment opportunities. It is not surprising that today politicians are still promising young Kenyans economic freedom through business and employment – hustlers being told that they will have a share of the national cake if they work hard. These promises are not much different to the ones of the independence moment when poor Kenyans were promised economic freedom yet denied access to productive land. This is history repeating itself, literally.

What Durrani offers in *Two Paths Ahead: The Ideological Struggle between Capitalism and Socialism in Kenya, 1960-1990* is a provocative discussion on what went wrong, how the pro-people policies framed in the KANU Manifesto of 1960 were bastardised and why it has always been difficult for progressive individuals and institutions in Kenya to succeed in the struggle for true liberation of the country from neocolonialism.

Durrani references bits and pieces of Kenyan history in the 10 years, just before independence and the consolidation of the nation-state under Kenyatta 1 that stand out as key moments in the transformation of the country into a capitalistic society; moments that today are fading from public memory and have little by little been erased from the school syllabi. These are the moments that Kenyans who truly believe that Kenya could one day become a socialist state – as the Kenya People's Union and other postcolonial movements that have fought for freedom and socialism did – that is inclusive and fair to everyone must not only hold on but transmit to future generations. For those today who wish to know where and when the 'rain started beating Kenyans', reread the history of those tumultuous 10 years when what is today casually called 'state capture' happened.

Tom Odhiambo teaches literature, performing arts and media at the University of Nairobi. Tom.odhiambo@uonbi.ac.ke

Kimani Waweru: Origins of Primitive Accumulation of Capital

In the article ‘Socialism: Utopian and Scientific’, capital was defined as money meant to generate profit through the production of commodities¹. This happens when the capitalist (owner of the money) goes to the market and buys two types of commodities: labour power and means of production (raw material, machines, energy, fixed capital). He then puts the labour to work with means of production to produce a fresh commodity and the fresh commodity is sold in the market for the original money plus profit and surplus labour². Due to the law of competition, the capitalist is forced to reinvest part of the profit and surplus value in order to increase his original capital with the sole aim of outdoing his competitor for a bigger profit. This is a process that keeps repeating itself. This article will, therefore, dwell on the origin of capital (Primitive accumulation of capital), i.e., where did the original capital originate or come from. The origin of capital was captured by classical economists among them Adam Smith whose explanation is the one widely known as it is used by the bourgeoisie’s economists of today. According to Adam Smith, individuals are driven by an invisible hand³ that incentivises them to act in their own self-interest, to produce what society needs. It, therefore, means that individuals who were industrious and thrifty accumulated wealth over time and became richer than other people and started to employ others. Those who remained poor were said to have been lazy and wasteful, thus condemned to poverty with only labour to sell. Bourgeoisie economist argument is that capital arose from the people who were industrious and thrifty. On his part, Karl Marx, whose analysis was scientific, termed this explanation as *insipid childishness preached to (individuals) every day in the defence of property*;⁴ he equated the explanation to the religious version of the origin of the sin where it is said God banished Adam

from the Garden of Eden and condemned him to work in order to get what he needs to live. In order to get to know where capital came from, we need to dig and unearth everything by scrutinising what has been unearthed. By this, I mean we have to be scientific⁵, it is based on this fact that Karl Marx’s writings on the subject are important. Marx’s writings are scientific as opposed to most bourgeois economists, among them Adam Smith, who are idealists and, in some instances, invoke imaginary or fairy tales to explain complexities. This does not mean that one cannot learn from bourgeoisie economists, rather science principles help individuals to discern what does not conform to reality and embrace what does. For example, Marx, being very critical of classical economists, also learnt a lot from them, he relied a lot on the works of classical economists -- among them David Ricardo and Adam Smith in writing *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*.

Capital has not always existed; it emerged during a certain time in history. It came out of the womb of feudalism, which relied on natural economy and simple commodity production (production based on the personal labour of small commodity producers who owned simple means of production). The fall of feudalism resulted from the development of productive forces that broke limits set by the system itself as the social division of labour grew and technology improved, undermining the natural economy thus eroding its foundations. This development, together with resistance of the oppressed, i.e., serfs, peasants and the merchants who had become tired of paying exorbitant taxes to the kings, hastened the downfall of feudalism, which was replaced by the capitalist system. A concrete example of resistance was that of Oliver Cromwell who led the capitalists, the poor peasants and craftsmen in overthrowing the feudalist

¹ Waweru, K. 2020 ‘Socialism: Utopian and Scientific How Capitalism and Socialism Meet the Needs of People’, The Kenya Socialist, (2) Jul 24, [online]. Available at: <https://thekenyasocialist.org/socialism-utopian-and-scientifichow-capitalism-and-socialism-meet-the-needs-of-people/> [Accessed: 3rd March 2023].

² Harvey, D. (2008) Reading Marx’s Capital Vol 1 – Class 13, Conclusion [Online]. Available at: <http://davidharvey.org/2008/09/capital-class-13/> [Accessed: 3rd March 2023].

³ It is a word that appears in Adam Smith famous a 1,000-page book, *The Wealth of the Nations*, first published in 1776. It generally means the unseen forces of self-interest that impact the free market.

⁴ Marx, K. 1976, Chap 26, *Capital Vol 1 A Critique of Political Economy*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, pp. 873-874

⁵ A process of investigating, understanding and transforming material reality to correspond with objective reality that requires proof and evidence that something exists, i.e. It is an evidence-based process.

regime (the monarchy, the old feudal landowning aristocracy and the Anglican Church) in England in the 17th century.

Having emerged as victors, capitalists aligned themselves with the church, lords and monarchy with the sole purpose of enriching themselves. They worked together in violently forcing serfs and peasants out of land by enacting punitive laws such as the 1572 Vagabonds Act to punish displaced peasants. Many became a reserve army of labour while others were forced by the situation to become thieves and beggars. These laws were meant, among other things, to force peasants who had lost their means of survival to sell their labour power to the capitalists for their daily subsistence and also criminalise beggars as Karl Marx wrote: *Legislation treated them (beggars) as 'voluntary' criminals, and assumed that it was entirely within their powers to go on working under the old conditions, which in fact no longer existed.*⁶ For example under the reign of Elizabeth I in 1572, beggars and vagabonds were sentenced to flogging and, in case of a repetition of the offence, if they were over 18, they were executed, unless someone took them into service for two years.⁷

The capitalists, having solidified their position as the ruling class, and also facing the challenge of the growing demand for gold and silver, which by then had become the means of exchange and which could not be produced in plenty by European mines, started to venture in other continents to amass wealth. It is during their expedition/ escapade in the 15th century that they discovered America-- actually, the discovery of America was by accident, it happened that during the time the route to India was blocked by Arab Muslims who had become hostile to Christian the culture of Western Europe. The European governments sponsored people like Christopher Columbus to look for an easy route to India. It is no wonder that they named Native American as Red India. The discovery, as Karl Marx noted, was *the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.*⁸ The capitalists having the military prowess conquered the natives and began stealing their wealth and putting them to hard labour, which they were not used to; many succumbed to death while others were maimed -- not forgetting millions who died from the smallpox

virus brought by the conquerors. It is a pity that some were deliberately infected with the virus, for example, according to a blog, *Notes from the Frontier*, “*In 1764 British military leaders Colonel Henry Bouquet and General Jeffrey Amherst devised a plan to destroy Native tribes in the area of Fort Pitt (present-day Pittsburgh) after peace talks by distributing blankets infected with smallpox. Their plan was stunningly successful. It resulted in a genocide that killed about 500,000 Native Americans.*”⁹ The natives could not cope with the extraction of wealth, especially mining, as they were not used to such hardship, and this made the European invaders to import workers (prisoners) from their continent. The labour of European workers turned out to be expensive since the said workers were entitled to some fee. In a desire to maximise their returns the conquerors collaborated with some chiefs in Africa in taking by force the most productive men and women to work in the mines and farms as slaves. It is believed that more than 12 million Africans were forcibly shipped to America, with many dying on transit while others succumbed to extreme exploitative conditions. African slaves had come from tropical environments, which are somehow like those of the Caribbean and thus made them accustomed to heat and humidity. Slavery during this time was done according to the dictates of capitalism and was different from the earlier slavery epoch.

The Europeans benefited a lot from African free labour for centuries up to the introduction of machines, which led to the expansion of industries. The said machines and industries rendered slave labour redundant, thus making it uneconomical; the slaves had also made a spirited resistance, which contributed to the end of slavery. The southern part of the USA was not as developed as the North and relied heavily on slave labour: this was the reason the South was against the abolition of slavery. On the other side, North America saw slavery as hampering the progress of capitalism. The two sides had a conflict leading to a civil war in which, the northern part won, contributing to the ultimate end of slavery in 1865. Capitalists and slave owners used the Bible to justify their evil actions, in both the Old and the New Testament, e.g., Ephesians 6:5, which says: “*Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ*”. The bible was written

6 Marx, K. 1976, Chap 28, Capital Vol 1-- A Critique of Political Economy, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, pg. 896

7 Marx, K. 1976, Chap 28, Capital Vol 1 -- A Critique of Political Economy, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, pg. 896-7

8 Marx, K. 1976, Chap 31, Capital Vol 1 -- A Critique of Political Economy, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, pg. 915

9 Notes from the Frontier [Online]. Available at: <https://www.notesfromthefrontier.com/post/smallpox-the-deadliest-killer-of-native-americans>, 3rd May 2020 [Accessed: 3rd March 2023]

when slavery was the mode of production and writers did not see anything wrong with slavery. Society for the Propagation of the Foreign Part (a missionary organization of the Church of England) had a slave plantation in Barbados from 1710 to 1834 and its slaves were branded with S for the society. Just like today, the church does not see any wrong with the capitalist system. The church uses the system to acquire wealth and it is one of the richest institutions in the country and in the world. Queen Elizabeth had in 1564 rented a huge 700-tonne ship called Jesus of Lubeck (the good ship Jesus) to a religious man called Sir John Hawkins, the ship was meant to be used to ferry Africans leaving from Sierra Leone to the West Indies. Ironically, the captured slaves were made to serve God by holding services twice a day. The capitalists also used fake scientific ideologies of racism that claimed that Africans and Native Americans (Indians) were inherently inferior. The British Empire abolished slavery in 1833; the funny thing is that its government paid out £20m to compensate some 3,000 families that owned slaves for the loss of their 'property'. Some £10m went to slave-owning families in the Caribbean and Africa, while the other half went to absentee owners living in Britain.¹⁰ But one thing that is not doubtful is that were it not for slavery the USA, Britain, and other Western European countries would not have acquired massive wealth, which they enjoy, as it was created by the slaves through free labour.

Wealth obtained from slave labour was used to establish some of the big banks and universities in Britain, among them Barclays, Oriel College Oxford, HSBC and Lloyds. According to the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, 10 per cent to 20 per cent of Britain's wealth can be linked to slavery.¹¹ The former slave owners together with the merchants became the real capitalists and used their wealth to build factories where they employed men, women and even children as young as 5 years old. The working conditions during the period were very harsh, workers and children were forced to work for long hours (12 to 16-hour shifts) with low wages that could barely cover their daily subsistence. During this period, (industrial revolution) *laissez-faire* capitalism (no government interference in economy/market) was being practised, meaning that the capitalists could act in any way they wanted, as the government could

not protect workers. *Laissez-faire* was Adam Smith's idea to fight principles of mercantilism (government control of the economy).

The capitalists continued to accumulate capital and reinvest it with the sole aim of acquiring big profits to the detriment of the workers. In the US, the freed slaves became workers, and in an effort to divide workers along racial lines, the ruling class devised a mechanism of enacting Jim Crow laws. The state, being under the capitalist's class, used its machineries to enforce those laws and also failed to tame racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, which were killing Black Americans. Jim Crow laws were to be done away with in 1965 after a protracted resistance by the blacks in America. The white workers, though being exploited, felt/feel they were/are better off than the blacks due to the unfair advantages (paid a little higher than blacks at every education level¹²) that the system conferred on them.

Primitive Accumulation of Capital during Colonial Period in Kenya

Competition among the capitalists became vicious to an extent that they started to devise ways of outdoing one another. They realised that competition was limiting them from getting the maximum profit and, therefore, some began merging. This facilitated the emergence of monopoly capitalism where the economy was controlled by a few gigantic monopolies. These monopolies, with the help of their respective governments, ventured in other territories to compete for resources. Their countries could not agree on territory to grab, especially in Africa, and in an effort to avoid conflict, a conference was called in Berlin, Germany. The conference ran from November 15, 1884 to February 26, 1885 where Africa was divided among European imperialists.

After the conference Kenya became a protectorate of Britain. Britain then gave the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), under the leadership of Sir William Mackinnon, the right to administer and develop Kenya on its behalf. The first major task of the company was to construct a railway from the Mombasa seaport to Kisumu and then on to Uganda, and this railway line was designed to help ensure the flow of the stolen wealth from Kenya and Uganda to Britain. Since most of the natives lacked skills for railway construction

¹² Wilson, V. & Rodgers III, W.M (2016) Black-White Wage Gaps Expand with Rising Wage Inequality. Washington DC, Economic Policy Institute [Online]. Available at: <https://www.epi.org/publication/black-white-wage-gaps-expand-with-rising-wage-inequality/#epi-toc-7> (Accessed: 3rd March 2023)

and others resisted conscription, about 32,000 skilled and semi-skilled Indian workers were brought to execute the job. More than half of these Indian workers returned upon the completion of the railway while about 6,700 settled in Kenya and Uganda¹³. The company's mandate was cancelled and transferred to the British foreign office on July 1, 1895. The illegal occupation was resisted by the Africans but due to Britain's superior weapons, they were defeated. It is upon this that the British imperialist government encouraged their citizens both in their country as well as in South Africa to come and settle in Kenya. Most of these citizens were poor and were happy to settle as they saw it as an opportunity for them to get rich like other capitalists. Many Africans lost land and became squatters to pave way for the settlers. Some settlers allowed the displaced Africans to squat on their land in order for the former to secure a continuous supply of cheap labour, and it is in this way that squatters in Kenya emerged. Since settlers needed labour, the imperialists designed laws similar to the one used to force peasants out of land in Britain. Some of these included poll tax and hut tax laws meant to force Africans to leave their homes to work on settler's farms. Furthermore, the Natives Ordinance law was specifically designed to keep the worker with his employer and prevent him from deserting duty. Every time an African left employment, the employer had to sign the worker's *kipande* (identification card), which was always hung around the neck, as evidence that the African was not a labour deserter. The *kipande* had to be produced on demand for the police or the administration. These laws helped the poor settlers to accumulate capital thus becoming the richest capitalists in Kenya. They continued amassing wealth and when Kenya's flag independence was imminent, the British government copy pasted the same thing it did to slave-owners though doing it differently by giving the Kenyan government funds to be used to buy lands from the settlers to settle Africans squatters who had been dispossessed of their land.

Primitive Accumulation of Capital during Post-Colonial Period

The people who were handed power by the colonialists were those who all along had collaborated with

colonialists in the exploitation of Kenyans. These people had been schooled in the tenets of capitalism and were ready to pursue the dictates of capitalism to amass capital at the expense of other ordinary Kenyans. Having controlled the state, they grabbed land and also designed a law that could allow them to buy stolen land cheaply. For example, by December 1966, Jomo Kenyatta bought more than 3,895 acres in Nairobi and Ruiru at a total cost of Sh472,740. The land was registered in either Mr Kenyatta's or his wife Mama Ngina's names, or in the names of his two eldest sons -- Peter Magana, and Peter Muigai.¹⁴ Kenya being an agricultural economy, land is a major asset of production and the accumulation of wealth no wonder the said families e.g., Jomo Kenyatta are the richest capitalists in the country. Therefore, it is important to know that capital does not fall like biblical manna, rather it has a bloody source and as Karl Marx said, *capital comes into the world dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.*¹⁵

The other thing that we need to realise is that the primitive accumulation of today has taken another form different from that of the early days of capitalism. According to David Harvey, a geographer and Marxist scholar but not a revolutionary Marxist who has borrowed both Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg's writings on the subject, came up with a concept of "accumulation by dispossession", in which he describes the ways capitalism uses force and theft to rob the world of value-both human beings and nature-in its insatiable quest for profit.¹⁶ Accumulation by dispossession can take place in many different ways, i.e.,

- Big capitals take over small capitals e.g., Brookside Dairy buying out its competitors Buzeki Dairy Ltd, Ilara, Delamare, Spin Knit etc.¹⁷
- Good profitable businesses/corporations especially in the Third World denied liquidity thus going into bankruptcy leading to a crisis like the one that happened in Asia in 2007. When this happens capital from imperialist countries comes in and purchases these corporations very

14 Durrani, S. 2022, *Two Path Ahead - The Ideological Struggle between Capitalism and Socialism in Kenya, 1960-1970*, Vita Books, Nairobi, pg. 124

15 Marx, K. 1976, Chap 31, *Capital Vol 1 - A Critique of Political Economy*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, pg. 926

16 Bailey, B. 2014, 'Accumulation by dispossession - A Critical Assessment', *International Socialist Review*, (95) Winter 2014-15, [online]. Available at: <https://isreview.org/issue/95/accumulation-dispossession/> [Accessed: 3rd March 2023]

17 Food, Beverage Africa. 2013, 'Brookside Dairy acquires majority stake in Molo Milk', [online]. Available at: <https://www.foodbusinessafrica.com/brookside-dairy-acquires-majority-stake-in-molo-milk/> [Accessed: 3rd March 2023]

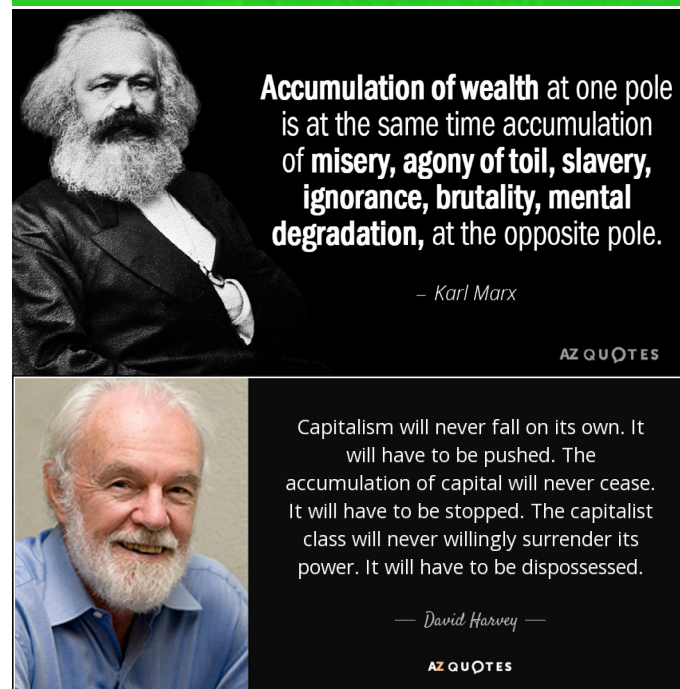
cheaply. When the dust settles, these imperialists and corporates may decide to retain or sell them again at abnormal profits.

- Gentrification, which is done legally, or illegally, evicting people from their houses in order to bring in capital to build modern houses, which the former evictees cannot afford. This is happening in the Nairobi areas of Ziwani, Pangani, etc.
- Refusing to pay workers who create value or honour their benefit or pension rights when a company goes bankrupt and instead focusing on repaying debts to the creditors (fellow capitalists) for example in December 2022 the judge of Labour court in Nairobi dismissed a case filed by former Dubai Bank employees, seeking more than Sh44 million from the bank. This was after the bank was placed under receivership and subsequent liquidation.¹⁸
- Grabbing public land, especially by politically influential people who invest capital obtained corruptly. The same politicians even have the audacity to deceive Kenyans that they got their wealth by doing small-scale business such as selling chickens on the roadside. Yet there is a proven fact that initial capital came from grabbed land given to them¹⁹ and the money gotten through corrupt deals with the government.²⁰

a socialist system. Under a socialist state, money will cease to be capital and only act as a means of exchange, not necessarily as a valourisation tool. This, however, will not come by automatically but there will be a transition period where it will wither slowly.



From the foregoing analysis, we have seen that capital is a recent term. In fact, according to Marxists Internet Archive Encyclopedia, it was first used in England around 1611, being derived from “capital grant,” meaning a grant of land from the King. One therefore wonders whether there is a way money can cease to operate as capital, i.e. only to be used as a medium to buy something; Commodity-Money-Commodity (C - M - C) or, as opposed to being used to buy something only in order to sell it again; M - C - M’ or transformation of Money into Commodities and the exchange of commodities back again into Money (M’) of altered value (sum of money larger than that started the process), which happens within this capitalist system. Based on the system we operate in this is impossible. However, it is possible within



18 Muthoni, K. 2022, 'Court Dashes Hope for Former Dubai Bank Employees, 31st December 2022, [online]. Available at: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/health/business/article/2001464181/court-dashes-hope-for-former-dubai-bank-employees> (Accessed: 3rd March 2023).
 19 Citizen News Live (2020) Citizen, 6th February [Online]. Available at <https://nairobi.news.nation.africa/moi-gave-me-land-when-i-visited-him-from-university-dp-ruto/> [Accessed: 4th March 2023].
 20 Ondieki, E. 2019, 'Ruto to Pay for Airport Land: NLC, 19th February 2019, [online]. Available at <https://nation.africa/kenya/news/Ruto-to-pay-for-airport-land--NLC/1056-4990070-vy67j1/index.html?platform=hootsuite> [Accessed: 4th March 2023].

Otsieno Godrick : Njia Panda ya Uhuru wa Kenya Mkinzano baina ya Ubepari na Usosholisi 1963

Njia Panda ya Uhuru wa Kenya (1963): Ubepari au Ushosholisi¹ - Mfasiri: Otsieno Godrick

Mapambano kati ya ubepari na ujamaa nchini Kenya yana historia ndefu. Lakini hayakuwa mapambano yaliyo sawa, kwani ukoloni ulikuwa tayari umeanzisha ubepari kwa nguvu tangia siku za awali. Na bado, ubepari haukuweza kukidhi mahitaji ya watu, kama inavyodhibitishwa na kushindwa kwake katika nchi zote za kibepari barani Afrika. Ujamaa pekee ndio ungeweza kukidhi matakwa ya wananchi ya ardhi, uhuru, haki na usawa kama ilivyopangwa, kwa mfano, na Muungano wa Watu wa Kenya (KPU) ambao kauli mbiu yake ilikuwa ‘Uhuru na Ujamaa’. Azimio la Wananchi la KPU (1969, 6) lilitaja sera zake kwa uwazi:

Jawabu lipo kwenye mfumo unaojulikana kama Usosholisi. Kwa maana, kitu cha kwanza muhimu ili kuwe na mgawanyo wa haki katika jamii maskini ni kuweka nguvu za kiuchumi mikononi mwa watu. Hili halifanywi tu kwa kuwaweka Waafrika wachache kama wakurugenzi wa makampuni makubwa, na kugawa maeneo makubwa ya ardhi kwa Mawaziri na mahusiano wao... jibu lilikuwa katika kuweka msingi wa kubadilisha muundo wa uchumi na uwezo wa serikali ya Afrika ndani yake ili maendeleo yetu yasiwe tena katika huruma ya mabepari wa kigeni au wa ndani.

Manifesto hiyo inatoa kauli ya wazi kwamba ‘Serikali ya KPU itasimamia uchumi kulingana na kanuni za usosholisi’. Lakini ubepari ulivyozidi kujikita, ndivyo chaguo pekee la watu likawa ni kuupinga. Mzozo mkuu katika jamii ulikuwa kati ya wafanyikazi waliokuwa wakidai ardhi, uhuru na haki kwa ukinzano na mabepari wakala waliodai haki yao’ ya kudhibiti na kumiliki mali na rasilimali’ za taifa. Katika vita hivi, tabaka tawala la wachache, ambalo liliunga mkono ubepari, lilipata mamlaka na uwezo ilhali watu wengi wakiwemo wafanyikazi wakapoteza. Je, hili liliwezekanaje, wakati nguvu za watu wanaofanya kazi zilishinda Milki ya Uingereza

na kuhakikisha uhuru? Kama podikasti ya Sheng’ Hadi Kila Mtu Awe Huru (2021) inavyouliza, ‘Nchi ya Kenya ilifanikiwaje kuwa huru...bila watu wa Kenya kupata uhuru?’

Jambo hili linaweza kuelezewa kwa kuzingatia kipengele muhimu cha ubepari: unagawanya watu kwa matabaka pinzani ambapo tabaka tawala hudhibiti mamlaka ya serikali ili kujitajirisha yenyewe kwa gharama ya watu wengi. Bado sababu nyingine inayoelezea kujimudu kwa wachache madarakani ni msaada wa fedha za kimataifa, biashara, maslahi ya kisiasa na kijeshi.

Mgawanyiko wa jamii kwa msingi wa tabaka pinzani unasababisha kuwepo kwa tabaka la wafanyikazi na upinzani wake kwa ubepari. Ni mzunguko huu wa ukandamizaji wa ubepari kwa upande mmoja, na upinzani wake kutoka kwa watu kwa upande mwingine, ndio sifa kuu ya hali ya zamani na sasa nchini Kenya.

Matukio ya sasa na historia nchini Kenya mara nyingi huonekana katika vitendo vya mtu binafsi na kikundi kuhusiana na masuala ya siasa, sheria, utawala na viongozi. Kisichoonekana au kudhihirika ni itikadi inayosimamia vitendo hivi. Rekodi za kihistoria za Kenya zinaonyesha kile viongozi na vyama vyao husema na kufanya, kile ambacho katiba, Bunge na sheria zinasema kuhusu masuala ya kijamii na kisiasa, sera na matukio. Lakini ubepari, itikadi iliyo na umaarufu, ambayo inaweka mwelekeo wa matukio yote, mara chache huonekana wazi. Hata hivyo inaathiri maisha ya mamiloni ya watu.

Vile vile maisha na vifo vya wafanyikazi, watu na mapambano yao ya maisha katika mazingira ya uhasama wa kiuchumi, kisiasa na kijamii yaliyoundwa na ubepari yamefichwa kutoka kwa habari na ufahamu wa umma. Pia pingamizi yao kwa ubepari na mapambano ya kufanikisha usosholisi hayatokei katika rekodi rasmi.

1 Two Paths Ahead for Kenya: Capitalism or Socialism. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/49882450>. Academia Letters, July 2021. Durrani, S. (2021). Two Paths Ahead for Kenya at Independence (1963): Capitalism or Socialism. Academia Letters, Article 1808. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL1808.1> ©2021 by the author — Open Access — Distributed under CC BY 4.0

Ubepari hutanda nyuma ya pazia, bila kuonekana wala kusikilizwa lakini bila kuchoka ili kuendesha ajenda yake fiche katika mwelekeo wa kiitikadi uliowekwa na kubainishwa ili kuushinda usosholista kwa kuusifia ubepari na ubeberu ili uonekane kuwa bora. Mara nyingi, demokrasia ya uongo hutumika kudanganya watu na kueneza ajenda fiche ya 'faida-binafsi-nzuri'. Kinachoonekana hadharani ni katiba, uchaguzi, mifumo ya bunge, vyama vya siasa na mfumo wa kisheria unaodhaniwa kuwa nguvu nyuma ya matukio.

Shinikizo muhimu zaidi katika kuamua hatima ya watu na nchi haijaonyeshwa katika vyombo vya habari vinavyodhibitiwa na kampuni, mifumo ya elimu, historia na sera za serikali. Ubepari basi pia huficha kutoka kwa umma athari mbaya ya utawala wake. Inaficha kuwepo kwake. Ubepari hauwezi kuonekana au kueleweka kwa kutengwa na usosholista, ambo ni kinyume chake. Na kwa hivyo, usosholista -- itikadi yake, uwepo wake, udhihirisho wake na jina lake -- pia umefichwa na tabaka za watawala. Hisia ya uwongo inaundwa kwamba ubepari ndio njia pekee inayoweza kuandaa jamii. Upinzani kwa ubepari unaonyeshwa kama vitendo vya watu wanaoongozwa na nia na nguvu za giza.

Ubepari hutwika mapungufu yake na migogoro inayowaletea wafanyikazi kwa mambo ya nje au kwa 'nia mbovu' ya watu 'wabaya', 'magaidi' na kusingizia dini, utaiifa, jinsia, eneo au watu binafsi wanaounga mkono usosholista -- kamwe ubepari usionekane kuwa asili ya maovu haya. Ubepari unaenea sana katika kila nyanja ya Maisha, hivi kwamba kuwepo kwake hakuonekani. Uko kila mahali, lakini unaishi katika vivuli, na huendesha jamii, matukio na watu binafsi kutoka kwa udhibiti wa mawimbi ambao hauwezi kufuatiliwa kwa urahisi hadi kitovu chake.

Kipengele kingine kinachofichwa na ubepari ni mgawanyiko wa jamii katika matabaka pinzani ambayo ubepari wenyewe huyaunda. Suluhu yake kwa matatizo inayoibua ni 'sote tupo ndani pamoja' ilhali ni wazi kwamba tabaka tawala ziko mbali na ukweli wa maisha ya wafanyakazi. Ubepari hushambulia tabaka la wafanyakazi, mashirika yake -- vyama vya wafanyakazi -- na viongozi wao ili kunyamazisha upinzani. Pia mashambulizi yao yanalenga wakulima, wafugaji, wavuvi, pamoja na wataalamu wa maendeleo, wanafunzi na wanaharakati. Hivyo mabepari wanasafisha njia kwa unyakuzi wa mali ya taifa bila woga wa kupinduliwa.

Kipengele cha tatu ambacho kinafichwa na ubepari ni harakati zake za kutafuta faida binafsi bila kuchoka na ambazo zinazoendesha vitendo vyake vya uporaji, unyonyaji na ukandamizaji wa watu wanaofanya kazi. Chini ya ajenda yake ya 'uhuru', ubepari unabinafsisha huduma na taasisi za umma katika sera ya kufidia kila kitu. Kisha hutumia mamlaka yake ya serikali kuwatajirisha zaidi wasomi wanaotawala, mashirika na mtaji wa kifedha huku ikiwafanya watu wanaofanya kazi kulipia hizi huduma kwa njia mbalimbali zenye uharibifu. Ajenda zake zisizoonekana na zisizoandikwa huendesha matukio ambayo hufanywa yaonekane 'ya kawaida'. Ubeberu, kwa msaada wake kwa tabaka tawala nchini Kenya, unahakikisha kwamba huo na ubepari unabaki bila kuonekana na kutotajwa hadharani. Bado unaipeleka nchi katika mwelekeo ambao unakidhi tu kiu chake cha faida kisichoisha. Unasimamia taasisi zote za kidemokrasia, mabunge, vyama vya siasa na hata Katiba kwa niaba yake. Unatumia nguvu za kiraia na kijeshi inazodhibiti ili kufikia ajenda yake inayotokana na faida. Inafuta kila kizuizi katika njia yake.

Tamaa ya faida basi inahitaji mashirika kudhibiti mawazo ya watu na ufahamu wa matukio ya kihistoria na ya sasa. Inatumia zana kadhaa ambazo imejinasia ili kudhibiti akili za watu. Hizi ni pamoja na vyombo vya habari, sera ya elimu, taasisi za habari kama vile maktaba ambazo zote zinafanywa kuakisi mtazamo wa kibepari katika kazi zao huku zikiwa na mkao wa kutoegemea upande wowote. Inashawishi idara za historia katika vyuo vikuu ili kusiwe na utafiti au mafundisho juu ya upinzani dhidi ya ubepari, historia ya Mau Mau, au vita vya uhuru wa Kenya. Upinzani dhidi ya ubepari na ubeberu ni sehemu zisizoweza kugusika na wasomi wala taasisi za 'elimu ya juu'.

Na bado, upinzani wa watu dhidi ya ubepari na mapambano ya usosholista sasa imekuwa sifa kuu ya maisha. Hii ni kweli si tu nchini Kenya, bali kote barani Afrika na, kwa hakika, katika ulimwengu ambapo ubepari daima hupata upinzani kwa ajenda yake ya unyonyaji na ukandamizaji isiyokoma. Katika harakati ya watu kutafuta usosholista, ambao pekee unaweza kutoa haki na usawa wanaoutafuta, hakuna uchovu.

Ubepari unapokabiliwa na kuonegezeka kwa upinzani kutoka kwa watu, itikadi hiyo hutumia matukio kama vile coronavirus kurudisha nyuma faida ambazo watu wamepata kwa miongo kadhaa ya upinzani.

Katika wakati wa uhuru nchini Kenya, na kwa hakika katika nchi nyingi za Afrika, hapakuwa na suala la kuendeleza ubepari ambao ulikuwa umeanzishwa na ukoloni. Usosholista ndio ulikuwa njia pekee mbele. Thomson (2010, uk.38) anatoa muhtasari wa kesi ya usosholista:

Si jambo la kushangaza kwamba mataifa mengi barani humu yalichukua mtazamo wa kisoshalisti baada ya uhuru. Baada ya kuziondoa nchi zao katika utawala wa kikoloni, kazi sasa ilikuwa kupunguza utegemezi kwa nchi za Magharibi, na kurekebisha uchumi ili kuhakikisha kwamba mahitaji ya maendeleo ya ndani yanapewa kipaumbele. Ni kwa njia hii tu ndipo umaskini ungeweza kupungua na ustawi wa jamii kutolewa kwa wote.

Miongoni mwa viongozi wachache wa Kiafrika waliochukulia ubepari kuwa itikadi inayofaa kwa nchi ni Jomo Kenyatta. Haiwezi kusemwa kwamba chaguo lake lilijikita katika kuhakikisha kwamba mahitaji ya maendeleo ya ndani yanakidhiwa, mbali na kupewa kipaumbele. Kusudi lake linaonekana kuwa ulafi mtupu wa mali na madaraka kwa ajili yake mwenyewe, jamaa yake na wale waliomzunguka. Ubepari ndio ulikuwa chaguo pekee la kutimiza matamano yake. Hata hivyo, haikuwezekana kutangaza kushikamana kwake na ubepari wakati watu na vyama vya kisiasa na urithi wa Mau Mau wakidai usosholista. Kwa kuungwa mkono na ubeberu, Kenyatta na Tom Mboya, wafuasi wakuu wa itikadi za ubepari, walikita mizizi ubepari chini ya neno 'Usosholista wa Kiafrika' ambao haukuwa na uhusiano wowote na usosholista au uAfrika. Ilikuwa ni mbinu ya kuficha jumuiya ya mbwa-kula-mbwa huku Kenyatta akiwa ndiye mwenye kunufaika zaidi. Ilizidisha migawanyiko ya kitabaka ambayo ilinufaisha wasomi waliokuwa wakitawala chini ya Kenyatta, na fedha na mashirika ya kimataifa, na kuwaacha watu wengi wakihangaika kutafuta maisha.

Kwa vile upinzani nchini Kenya ulilazimisha kufika kwa uhuru, Uingereza ililenga kuhakikisha kwamba Kenya inasalia kuwa ya kibepari na haigeukii usosholista. Ilipindua malengo ya mapambano ya Mau Mau na jitihada yake ya kutafuta wa ardhi, uhuru na haki. Wenye itikadi kali katika Mau Mau na katika chama cha KANU walifahamu vyema hatari hii ya ukoloni mamboleo kama walivyoeleza mwaka wa 1961 katika hati yao ya Njia Mbili Mbele (1973).

Jomo Kenyatta kuwaunga mkono Waingereza kwa ushirikiano na watu aliowaongoza ulihakikisha kuwa ubepari na serikali yenye mwelekeo wa ubeberu inabaki madarakani. Msaada huu ulijumuisha kukandamizwa kwa vyama vya siasa kali, vyama vya wafanyakazi, mashirika ya kisiasa na kijamii, matumizi ya sheria za enzi za kikoloni dhidi ya watu pamoja na kutengwa na kudhoofishwa kwa viongozi waliokuwa tishio kwa utawala wao. Miongoni mwa wahasiriwa wa mapema ni Shujaa Pio Gama Pinto kuuawa mnamo 1965. Mbinu zingine zilizotumiwa kukuza maadili ya kibepari miongoni mwa vizazi vichanga ni pamoja na kutumia elimu, utamaduni, vyombo vya habari na sheria kama njia za kuunda Hakuna-Mbadala-Kwa-Mtazamo wa kibepari. Zawadi zilitolewa kwa 'marafiki wa ubepari' na adhabu kwa wale waliokataa itikadi hiyo. Uingiliaji huu wa kibepari nchini Kenya ulihakikisha kuwepo kwa ubepari baada ya uhuru. Pia mawazo ya usosholista yaliondolewa kutoka kwa fikra za umma. Lakini yaliendelea, wakati mwingine peupe, wakati mwingine kisiri.

Marejeleo

Kenya People's Union (1969): Wananchi Declaration: The Programme of KPU.
The Two Paths Ahead. Source: Muchai, Karigo(1973): *The Hardcore: The story of Karigo Muchai*. Richmond, B.C.: LSM Information Centre. Introduction: *Kenya: Two Paths Ahead*. pp. 5-11. Also available in Durrani, S. (2018): *Kenya's War of Independence*. (Nairobi: Vita Books), pp. 365-369.
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NOTE: This article is extracted from Durrani, Shiraz (2023): *Two Paths Ahead: The Ideological Struggle between Capitalism and Socialism in Kenya, 1960-1970*. Nairobi: Vita Books. Academia Letters, July 2021

History & Ideology

Shiraz Durrani : Editorial Essay: Understanding Socialism through Literature

The focus of the movements and parties resisting capitalism around the world is on studying theories of socialism and Marxism. And that is as it should be, as ideological understanding is critical in defeating capitalism. But a real understanding of socialism requires more than theoretical knowledge. In order to change the capitalist thinking and outlook cemented into the minds of working people by decades and centuries of capitalism, further insight into theoretical knowledge is required. The vision of a new socialist society needs to be clearly understood and internalised to reinforce theoretical learning. Only then can the reality of what life under socialism would be like become real. Without this understanding, theories are dry and do not penetrate the imagination, and they fail to enhance the understanding necessary to bring about appropriate action for revolutionary change. It is relatively easy to understand class structures and class struggles in theoretical works. But the reality of workers living under a hostile and powerful bourgeoisie can only be understood when it is seen in the everyday lives of working people, in their daily struggles for survival, in their struggle to survive the daily police attacks. That reality can only be imagined and understood by reading works of fiction. Recent publications in the Series, *Tales from the Front* from the Paris-based Foreign Language Press¹ explain the importance of understanding the ‘murky complexity of real life’ that fiction provides:

Communists are known for our reliance on and understanding of theoretical knowledge. Our conception of education and self-education comes directly from Lenin's famous formula: "Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement." Yet, in our ongoing effort to acquire practical and theoretical knowledge, it may be necessary to engage with historical accounts of

concrete struggles in which theory was both forged and applied in the sometimes-murky complexity of real life. *Tales From the Front* aims to provide activists with concrete historical examples — both fictionalized and non-fiction — of those instances in which theory and practice mutually produced and intertwined with each other.

Culture was an important element in the transformation needed to consolidate socialism in the USSR. Lukin² discusses the role of literature in the building of a ‘new society’ in the context of Lenin’s writings:

Culture, literature, and art are active vehicles in the building of new society and in educating the new man. The colossal uplifting of Russia would have been impossible without their development, considering the plight it was in on the eve of the revolution. That is why literature, which possesses an enormous potential in terms of the political, ideological and moral education of the builders of the new world, must, Lenin thought, merge with the other components of the general cause of the people. The general improvement in culture and knowledge had to be linked "with burning economic requirements". Lenin emphasised that the creation of a socialist culture was inextricably linked with the building of communism and the overall policy of the party and the Soviet power. Both in his speech at the Third All-Russia Congress of the Young Communist League and in his last articles, Lenin constantly spoke of the incorporation of culture into the system of socialist society; he regarded the cultural revolution as on a par with the industrialisation of the country and the creation of cooperative agriculture. It was one of the principle tasks in building a socialist society.

¹ See for example their series, *Tales from the Front: A Collection of Revolutionary Stories and Poetry*. This includes Hao Ran's *Bright Clouds*, Joven Obrero's *Warriors*, *Poets*, *Friends* and Liu Qing's *Wall of Bronze*.

² Lukin, Yurl (1988): *Lenin and Literature*. Moscow: Raduga Publishers. pp.112-123.

³ Mao Tse-tung (1942): *Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art*. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm [Accessed: 20-04-2023].

Similarly, Mao³ saw literature as an important tool in the establishment of socialism:

In our struggle for the liberation of the Chinese people there are various fronts, among which there are the fronts of the pen and of the gun, the cultural and the military fronts. To defeat the enemy, we must rely primarily on the army with guns. But this army alone is not enough; we must also have a cultural army, which is absolutely indispensable for uniting our own ranks and defeating the enemy... The purpose of our meeting today is precisely to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind.

The situation today is different from that in USSR and China at the time when the above assessments were made. We need to be clear about the state of resistance to capitalism and prospects for socialism today. We can then see how literature can support today's struggles, in individual countries and globally. Vijay Prashad⁴ explains the current situation:

Indeed, much has changed since the 1960s and 1970s, largely due to the new technological developments – such as satellites, online databases, container shipping – global commodity chains supplanted the old Fordist forms of factory production, weakening both trade union movements and the necessary strategy of nationalisation (key to the attempt to break down the neocolonial structures). Despite these dramatic changes in the global economy, the neocolonial structures remained intact, structures that included imperialist control over five areas of human life: finance, resources, science and technology, weapons systems, and information. These five controls remained with the imperialist countries, despite the contradictions that emerged through the new global commodity chain system that was built during the neoliberal phase of capitalism. In many ways, the structure of neocolonialism, therefore, remains intact.

These changes have important implications for the struggle against capitalism and for socialism, particularly in the fields of information and related technology in the context of this essay. In this situation, culture in general, and literature in particular, can play an important role in overcoming some of the obstacles that capitalism and imperialism have placed in today's world against socialist forces. These changes are evident in Kenya too. These factors are made worse by its lack of a national Left political party or movement, weakened trade unions, and the government under total control of capitalism and imperialism. However, there are some openings that progressive and Left forces can, and do, use, for example the growing movement for study classes, as for example those based at Ukombozi Library, which then reach out throughout Nairobi and many parts of the country. However, these groups focus their study on Marxist and socialist ideological material and the use of literature and fiction have yet to be fully integrated in such studies. This is an important area that needs urgent attention.

A Class under Attack

It is literature, drama, films, songs, poetry with public performances, among other aspects, that show what it mean to be a class under daily attack, when those in power use their state, economic and political power to make the lives of working people ever more miserable. And yet, it is not easy to get material that depicts capitalism in its true colours. The power over printing and publishing industries in capitalist countries lies with the ruling class and they use various means to ensure that capitalism is not mentioned as the cause of people's misery in books and literature. Their control over mass media, school, university curricula and publishing then ensure that any work that shows the positive side of socialism, that exposes crimes of capitalism, are kept off the mainstream. Public libraries and mass media, education systems and publishing keep books, knowledge and information about socialism, about class struggles under capitalism, out of their doors.

So where does one find appropriate readings for those keen to understand lives under socialism? One way is to seek fiction from societies that had fully or

⁴ Marxism and Colonialism: An Interview with Vijay Prashad, by José Ernesto Novaez. CounterPunch. 19-04-2023. Available at: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2023/04/19/marxism-and-colonialism-an-interview-with-vijay-prashad/>

partially overthrown capitalism and moved towards socialism. The experience of the Russian Revolution and USSR; the material generated by the Chinese Revolution and the founding of People's Republic of China; literature from societies at the cutting edge of socialist endeavours like Vietnam, Cuba as well as people's struggles in India and Latin America, as well as in Africa, particularly in the context of anti-colonial wars — all have generated a large volume of stories and novels that are able to show, creatively, life, the challenges, the victories that the working class achieved under socialism. Many such books are being reprinted in many countries and the formation of the International Union of Left Publishers (IULP)⁵ offers hope for reprinting literature as well as political and ideological material in the long term. It is noteworthy that IULP sets out to oppose the capitalist monopoly on publishing and knowledge:

The IULP is a network that confronts the challenges of the market-driven desiccation of ideas with left books that amplify the voices of ordinary people.

Literature can make clear the possibilities that socialism opens up, not only in economic and political terms, but in daily lives of people and their communities. That is where the change that socialism brings can be seen clearly and where the difference between capitalist and socialist societies becomes clear. Dangulov (1977)⁶ explains the two key aspects that literature can support: first, 'arouse in man the fighter' to make them active in the struggle and, also to show the society under socialism:

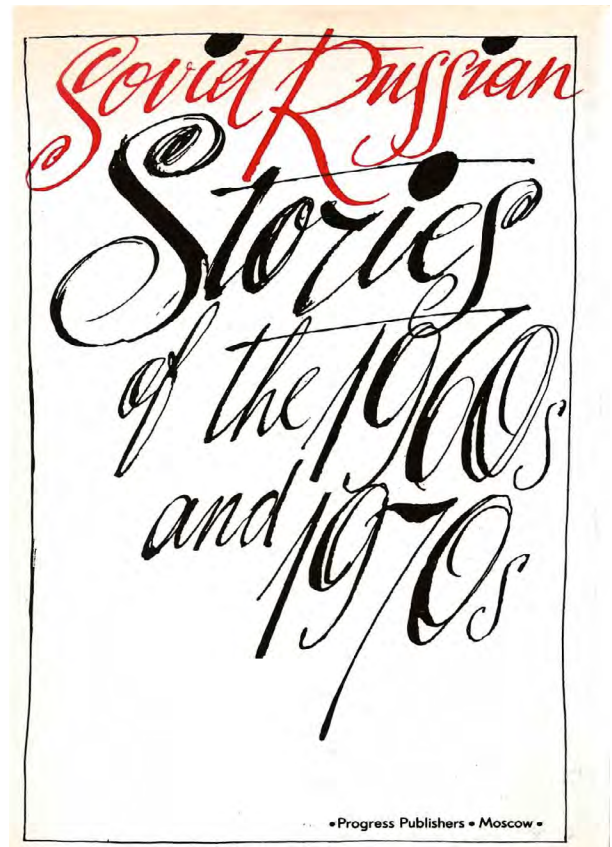
Literature can do a great deal to arouse in man the fighter for whom there is no cause more sacred than the lofty ideal of the freedom and fraternity of the world's toilers. But Soviet literature also has a task of its own: to show the world the land of Lenin. I shall risk repeating what I said at the beginning of this article: better than anything else, literature can give a clear picture of the life we live, of man's mode of existence, his interests, the essence of his relations with the family, the collective, the country; what he sees as his mission in life, and to what extent he is

capable of fulfilling it.

The time to incorporate the cultural wing of resistance into the struggle against capitalism is not when the struggle for socialism has been won; it is when the struggle is being waged, as is happening now around the world.

The next section looks at a few examples of novels that show what life under socialism can be.

The Literature of Life and Struggle Examples



This book has been prepared by Progress Publishers jointly with *Soviet Literature* magazine, which is printed in Moscow in nine foreign languages and is distributed in nearly a hundred countries. It consists of translations into English of contemporary Russian stories which have appeared in *Soviet Literature* and have won the approval of the foreign reading public. The book includes the work of Muscovites Mikhail Alexeyev, Sergei Krutilin, Nikolai Evdokimov and Yuri Nagibin, Siberians Victor Astafiev and Valentin Rasputin, and Evgeni Nosov from the Kursk region. These outstanding Russian prose-writers are popular at home and their books have been translated into many languages of the Soviet peoples.

The present edition is the first in a series to be put out jointly by Progress Publishers and *Soviet Literature* magazine. It will be followed by anthologies of contemporary verse and prose from the various republics of the USSR.

⁵ Formed in 2020, the International Union of Left Publishers emerged as a platform of left publishers to promote left books through Red Books Day (21 February), to defend left authors, publishers, and bookshops, and to develop a copyleft method of sharing books across our countries and languages. Available at: <https://iulp.org/>.

⁶ Savva Dangulov (1977): Foreword to *Soviet Russian Stories of the 1960s and 1970s*. Compiled by Yuri Bochkarev. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

BRIGHT CLOUDS

Hao Ran



Tales From The Front , A Collection of Revolutionary Stories and Poetry

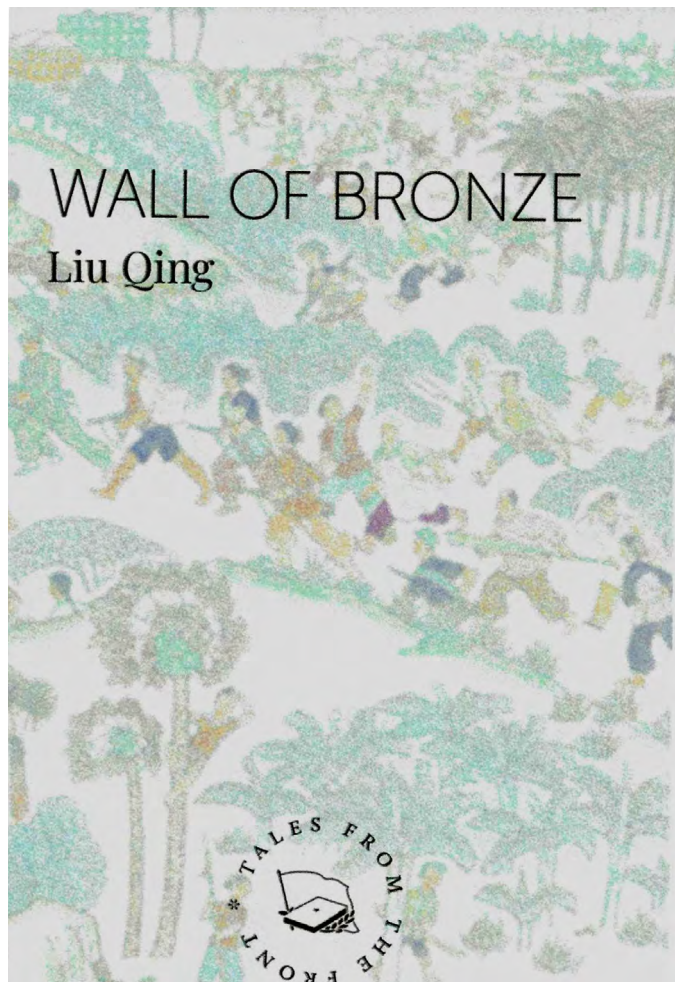
BRIGHT CLOUDS

Bright Clouds is a collection of eight short stories by the author Hao Ran, one of the many new writers who emerged after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Most of the stories are set in the northern Chinese countryside and depict the everyday life of ordinary peasants and cadres shedding the burdens of old feudal ways of thinking, working and relating to others and society. These stories describe a changing China, its contradictions forging new kinds of people, working together to build a new world.

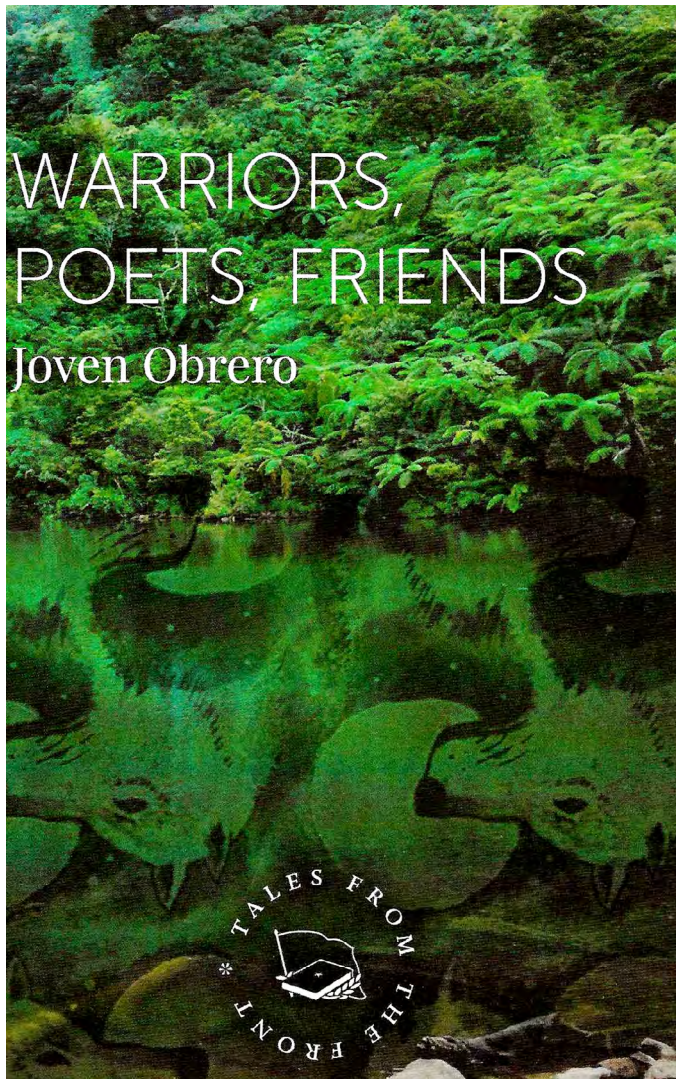


WALL OF BRONZE

Liu Qing



"Wall of Bronze" is an historical novel written by Liu Qing. Liu worked in the Cultural Association of the Shaanxi- Gansu-Ningxia Border Region as well as in the local state organs behind enemy lines and joined in the communists' struggle against the Japanese invasion. He came to know fighters and the life they led and also the lives of the civilian peasants who formed the mass base of support that enabled the People's Liberation Army's victory against the Japanese and the Kuomintang. Wall of Bronze tells in rich and complicated detail, the story of such peasants in the Liberated Areas, who risked everything to liberate China.



Tales From The Front, A Collection of Revolutionary Stories and Poetry

WARRIORS, POETS, FRIENDS

Joven Obrero's *Warriors, Poets, Friends* is a powerful collection of poems, letters and vignettes, describing the day-to-day life, struggles and triumphs of a lifetime in the Mindanao mountains spent immersed with the people and waging a people's war for national liberation.

"The thrill that this book brings to the reader comes from the news that out there in the valleys and the hills, away from Duterte yabang and round-up of tambays, comrades are doing revolution! [...] The struggle is protracted and the joy in seeing its glorious completion when the dawn of liberation breaks upon our country is exciting to contemplate. Read this book and be part of the struggle!"

—**Bien Lumbera**
National Artist for Literature



The Story

Before China's liberation in 1949 when the peasantry was ground down by the landlord class, there were countless incidents in which the peasants rose in heroic resistance. The story told here is about one such incident.

Young Pao and other land workers oppressed by the landlord Skinflint are stirred by their hatred to struggle against him. Educated and organized by an underground Communist, they unite in struggle and finally defeat the cruel landlord's plot against them. They then join the guerrillas and take up arms to fight all such class oppression.

The pictures in this book are stills from the marionette film of the same name produced by the Shanghai Animation Film Studio.



1. In 1931-45 when the Japanese imperialists occupied China's Northeast, the great masses of Chinese working people were made homeless and hungry by the Japanese invaders, traitors and landlords.



2. Worker Liu Ta-hung is an underground Communist who is assigned by his Party organization to return to his home village to help the people strike down the oppressors.



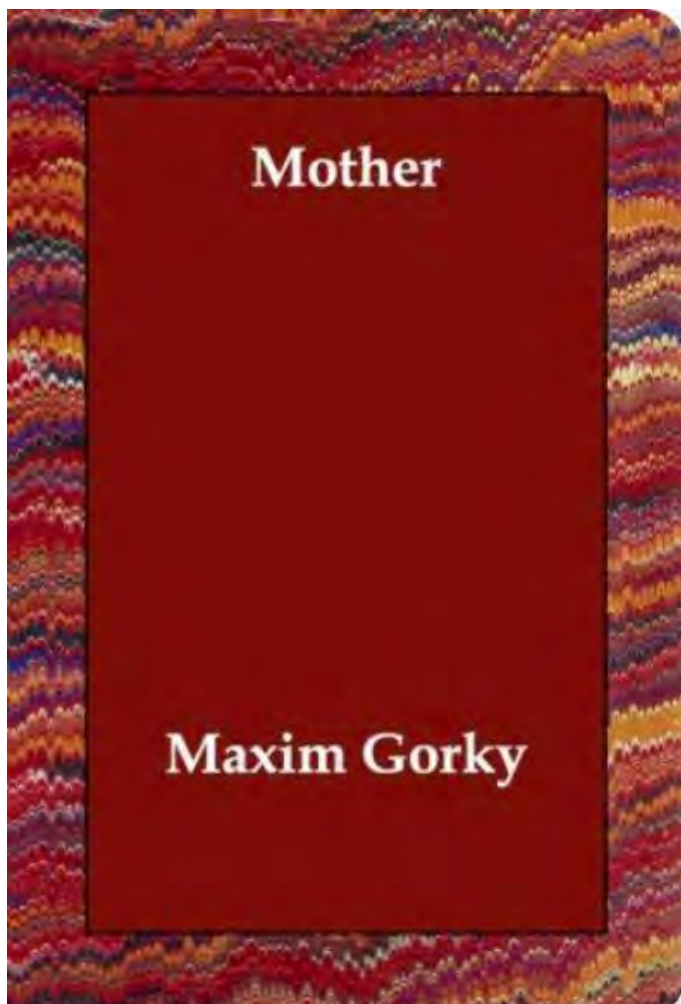
3. Chou Chun-fu, nicknamed Skinflint, is a landlord who exploits and robs his hired hands. It is to this landlord's house that Liu goes and gets a job.



4. Every year Skinflint takes on a lot of workers to cultivate his land. He wears them out with back-breaking labour, and after autumn harvest tricks them out of their wages.



64. Where there is oppression, there is resistance! Breaking out of their prison-like existence, the workers take the road of revolution. Confident of victory, they go to the mountains and join the guerrillas.



In his novel, Gorky portrays the life of a woman who works in a Russian factory doing hard manual labour and combating poverty and hunger, among other hardships. Pelageya Nilovna Vlasova is the real protagonist; her husband, a heavy drunkard, physically assaults her and leaves all the responsibility for raising their son, Pavel Vlasov, to her, but unexpectedly dies. Pavel noticeably begins to emulate his father in his drunkenness and stammer, but suddenly becomes involved in revolutionary activities. Abandoning drinking, Pavel starts to bring books and friends to his home. Being illiterate and having no political interest, Nilovna is at first cautious about Pavel's new activities. However, she wants to help him. Pavel is shown as the main revolutionary character; the other revolutionary characters of the novel are Vlasov's friends, the anarchist peasant agitator Rybin and the Ukrainian Andrey Nakhodka, who expresses the idea of Socialist internationalism. Nevertheless Nilovna, moved by her maternal feelings and, though uneducated, overcoming her political ignorance to become involved in revolution, is considered the true protagonist of the novel — [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_(novel)).



About The Dragon's Village

'With fascinating detail, Chen describes Ling-ling's journey to a remote, poverty-stricken village where she sets about organizing the peasants, forms a group to discuss "women's questions", and demands retribution from the anxious landlords. She confronts violence, cold and famine, superstition and fear among the peasants and treachery among the landlords who desperately try to buy off their peasants with false land deeds. Ling-ling's fellow activists, her own motives and self doubts, the peasants and their way of life are all drawn with remarkable candor and sympathy.' *Publishers Weekly*

SOVIET SHORT STORIES SERIES

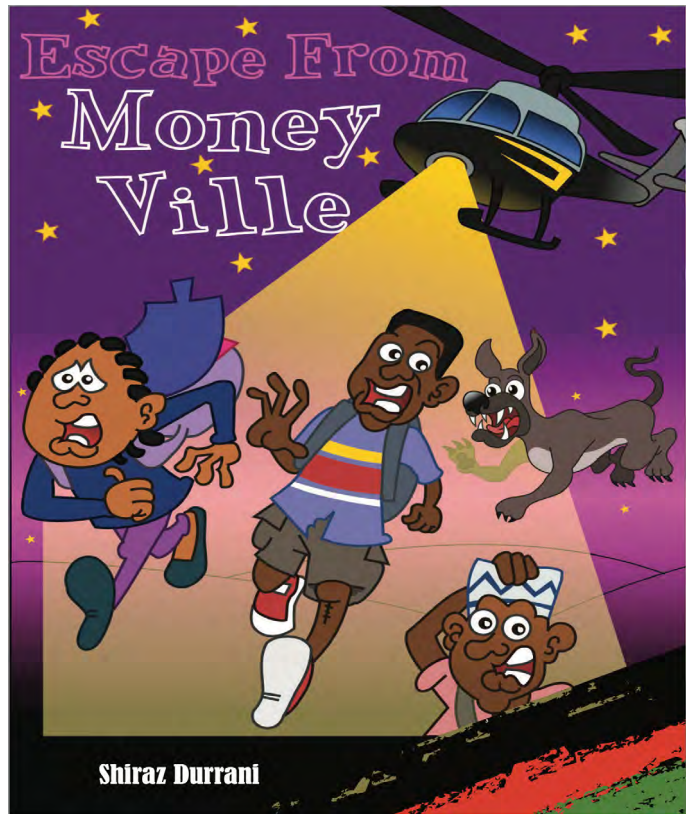


VASILY SHUKSHIN

I WANT TO LIVE



Progress Publishers • Moscow



Shiraz Durrani

Escape from Moneyville

"It was a cold, dark night. Everything was quiet. A Mawingo bus was travelling from Nairobi to Mombasa. It had big signs painted on the outside: *Dangerman*. It had travelled over two hundred kilometres and was approaching Mtito Andei. Everybody in the bus was fast asleep. Everyone, that is, except four people....."

So begins an adventure for four Kenyan youths, two boys and two girls, that explores the depth of deprivation and disaster that capitalism has been for working people in Kenya. Tricked into becoming forced workers for a factory with owners from USA, Britain and Japan, the youth live the harsh life of exploited workers. However, their sense of justice soon turns them into rebels seeking life and freedom. The story takes them through life-threatening adventures, fighting the armed forces summoned by the factory owners. Will they manage to survive the brutal attacks by fierce dogs and armed militia? Will they live to see the sea at Mombasa they had set out for?



Vasily Shukshin is a new name to readers abroad, although in his own country he has received wide acclaim as an actor, film director and writer. It would be hard to say what established his renown: his short stories, the film There's a Lad Down Our Way that he directed, the novel The Lyubavins, or his brilliant performance in the film By the Lake.

Shukshin's gift as a story-teller is beyond doubt. He has a mind packed with the characters of ordinary folk, with all kinds of incidents from life, and with tales that have been passed on to him by word of mouth. There is a very strong folk element in his writing and yet he is extremely modern.

This book contains the best of his short stories written over the past ten years.

History & Ideology

Shiraz Durrani: UMOJA Seen Through its Documents, 1987-1990 Part 1 of 3

The United Movement for Democracy in Kenya Takes up the Baton from December Twelve Movement

INTRODUCTION — The Struggle Continues Overseas

The December Twelve Movement (DTM) in Kenya used evasive tactics to avoid attacks from the Moi-KANU bourgeois dictatorship in the 1980s. The organisation was weakened by these attacks, but it survived in different forms. Some cells continued as DTM, others evolved into MWAKENYA. While not officially a successor of MK, UMOJA in London was much influenced by many of the policies and practices of DTM. UMOJA was formed by many DTM exiles from Kenya in several countries around the world, as indicated later in this book. They were now joined by some earlier political exiles and non-DTM Kenyans. Some surviving DTM Cells in Kenya worked closely with UMOJA. UMOJA and MWAKENYA then came together in 1996 and became a united, strengthened MWAKENYA-DTM. The earlier MWAKENYA was an attempt at survival by some cells of DTM and came under heavy attack from the Moi government. Many of its members had also to seek shelter outside Kenya. Some of them later joined UMOJA. The long and difficult journey from DTM to the strengthened MWAKENYA-DTM can be seen in the history of each strand.

DTM found its roots again in 2017 when MWAKENYA-DTM, Vita Books and Mau Mau Research Centre set up the Ukombozi Library which now houses, in central Nairobi, the 1980s DTM underground Library. Ukombozi Library is also the home of the Kenya Resistance Archives consisting of key documents from DTM, UMOJA and MWAKENYA. It is perhaps the only library in Kenya to hold such a collection.

This article comments on, and examines, documents from Umoja wa Kupigania Demokrasia Kenya/United

Movement for Democracy in Kenya — UMOJA — formed in London in 1987 to support resistance against the comprador KANU-B government in Kenya. The article sees UMOJA as one strand of the December Twelve Movement which President Daniel arap Moi sought to suppress following the attempted coup in 1982. The documents of the other strand — MWAKENYA — are outside the scope of this article. Many of the documents that UMOJA produced remain lost or hidden from public access. Some of them have now been placed in the Ukombozi Library in Nairobi. But not many people have access to them, or have time to study them. While an attempt is being made to digitise them, this article brings together some of the fundamental ideas and experience that made UMOJA unique in the history of resistance in Kenya.

UMOJA was formed in London at the Unity Conference in 1987. The aims were captured succinctly by the Salutation message from the Committee for Democracy in Kenya (CDK), Denmark:

We have to work together — not because we like each other but because the main objective in our unity is the complete liberation of Kenya from external domination and the overthrow of the neo-colonial regime. That is the basic meaning of our unity in resistance. Unity is our power — our only power — in the struggle to liberate our country, Kenya.

It is a fact that lack of a united resistance organisation against the comprador governments has enabled the comprador regime to stay in power so long. The study of the history of earlier resistance organisations is essential to avoid mistakes of the past and to chart a new path of resistance. There are many lessons to

be learnt from the experiences of December Twelve Movement, UMOJA and MWAKENYA and their history needs to be made available and studied by all.

Resistance Continues

Organised resistance against the takeover of power by comprador governments in Kenya began even before independence in 1963. This was a continuation of Mau Mau's war of independence when political independence was just one of the aims towards total liberation. Mau Mau was aware of the danger of neo-colonialism and imperialism and warned about the homeguard-compradors being manipulated into power by Britain and USA. Kenya African National Union (KANU), at its formation in 1960, carried on this anti-imperialist line. When this came under attack from KANU-B under Jomo Kenyatta, resistance continued, first within KANU until the assassination of Pio Gama Pinto in 1965, then under Kenya People's Union (KPU) from 1966 to 1969 when KPU was banned. After that, resistance went underground with movements such as the December Twelve Movement (DTM). Using the excuse of suppressing the attempted coup in 1982, the Moi government almost killed DTM too. Almost, but not quite. The Moi government's repression following the attempted coup in 1982 had grave consequences for DTM. Many of its leaders were detained. This was a major blow to the organisation. However, many cells continued to function and remained active. Some of them later emerged under the new name, Mwakenya.

The emergence of Mwakenya was thus one strand of DTM that continued resistance.

At the same time, many DTM members in various countries around the world joined with local activists to form the UMOJA in 1987 in London. Umoja merged with Mwakenya in 1996 and re-energised it. It is thus true to say that DTM did not die in the 1980s but continued to exist in UMOJA and MWAKENYA.

This article takes up the story of this second strand of DTM — UMOJA — formed in London which later returned to Kenya when it merged with Mwakenya in 1996.

Moi attacks DTM

The attempt by the Moi government to suppress DTM had unforeseen results for the Moi government. The threat it had tried to kill re-emerged with two

strands and with renewed vigour. Moi detained or imprisoned many leaders and members of DTM, and forced many others to flee into exile. Those who remained in Kenya continued resistance as DTM cells while others resumed their activities under the name MWAKENYA. Many of those forced into exile continued their political activities in whichever country they settled in. As a result of their organisational experience, study, activities and discipline, DTM members had developed a particular mindset that was, and still is, rare in Kenyan politics and organisations. They were totally committed to the cause of socialism and liberation, they had studied and absorbed local and international literature on resistance to imperialism and had developed a high level of organisational discipline. They had learnt to apply the lessons from their ideological, theoretical and historical studies to whatever situation they faced, whether in prisons, overseas or 'free' in Kenya. The brutal rule of Moi had hardened them and prepared them to carry on the struggle wherever they were. Thus the Kenyan struggle went international. There were members of DTM in Britain, USA, Sweden, Norway, Canada, Australia, Italy and a number of African countries which have remained unnamed because the murderous arms of Moi reached other African countries too. But these DTM members did not remain isolated as individuals in foreign lands. They formed local political organisations with the same aims as those of DTM, but adapted to their being outside Kenya. The following organisations from all these countries came together in 1987 to form UMOJA, as listed in the Umoja Unity Conference documents:

1. UKENYA: Movement for Unity and Democracy — UKENYA, UK
2. Patriotic Alliance for Kenyans, Southern Region (Africa) — PAKE
3. Organisation for Democracy in Kenya — ODK, Sweden
4. Muumgano wa Demokrasia Kenya — MDK, USA
5. Kenya Democratic Alliance — KDA, Norway
6. Kamati ya Ukombozi wa Kenya — KAUKENYA, East and Central African Region
7. Committee for Democracy in Kenya — CDK, Denmark

The Australian delegates could not attend the Conference, but formed the UMOJA Australia branch soon after the Unity Conference. It was based at the Glen Huntly suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. The Kenya Democratic Alliance from Norway could also not attend, but sent Salutation to the Conference carried by a member. Some of the participating organisations were active in supporting the struggle for liberation in Kenya before the formation of UMOJA, but as solidarity movements, not as Kenyan organisations. They now organised themselves as Kenyan political movements.

It is regrettable that many of the documents of this period were lost at the London Secretariat of UMOJA due to an administrative mishap when the documents were destroyed by the landlord of the UMOJA office. However, they are likely to have survived in the archives of participating organisations.

A few examples of the political work in some of the countries is recorded below to indicate their commitment to the struggle in Kenya. The work in **Norway** was reported in Umoja (1987a):

The solidarity movement in Denmark was among the very first organisations to make contact with parliament over the violations of human rights in Kenya and had actually forced a discussion of the issue of political prisoners in Kenya.

The stand of the Organisation for Democracy in Kenya (Sweden) was made clear in their document, The ODK Declaration (1986):

We, the **Organisation for Democracy in Kenya (Sweden)**, [are] totally opposed to the past crimes and the present atrocities committed by Moi's dictatorial KANU regime against Kenyan people ... We express our total solidarity with every initiative taken by peasants and workers of Kenya in their demand for higher wages, in their fight against the naked looting and robbery perpetrated by the regime, in their struggle for the rights to form themselves into exploitation and social oppression.

The ODK Declaration ended with these calls:

Out with all foreign imperialist theft and robbery of our wealth.

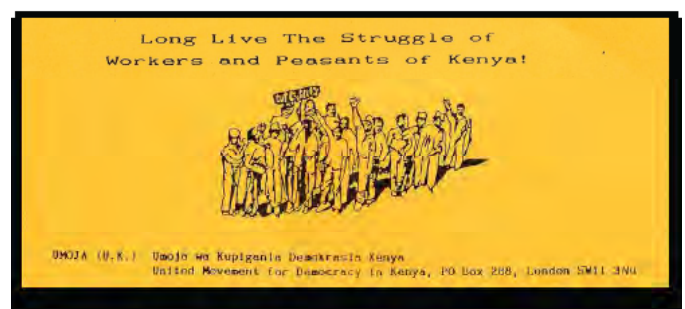
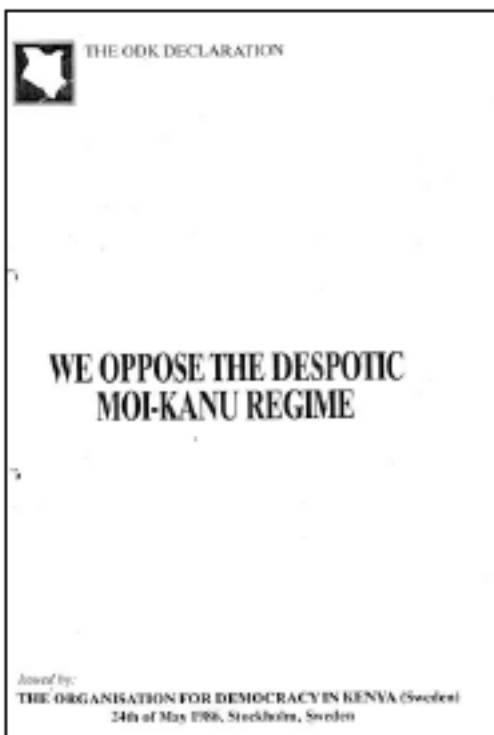
Out with the Moi regime and all the internal parasites

Out with all United States military facilities in Kenya.

Long Live *Mwakenya* and *Mpatahishi*¹

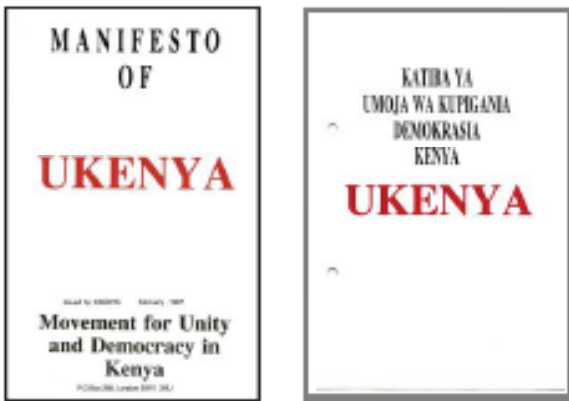
Long live the struggle of workers and peasants of Kenya.

It will be seen that the tone and the content of the ODK Declaration were as militant as the calls from DTM in Kenya. The Organisation for Democracy in Kenya (Sweden), although based in Sweden, was totally in support of the struggle of workers and peasants in their homeland.



¹ Publication from DTM.

Before UMOJA UKENYA: Movement for Unity and Democracy in Kenya (London)



The organisation of activists in London is described by UKENYA²:

There have been groups of politically active Kenyans in Britain going back to the 30s and 40s. In the history of neo-colonial Kenya, a number of individuals and groups of Kenyans have had to seek exile in Britain. During the late 60s and 70s, these individuals were mainly those connected with the opposition party Kenya People's Union [KPU). One of the better known groups of exiles of that period is the Kenya Democratic Alliance which was very active in the 70s. There were other equally active groups. some of who produced a newspaper Sauti ya Wananchi. These Kenyans played an important role in exposing the Kenyatta-KANU neo-colonial regime. internationally. We in UKENYA are proud of this heritage of resistance from generations of Kenyan exiles.

In the late 1970s, progressive Kenyans were active in the work of the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya (CRPPK) which was formed, not as a political movement for Kenya, but as a solidarity movement, as is explained below by the Committee:

The Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya (CRPPK) was a London-based organisation established on 2 July 1982 and coordinated by John La Rose from New Beacon's Stroud Green address. The Committee emerged as a response to evidence of increasingly repressive tendencies in the Kenyan government

under President Daniel Arap Moi. It aimed to act as a 'solidarity organisation' for those arrested, detained or harassed for their political activities in Kenya.

As such, the Kenyan members of the Committee could not take part in any political activities on behalf of CRPPK. It was in 1986 when some members of DTM in exile in London formed the first DTM cell in London. It was from these two developments — the solidarity front and the DTM London cell — that the Movement for Unity and Democracy in Kenya (UKENYA) was formed in 1987, as explained by the UKENYA Manifesto (1987):

... It is against this background of repression and resistance that we Kenyans living in Britain have come together and decided that we cannot stand idly by without taking a firm side in the struggle. After four years of intense debate and discussion on the situation in Kenya, we have taken the decision to form Umoja wa Kupigania Demokrasia Kenya UKENYA. UKENYA is [an] anti-imperialist organization committed to [the] struggle for democracy and the regaining of Kenya's sovereignty. We declared our total opposition to the present KANU-led neo-colonial regime and our commitment to the dismantling of the neo-colonial structures in all sectors of our economic, political, social and cultural lives.

This was the first Kenyan political organisation that became active in London after the attacks by Moi-KANU on DTM in Kenya. It is instructive to note that the four years' 'intense debate and discussion' came to fruition only when ignited by the newly-formed DTM Cell.

The UKENYA Manifesto sets out its Objective as follows:

UKENYA is fully committed to the restoration of Kenya's sovereignty and national integrity. UKENYA shall therefore strive for the unity of all patriotic Kenyans who are struggling against neo-colonialism and hence are fighting for a national economy; a national democratic society; and a national independent culture which reflects the diversity of the nationalities of Kenya.

² UMOJA: Learning From Ourselves. UKENYA. 1987/UC/DPIIIa

The Manifesto gives detailed objectives under different headings: Economic, Political, Social, and Foreign Relations. It was significant that UKENYA saw that there different roles for organisations based in Kenya and those based overseas. It stated:

UKENYA pledges to promote activities of democratic resistance in Kenya in cooperation with *Internal* and *External* democratic movements towards a unified national resistance movement. This will be done with the clear knowledge and understanding that *externally based* movements can only get guidance from those internally based (i.e. those within Kenya) and therefore that those abroad will mainly play a supportive role. [Emphases in the original].

It was this desire for a ‘unified national resistance movement’ that was led to the formation of UMOJA. In the meantime, each organisation carried on political and cultural activities in their country of residence.

ODK: Organisation for Democracy in Kenya (Sweden)

The ODK Declaration was issued on 24 May 1986. It showed an active organisations of Kenyans which set an example to other organisations that participated in the UMOJA Unity Conference in 1987. Its ODM Declaration was among the first public document from Kenyans overseas which proclaimed its opposition to the Moi government and showed it stood for radical change in Kenya. A short selection from the declaration is reproduced below:

We, THE ORGANIZATION FOR DEMOCRACY IN KENYA (Sweden) do hereby DECLARE:

— our total commitment to the restoration of Kenya's sovereignty and National integrity which has been seriously compromised by the Moi regime and hence our total opposition to the United States military facilities and any other foreign military presence on our soil;

— our total commitment to the creation of a Nationally Controlled Economy and to the termination of the present Moi-KANU supervised drainage of Kenya's wealth to imperialist countries and hence our total opposition to the mortgaging of our country to the IMF, WORLD

BANK, THE MULTINATIONALS and the virtual entrusting of the running of our country to aid agencies from the very countries that loot our wealth;

— our total commitment to the restoration of Democracy in Kenya:

— the rights of workers, peasants, students and professionals to organize themselves without government interference,

— the freedom of the National Press in Kenya

— and the freedom of speech, expression and assembly;

— our total commitment to the restoration of Justice and therefore our opposition to the colonial based Preservation of Public Security Act, detentions without trial, the entire Kangaroo court system, the use of physical and mental torture in police custody;

— our total commitment to the Revolutionary Culture rooted in the historical struggles of peasants and worker of our country, a culture which is the basis for the creation of a new man and woman of Kenya and hence our uncompromising opposition to the nee-colonial culture of subservience, servility, meekness, sycophancy, gratitude to charity, — the begging culture being promoted by the Moi regime.

Towards the promotion of the above, we, THE ORGANIZATION FOR DEMOCRACY IN KENYA (Sweden) do hereby:

DECLARE our total and unreserved alliance with all the democratic forces struggling against the nee-colonial regime of Moi and his clique;

APPLAUD the heroic and patriotic stand taken by MWAKENYA (Muungano wa Wazalendo wa Kukomboia Kenya) in championing nationally organized resistance against this corrupt, anti-Kenya, anti-people regime;

CALL UPON all the progressive and democratic forces in the world to come out in support of MWAKENYA and all other nationally based resistance movements inside Kenya;

PLEDGE our alliance with all the Kenyan democratic and progressive forces operating outside the country for the restoration of democracy in Kenya;

EXPRESS our total solidarity with every initiative taken by peasants and workers of Kenya in their demand for higher wages, in their fight against the naked looting and robbery perpetrated by the regime, in their struggle for their right to form themselves into organizations and in their struggle against external and internal exploitation and social oppression;

— APPLAUD the gallant role of University students in spear-heading the course for a democratic Kenya, often paying for their stand with life, blood, imprisonment, exile and expulsions.

OUT WITH ALL FOREIGN IMPERIALIST
THEFT AND ROBBERY OF OUR WEALTH
OUT WITH THE MOI REGIME AND ALL
THE INTERNAL PARASITES
OUT WITH ALL UNITED STATES MILITARY
FACILITIES IN KENYA

LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF ALL PATRIOTIC
FORCES IN OUR COUNTRY
LONG LIVE MWAKENYA AND MPATANISHI
LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE OF WORKERS
AND PEASANTS OF KENYA

A PEOPLE UNITED CAN NEVER BE
DEFEATED
VICTORY TO THE KENYAN PEOPLE

Issued by THE ORGANIZATION FOR
DEMOCRACY IN KENYA (Sweden)

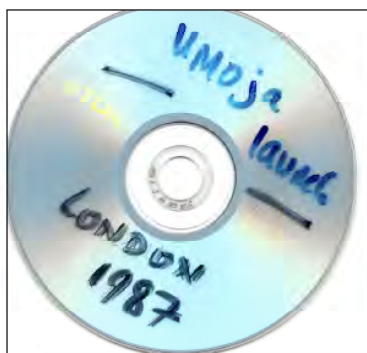
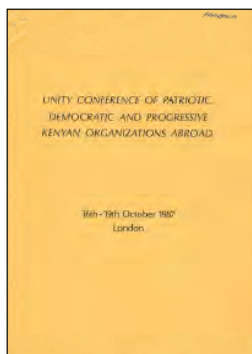
24th May 1986

Stockholm, Sweden

Address: Box 45237

104 30 Stockholm Sweden.

The Birth of UMOJA at the London Unity Conference (1987)



These externally based Kenyan organisations supported Mwakenya in various ways and co-operated with each other as independent bodies. The decision to come together followed a request from UKENYA to the future Co-ordinator of UMOJA to ‘seek out the various organised groups of externally based Kenyans’, as mentioned in Umoja (1987) which also explains the basis of coming together:

In April this year [1987] I was asked by UKENYA, London, to seek out the various organised groups of the externally based Kenyans. I was asked to seek out their views on how best the externally based organisations could work together while each retained its autonomy. Different organisations; different names; but all working together on a common platform of anti-imperialist struggle for democracy in Kenya. In keeping with their manifesto they wanted to forge a strong working alliance with all the patriotic, democratic and progressive resistance forces abroad. This in their view would be only the first but an essential step towards the eventual total unity of all the forces abroad and those inside the country. Almost at the same time, I received a message from forces inside our country wanting me to meet them somewhere in Africa.

The Co-ordinator visited Norway, Sweden, Denmark, ‘Southern Africa’, another African-based group, the Central Africa Committee for the Liberation of Kenya. He also met leaders of Mwakenya from Kenya who he described as:

I have not recently come across the faces of such absolute dedication to the liberation of our country. These young people living underground in the country had risked so much, their lives even, in order to make that contact.

The Co-ordinator’s report concluded with the wishes from outside and inside the country thus:

They from the inside wanted all the democratic forces operating abroad to rally round the banner of unity to help liberate our country from the neo-colonial dictatorship of the Moi-KANU regime. And so both, from the inside and the outside, were issuing the same cry for unity of action of all patriotic, democratic and progressive forces.

Both the forces, internal (MWAKENYA) and external (soon to be formed UMOJA) became active in achieving the aims mentioned at these meetings. This article examines the formation of UMOJA in 1987. The developments with MWAKENYA will be the basis of a future article.

The Unity Conference of Patriotic, Democratic and Progressive Kenyan Organisations Abroad, 1987

Events moved fast after the visit of the Spokesperson to various centres of Kenyan organisations. The Unity Conference of Patriotic, Democratic and Progressive Kenyan Organisations Abroad took place in London from October 16-19, 1987, hosted by UKENYA. Attending the Conference were representatives of the seven Kenyan organisations listed above.

The Conference was well planned and organised one. Delegates had prepared documents for presentation at the Conference. The List of Conference documents (reproduced in Part 2 of this article) shows four main Agenda items. Each delegate gave their views on each of these agenda items which were:

- I. Salutations to the Conference
- II. Learning from our Past - Unity in Resistance
- III. Learning from Ourselves - Organisational Lessons and Experiences
- IV. Where do we go from here? This was in two parts:
 - A. Letter & Programme of MWAKENYA
 - B. Proposed Structure [of UMOJA]

The delegates were given about 10 Background Papers based on the above programme. The full Conference proceedings have not been published, although some centres were supposed to produce them. However, a paper version is available at Ukombozi Library in Nairobi. There has been no similar conference on Kenya where the past, the present and the future struggles are investigated with such precision from a working class perspective. In view of this, this article reproduces some key points from the Conference. These indicate the seriousness with which participants attended the Conference and shows their ideological understanding and commitment to the liberation of Kenya. The first part is taken from Agenda item I.

Salutations to the Conference

*Message from UKENYA: Movement for Unity and Democracy in Kenya, Britain*³

After years of analysing the neo-colonial situation in our country, we came to the simple truth that imperialism and the ruling comprador class were the enemy of our people. The comprador alliance has mortgaged our country to the leading imperialist power — the United States of America. It has sold our economy. It has killed democracy. It rules by dividing Kenyans along nationality lines. It has decreed that to organise is subversive. There is no doubt that this comprador clique is the enemy of our national interests and of development. Having identified the enemies of our society, we look towards the natural allies in the struggle - the oppressed and exploited masses. We must unite to remove the unholy alliance of imperialism and its local agents. The Kenyan worker, the Kenyan peasant, the students and progressive and patriotic elements must unite to defeat the ruling comprador class and its foreign masters ... MWAKENYA represents the culture and spirit of resistance in our country. From the Kenya Land and Freedom Army's armed struggle to the patriotic parties that later emerged in independent Kenya, to the underground tradition of radical groups such as the December 12th Movement, we can clearly see the thread that links this history of resistance and struggle for real independence.

*Message from Kenya Democratic Alliance (KDA), Norway*⁴

Our nation's history of struggle should be a guiding star in our deliberations and we should never be shy in expressing what we want or what seems to be the effective solution to our problems at home. We should not lose sight of Moi-KAN U's repressive state machine which is sending hundreds of our compatriots to the gallows, prisons and exile. Already, he has inside the country, U.S. and allied powers naval and military extensions at his disposal if need be to realise his fascistic dreams. He has as well through his machinations made Kenya a legally one party state. And the only party, KAN U has been declared supreme, that is above parliament and the judiciary. In reality the party does not function at all.

³ Salutations from UKENYA. 1987/UC/DP/1a:

Moi just rules through decrees and directives either worked discreetly through members of his kitchen cabinet or through his general public pronouncements which occasionally are contradictory. This repression should be seen as a measure of silencing the ongoing resistance inside the country against his despotic regime. A clear indication that, this Moi-KANU's neo-colonial regime will never give Kenyans any meaningful change. Having realised the predicament we are in, those of us in Norway with the same patriotic sentiments decided to organise ourselves into a movement committed to struggle for restoration of democracy in our homeland.

*Message from the East & Central African Group Kamati ya Ukombozi wa Kenya (KAUKENYA)*⁵

The struggle we are engaged in has everyday continued to become more and more demanding not only of our energies but the united action of the various patriotic organisations and individuals. We, KAUK EN YA based in the East and Central African region, outside our motherland, fully support this unity conference. But beyond the conference itself, we look further to material and active unity for the liberation of our country Kenya. We view unity in this struggle as nothing less than a dynamic and not static. Not only desirable but as a basic prerequisite for the defeat and dismantling of the forces of repression, exploitation and oppression; and other reactionary forces in Kenya. Unity not only for the immediate state of the struggle against the neo-colonial regime, but unity that is founded firmly enough, structured and organised to go beyond individuals here to be part of the greater unity of our people's victory in the building of a new revolutionary society in Kenya.

We were forced to leave our homes, families, jobs and country just like all the comrades here because we protested against the undemocratic and repressive neocolonial rule of Moi and his KANU clique. We rejected exploitation — the continuing exploitation and domination by foreign forces, being inspired by goals similar to those of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau) movement.

KAUKENYA has great confidence and faith that the Kenyan people will triumph in this struggle and never

allow again the hijacking of our social revolution. For us who are abroad, we must exploit the extra freedom of movement and association that we have, compared to the Kenyan masses, to the fullest. We have started by organising this unity conference and we must continue, with maximum vigilance on our whole security, to organise ourselves fully.

Discipline among members was paramount. This is particularly so for recruitment and training of new members. DTM was strict in recruitment and admitted new members only after a long process of study and proven action in resistance activities at political, social or cultural levels. However, this practice was not followed under Mwakenya, at least in the initial stages. This allowed members who did not have ideological clarity and experience to capture leadership positions, bringing liberalism into the organisation. The need for constant struggles for a clear political line is essential if resistance is to succeed.

It is to the credit of DTM members in exile that they continued the struggle in countries of their exile. Various organisations in different countries came together to form Umoja in 1987 in London. Umoja became an important part of Mwakenya after that. An overseas partner is a useful asset to support local actions.

*Committee for Democracy in Kenya (CDK) — Denmark*⁶

The Agenda of our meeting is a very important one for it deals with one of the most crucial aspects in organising a political movement. UNITY is the crux of our meeting. Unity with each other is unity of all Kenyan nationalities: it is the unity with peasants and workers: it is unity against the comprador ruling class in our country: it is unity against imperialism: unity for change and the social transformation of our country and unity to liberate Kenya.

At this historic conference we shall be looking at details of resistance — past and present — in relation to the task of overthrowing the present neo-colonial order in our country. These details are the reality of

⁴ Message from Kenya Democratic Alliance (KDA) Norway. 1987/UC/DP/1e.

⁵ Message of Salutations from the East & Central African Group, Kamati ya Ukombozi wa Kenya (KAUKENYA). 1978/UC/DP/1f.

the struggle to liberate Kenya from the imperialists who have sat on Kenya's back for almost a century: and it is also the reality of the struggle to dismantle the neo-colonial regime. Unless careful attention is given to the details, any talk of liberating Kenya will be a mere illusion.

As October 20 draws near, for patriotic Kenyans and the entire world the memories of the heroic resistance of all Kenyan nationalities against the British invasion and occupation of our land are fresh in the mind. All actions of resistance developed out of a felt need of people to liberate themselves. We have reasons indeed to be proud of noting these heroic acts of resistance of the past but this pride in the past must be realised in terms of how we face the challenges of our time. We must take these challenges which every Kenyan knows in order to regain our personal and national integrity which has been sold to imperialists.

Comrades, we have come together in order to form one united resistance movement for the liberation and transformation of our society. The present system in Kenya was created by imperialists to serve their needs. This is a matter of historical fact, not a moral judgement! The result is that imperialists control the levers of the Kenyan regime and also control the wealth produced in Kenya. Again, we are stating facts, not making moral judgements. If morality enters into the matter — as we believe it does — it refers to the future of our country. The present system in Kenya, as we have already said, was created by imperialist powers for their own ends. As you know, for example, the transport and communications network were organised for the extraction of Kenya's wealth. In order to siphon off Kenya's wealth, the imperialists established forces of oppression and a top-down administrative system. Further, the education system was established to colonize the minds and the church institutions were built to take care of the bleeding souls. The achievements of all these well planned colonial activities were clearly demonstrated during the struggle for independence.

Today, these achievements of the colonialist are displayed on every product of colonialism and neo-colonialism in our country. If you like, take a good look at us Kenyans. Look at our cities, our food, our music our language today, in short — our culture

today. We Kenyans have no choice but to fight on until we dismantle the slave situation existing in our country today if a meaningful independence and democracy is ever to come to Kenya. We make this decision as Kenyans being fully aware of certain basic facts, and because of them. We know that the intention of imperialists in Kenya is to milk our blood until the last drop. We know that the neo-colonial regime in Kenya is ready to co-operate with the imperialists in this cause. We are forced to declare war against our oppressors. And as you know comrades, this is not a choice — it is the only way out of the present repressive situation in Kenya.

Why Unity in Resistance?

We Kenyans have been denied the right to live in our country and decide anything concerning ourselves or our country. We are either slaves or prisoners in the country of our birth. Independence has meant that Kenya has been turned into a "no man's land." In other words, independence was only meant to open up Kenya for Americans, Japanese, Israelis, Germans, Scandinavians etc. This opening up of our country to foreign exploitation has also meant the wholesale mortgaging of our country and the imposition of an alien culture on us. It is tragic that we are even forced to communicate with each other in English — the language of the colonialists as if we are still a colony of Britain.

It is this colonisation of our minds and the domination by foreign forces over which we have no control that all of us gathered here have rejected. Our coming together has the purpose of enabling us to deal with these problems collectively and in great seriousness. The situation in our country forces us to hold this historic gathering in a foreign country. Our being in this place attests to our situation. We have no choice but to have unity in our resistance: to unite with all oppressed Kenyans. For it is our situation which has caused us to come together, not just the ideals of human brotherhood or love for each other. The immediate reason for each of us coming together depended on the point at which s/he had experienced repression in our country. It is the practical experience of the fact that Kenya is not truly independent which made all of us here think in terms of struggling to

⁶ Hopes and Aspirations for the Conference from the Committee for Democracy in Kenya (CDK). 1987/UC/DP/Ig.

liberate our country. We stress the fact that it is our situation which has forced us to come together because we have to understand ourselves in order to fight against this situation. We are not necessarily friends with each other but basically PATRIOTS wanting to liberate our country.

The pressures towards disunity are strong. We all feel the cold winds of neo-colonial repression and in desperation there will be a strong temptation to look at ourselves as individuals rather than as a group of the oppressed.

Comrades, as we understand it, our purpose at this meeting is to come to an agreement on the formation of a united resistance group. Our goal is to liberate Kenya and her people. and on that goal there can be NO compromise. Nothing we have said is new. It can only be a reminder of well-known truths to you. For there are NO miraculous answers to our problems.

What can we do as a united resistance group?

We must ensure that we continue united and speak with one voice and that none of us makes a separate deal which might weaken our unity in resistance. This will not get easier as time goes on. But we have to do more than stand united. We have to work together — not because we like each other but because the main objective in our unity is the complete liberation of Kenya from external domination and the overthrow of the neo-colonial regime. That is the basic meaning of our unity in resistance. Unity is our power — our only power — in the struggle to liberate our country, Kenya.

Thank you!

London 15-19 October. 1987

Learning From Our Past — Unity in Resistance *UKENYA*⁷

The brave Turkana warriors were successful in defeating the British army of 1500 soldiers in May 1918 at Kangalila; the well drilled Marakwet army overcame the 300 strong British army in 1012. British army in 1912. These battles were won by our people. Their courage, sacrifice and heroism became a legend. But the war was lost. This was mainly because our people had not yet clearly understood the

enemy tactic of creating, supporting and then using against us its new weapon: the traitorous collaborators whose greed for small gifts from imperialist plunder turned them into willing tools of the enemy against us. In each historical stage, it was this enemy that undermined our resistance. The traitors who formed various traitor organizations at the beginning of the century were no different from the homeguard traitors whom the Kenya Land and Freedom Army fought. It was the remnants of the same collaborators who regrouped with imperialist support and have taken over power in our country today.

But just as the enemy developed its own comprador class to act as its agents, our own struggle in successive periods has devised ways of neutralising this enemy. The highest manifestation of this was the fact that the KFLA waged its fiercest battles against this class, showing no mercy in trying to eliminate this danger.

And the danger was real. It was easy to aim a bullet at a foreign face. But it was difficult to root out the enemy from our own midst. It requires a clear analysis about which class is the enemy, and how best to eliminate this threat. This shows the necessity of uniting our forces to fight against the enemy. This unity is not based on subjective concepts, of who our allies are. The lessons from our history of resistance are clear. The nationalist forces coming together did not unite with every voice that claimed to be its friend. The various patriotic associations united with their own class allies: KCA, KAU, Taita Welfare Association, Luo Thrift, Kavirondo welfare, Somali Youth ... all these brought together progressive elements from the same budding working class. In joining hands with each other, these associations were affirming the truth that there can be no success unless they were united on the basis of a shared class interest. Just as there were collaborators in every nationality, the progressive working class also came from different nationalities. Me Katilili represented the coming together of all progressive people of the Giriama against the homeguard elements who very clearly represented the class interests of the exploiters.

The lesson of unity based on the class interests of workers and peasants answers the question "Uniting with whom?" One cannot unite with forces opposed

⁷ UKENYA. 1987/UC/DP/IIa.

to the very values one is fighting for. It is thus absurd for Moi to call for 'love, peace, and unity' in abstract, as if there is only one class in Kenya which needs to come together. For us, the unity is one of bringing together forces of those classes whose economic and political needs dictate that they struggle against imperialism and the comprador class. Here again, the KLFA reached the highest level in understanding the need to have unity of working class and peasants against colonialists, homeguards and other regressive classes.

...

The search for a united organisation, based on the material needs of the people, the material needs of the working people, and their world outlook and on a basis of practice — such is the lesson taught us by our history which was well learnt by the combatants of the KLFA. It is to such a need in our own times that we have to answer today.

The KLFA represented the height of our ability in the colonial era to learn the lessons from our past and to organize on the basis of learning from our past mistakes and building on our successes. The greatest lesson was to root out the enemy from our midst and form a united organization and fight the enemy with the appropriate weapons at different times. We are called upon today to learn similarly from past mistakes, come together on the basis of a principled unity dependent on the concrete needs of our times, join hands with the progressive forces within the country and march ahead. History will judge our success or failure on the basis of whether or not we answered appropriately to this call.

PAKE: Unity in Resistance, 1885-1963 ⁸

What lessons can we draw from our history of resistance? What mistakes did our people make which obviously need not be repeated in our struggle against neo-colonialism and imperialism led by the United States of America?

From our history we can draw the following lessons:

- Unity is created on concrete issues and demands, Unity is not something to be declared but must be

- worked for even if it takes long periods.
- Unity in resistance can dramatically change the balance of power and the course of history,
- We have also learned that our people when faced with national political repression have never been afraid to take up arms.

Today, the struggle to unite various forces in our history are significant and this is why this Unity Conference of Progressive, Democratic and Patriotic groups is gathered here to share experiences.

Learning From Ourselves — Organisational Lessons and Experiences

At one level, UMOJA can be seen as the continuation of the December Twelve Movement (DTM) some of whose activities were examined earlier.⁹ Among the DTM practice it continued were secrecy, discipline and self-criticism as a way of strengthening the organisation. The contribution of the London Centre, formally organised as UKENYA, at the UMOJA Unity Conference in 1987 shows the DTM influence in its work and practice. The first selection looks at its approach to secrecy and discipline:¹⁰

At this early stage of our discussions, we agreed to maintain organisational secrecy and adopt a slightly higher level of discipline. It was in fact easier to say we would accept slightly more discipline and observe secrecy, than to actually do so. For example, after coming under this new discipline, friends and relatives as well as other political acquaintances, still expected us to relate to them on the basis of other social relations and divulge organisational details. There are instances when this actually happened.

It continues its analysis on discipline and contradictions:

As the new organisational structure called for an even higher discipline, contradictions became sharper. Some of our members failed to struggle against the harmful petty-bourgeois tendencies of liberalism and dropped out of the organisation. This liberalism manifested itself in the failure to complete tasks, failure to accept

⁸ PAKE. 1987/UC/DP/IIb.

⁹ See: Shiraz Durrani (2022): Lessons from the Underground: How DTM Linked Theory With Practice in Kenya. The Kenya Socialist. No. 5. pp.5-18.

¹⁰ UMOJA : Learning from Ourselves. UKENYA. 1987/UC/DP/IIIa.

responsibilities, lateness for meetings, failure to respect established channels of communication, failure to take security seriously with decisions on security not being implemented, failure to take criticism seriously or taking criticism as personal attacks and failure to put politics in command. i.e. putting personal. family or other considerations before the organisation. Some of these liberal tendencies still exist in our midst and are a reflection of the contradictions within us because of our petty-bourgeois class backgrounds.

The above sums up the germ of destruction that eats up political organisations from the inside. This was particularly prevalent among political organisations in countries outside Kenya when there was no immediate danger from Kenya security forces and where the life-threatening conditions that face Kenyan working people were not present. Nor were there the same security precautions in UK as there were in Kenya and liberalism was the norm rather than a sideline tendency. That the organisation survived was due in no small measure to the dedication, discipline and hard work of a relatively small number of members. But it is refreshing to note that such destructive tendencies were given official expression at the Unity Conference. The statement continued with a look at the need for a 'struggle for democracy' and to 'educate ourselves', aspects that are often underestimated in many resistance organisations:

In organising ourselves to struggle for democracy and unity in our country. we have found a great need to inform ourselves, educate ourselves. We have, therefore, paid attention to study of our history, our concrete experience and learning from other people's experiences but always ensuring that these lessons are taken in consideration of the concrete conditions existing in our country. We have also made great efforts to struggle against the tendency of high mental theory and the disdain of 'menial' tasks.

Another important lesson we have learnt is the principle of self-reliance. From the history of our people, we have seen how various struggles were waged and won by relying on the resources and strengths of our people. Equally, we ourselves have experienced the tremendous joy and confidence that

comes from organising public meetings ourselves and publishing our various documents. By the collective pooling together of our meagre resources we have managed to finance all of our activities while always attempting to present the best possible.

It called for the need of 'higher form of resistance' to meet new challenges:

As the struggle in our country has heightened, we have it necessary to respond to the new situation by an even higher form of discipline. The new conditions call for us to be more conscious of security, secrecy and discipline.

It is the lack of such practice that has seen the sad end of many organisations in Kenya over the years. UKENYA had understood the historical needs of the time very well. But the problems highlighted by UKENYA were not unique to their organisation. Similar issues were raised by others as well. PAKE's position, given to the Conference, highlighted problems of organising unity among Left movements:¹¹

The group of Kenyans represented by our delegates to the London conference are made up of individuals who are either in exile, or deliberately living outside Kenya because of their political convictions which would not be tolerated by Moi's neo-colonial, repressive regime. Attempts to operate together as a group go back to 1983. Since then the group has been faced with problems of differences that have made it difficult for them to come up with, or to follow a comprehensive collectively agreed upon programme. These problems have ranged from ideological differences, to the kind of programme that should be adopted, to the question of how some of the envisaged activities should be carried out etc. etc. To date, our group has not succeeded in ironing out our basic differences, but has agreed to overcome them.

...

The question of ideology has been a central problem and has been discussed heatedly and extensively by the group over a number of meetings. Some members have been of the opinion that any kind of political programme adopted should include a systemic agenda for

¹¹ UMOJA. Learning From Ourselves. PAKE. 1987/UC/DP/IIIb.

the study of Marxist-Leninist classics and other studies in Scientific Socialism. The argument has been that it is necessary for the individual members of the group to have political education in Marxism-Leninism and that studying together would facilitate collective ideological growth. This would provide a common and collective frame of reference that would enrich our political work. Other members have opposed the idea of studying Marxist-Leninist works, describing it as unnecessary pre-occupation with theory. They have argued for political activism, suggesting that theory should only be dealt with in so far as it relates to specific issues being dealt with in the programme of political action. This difference of opinion and orientation almost led to the complete break up of the group at one time.

...

The lesson from all this was that whatever differences political activists may have between themselves, they should not fight against one another as this will only serve the purpose of the enemy who would gain from our state of disunity. We must rally together around the issues that we agree upon and collectively work around those while looking for solutions to our differences. Another lesson is that any movement, group, or organisation that consciously goes out to attack, undermine and destroy the other ones, is unconsciously fighting for the enemy by doing the work for him.

Similarly, the Organisation for Democracy in Kenya (ODK, Sweden¹² raised a number of important organisational issues on a number of issues, some of which are mentioned below:

- We did not analyse as to who we are, who we could work with, our weaknesses and our strengths.
- We did not study our situation as best as we should have. The enemy was not always understood.
- Some of us looked for external solutions when faced with a number of problems. We depended on others to think and bring about solutions ... Others felt we needed huge sums of money before we could move an inch.
- Discipline has not been observed at individual or organisational level.
- Security, if wrongly emphasised could be and

has been a great drawback.

- At all levels dialogue and democracy must prevail.

The ODM document ends:

Historically, it has been observed that it is not necessarily those who start off organisations that lead them to triumph. Ours is to see that a genuine movement with proper roots is off the ground come what may and that it will outlive individuals and be destined to triumph in the total liberation of Kenyan people. At this juncture we would like to emphasise that correct leadership at every stage of our evolution and revolution will determine our success or failure. So effectiveness of correct leadership is not being over-looked. Practice and the Kenyan people are the best arbiters and no individual should feel or believe that he or she is INDISPENSABLE.

LONG LIVE KENYA PEOPLES'
REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATIONS

USHINDI NI WETU!!

The above indicates the clear awareness among Kenyans overseas of the dangers that the liberation movement faced — both external from the ruling class and imperialism and internal from individual and organisational weaknesses. The Kamati ya Kuikomboa Kenya (KAUKENYA) -East & Central Africa¹³ mentioned the learning lessons of the exiles and raised additional issues facing overseas organisations:

The exiles have undergone diverse experiences in difficult conditions. They have learnt many lessons in terms of organisation, ideological orientation, political education and many have emerged more educated, experienced, hardened and tested within this practice in exile. Our organisation KAUKENYA (EA) is an example of people's efforts to organise themselves and we would like to share our experiences and lessons drawn with other patriotic Kenyans in exile. This is done with the hope that all of us will be able to contribute something to the struggle in our beloved motherland. This is in the light of our endeavour to nurture the collective spirit in unity.

¹² UMOJA. Learning from Ourselves. ODK. 1987/UC/DPIIIc.

KAUKENYA then listed some of the problems they experienced:

Ideology: In undertaking the efforts of organising, we have had some problems. For example we have had some people who were bent on pursuing their self-interests. This was evident during some discussions to solve problems collectively and sharing our meagre resources. Some members take decisions only when they are in their favour. We solve that problem by vigorous debates pointing out the mistakes in adopting such a stance. The members are then persuaded after such exhaustive discussion.

The other problem faced is the ideological diversity among individuals. This requires a lot of patience because some individuals take long to see the alternative of what they uphold. We encourage debates and serious critique of each belief that is contrary to the accepted collective spirit. It is after much discussion that the identification of the correct ideological orientation is made. It never works when you literary force one to adopt the chosen ideology. The whole idea is to persuade and let the individual to be transformed. Some members have difficulty in identifying the real enemy of the Kenyan people clearly. Some say Moi, or this or that tribe, race etc.

Opportunism: Opportunistic tendencies among individuals eg vying for leadership, in a group are checked by criticism before it is allowed to persist.

Despair: Some comrades have been apathetic to the struggle arguing that the system is formidable. They are educated to learn that this is a protracted struggle that could take many years to accomplish.

Discipline: Before a group becomes evolved, capable of working as a unit, discipline must be observed. But there are always individuals who do not like to work within disciplined rules. The spirit of collective work/collective responsibility needs to be consciously developed.

Once the ideology has been defined, any organisation must take the necessary steps to provide education on the identified ideology. Our organisation recognised this as necessary in order to raise and improve the political/ideological and organisational knowledge of members. We encouraged comrades to read and write papers for discussion with the other members as a

means of helping them grow and have confidence in the exposition of the ideology. Though this, in cases, can be a slow process, nevertheless, we find that patience gives rewards. Through discussions, comrades are led to see the dangers of their shortcomings or tendencies. Those who cannot fit collective discipline are often given tasks or isolated as lessons for them to learn. We educate and persuade without tiring.

Vying for *leadership* is one of the biggest group problems. Working relationships bring these ambitious selfish interests and can only be solved by showing the need to follow democratic principles. The emphasis is for people to stop seeing leadership as a privileged status but as a duty. The values attached to good leadership are devotion to duty and selfless service. Some affected members have failed miserably when given the coveted position after realising that it required too much devotion rather than providing the imagined privileges.

In undertaking political education we have had to face some problems. Some members had not nurtured the idea of forming good reading habits. We usually encourage people to constantly read and see it as a vital aspect of preparing and preserving oneself.

The other problem is building courage especially among the ideologically inadequate to assume responsibility. Many underrate themselves and feel inferior for some duties. Here we constantly expose this tendency and provide learning situations for all. By giving practical examples members actually improve and shed their complexes.

We also face a problem of acquiring adequate literature especially the relevant material and also the rare publications. This problem we partly solved by making and building a library from members' material and financial contributions and by borrowing materials from whatever source. It is no longer a major problem. even though books are never adequate.

Information/Communication:

It is necessary to keep the members informed of what events are taking place within and outside our country and around the world. This is a recognised aspect of our programme of activities. We have therefore established

a system of gathering news/information, analysing the news, recording the news and disseminating it to members. We have also established a system of obtaining current journals, newspapers and magazines to make them accessible to members.

...

We have had a problem of reporting, recording and dissemination of information because some members are inexperienced. This we are solving by emphasizing the need to learn in practice. In any organisation, a system of communication among members and with other patriots elsewhere must be set up. Such a system must be functional to always serve the need to communicate. However some problems have so far been identified. Major among them is a method of communication that would be safe without endangering the security of the organisation. Arrangements continue to be made in this respect but we have to constantly change the methods due to the changing conditions.

Security:

An organisation must also establish a security system for the members. This is because of the need for vigilance at all times: to identify enemy agents and dangerous elements: maintain surveillance on the security of members: check out on the possibility of infiltration by enemy forces and set guidelines of action in case the security of members is threatened.

Programme:

Our organisation recognised the need to have a political programme. As pointed out earlier, for any organisation, such a programme is solely to guide political activities: identify major goals and tasks. The programme must have a brief outline of what the organisation intends to do. Therefore it must be action-oriented, goal-focused and task-oriented.

Constitution:

Any organisation/group must have an outline of its rules. The outline must be made very clear, simple and following particular guiding principles understood by all members. Our organisation has recognized the importance of such an outline. The guiding principles are of necessity based on the working people's ideology that was chosen by the members.

The Unity Conference's next item of agenda was 'Where do we go from here?' Appropriately, this section began with a message of solidarity from MWAKENYA 'to all our Kenyan comrades abroad'.¹⁴ The Conference ended by passing a resolution¹⁵ on October 19, 1987, signed by all the seven participating organisations. Selection from the Resolution are reproduced below:

Patriotic, Democratic and Progressive Kenyan Organisations Abroad Unite

Following several consultations over the years, we, the following organisations of Kenyans, namely, Muungano wa Demokrasia Kenya (MDK), USA; UKENYA: Movement for Unity and Democracy in Kenya, Britain; Kenya Democratic Alliance (KDA), Norway; Committee for Democracy in Kenya (CDK), Denmark; Organisation for Democracy in Kenya (ODK), Sweden; Kamati ya Ukombozi Kenya (KAUKENYA) and Patriotic Alliance of Kenyans (PAKE), Africa, met in London from 16th to 19th October 1987 for the Unity Conference of Patriotic, Democratic and Progressive Kenyan Organisations Abroad.

We discussed and reviewed several issues related to our history and the current political situation in Kenya. We noted with pride the long history of our people's resistance to forces of foreign occupation and internal repression, a heroic history stretching from the 16th Century to the present. The highest peak of that resistance was the armed struggle waged by the Kenya Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau movement) which forced the British colonial power to concede independence.

Evaluating these experiences we noted that the successes were always dependent on a clear understanding:

1. of who was the real oppressor and who the real oppressed;
2. of the necessity of unity of the oppressed against the oppressor;
3. that unity depended on the oppressed being guided by a set of common principles.
4. that this unity can result in victory against the oppressor only through and organization;

¹⁴ UMOJA. Where do we go from here? Part 1 1987/UC/DP/IV.

¹⁵ UMOJA Resolution and Final Statement. London, October 20, 1987. 1987/UC/DP/VII.

5. that the oppressed had to be vigilant against infiltrators and other divisive enemy agents among them.

We noted that every time our people ignored any of these lessons there inevitably followed defeat. Even where there was victory, failure to observe discipline and maintain vigilance could result in the hijacking of the success by the enemy and his agents. This was indeed what happened to our hard-won victory over colonialism. The homeguard and empire loyalists in KANU regrouped with the KADU renegades to hijack our independence and to take the state machinery.

These renegades ended up integrating Kenya's economy into imperialism. The economy today is controlled by the transnationals and the IMF. The wealth created by the people goes into the coffers of foreigners or into the pockets of a local minority led by the Presidency. Landlessness, mass unemployment, starvation wages, death through lack of medicine and adequate medical care is the lot of the vast majority of Kenyans. The gap between the rich and the poor is the widest in the world. In the same way the KANU renegades have sold our political independence and polluted our culture with crude imitations of the worst aspects of western bourgeois values.

We noted with pride that the resistance traditions of the pre-colonial and colonial eras had continued after independence making the KAN U renegades react with venom against the people.

We reviewed the current situation under the Moi-KAN U regime. Various delegations expressed their indignation at the utter disregard of human life and democracy. The jailings, detention without trial, torture, disappearances, deaths in police custody and massacres have become the order of the day. Every day sees more Kenyans flee abroad. Democratic organisation is banned.

The Moi-KAN U regime has specialised in sowing seeds of discord and division among the nationalities as a way of survival. Thus the regime wants to make people believe that the problems are caused by this or that nationality. It seeks to blow up minor contradictions among the people into false pictures of the real cause of underdevelopment. Similarly it seeks to divide up the patriotic forces.

We evaluated the state of repression and resistance and noted with pride the increasing international and national isolation of the regime.

This isolation is a direct consequence of resistance at home and abroad.

The conference noted with pride that Kenyan exiles have continued resistance by forming Kenyan organisations abroad and have inspired solidarity movements in different parts of the world.

The Resolution then examined the situation of the Kenyan organisations abroad:

In examining the work done by the organisations abroad, the delegates observed that while the organisations in conjunction with solidarity groups have been successful in causing the increasing isolation of the Moi-KANU regime internationally, they have suffered from the following problems:

1. Lack of communication resulting in misunderstandings.
2. Isolation of groups in terms of information.
3. Contradictions among groups resulting in lack of trust.
4. Looseness of organisation resulting in lack of discipline, factionalism and anarchic tendencies manifested in suspicion of all authority without differentiation.
5. Lack of programme of action has resulted in the disillusionment of individuals and organisations.
6. Unevenness in the development levels of activities and of understanding the needs of the struggle.
7. Isolation and lack of proper integration with the struggle at home.

The above have resulted in denying these organisations the benefits of the potential force of a well-coordinated and united front.

Realising these weaknesses, the delegates of the organisations represented, i.e, UKENYA, MOK, KDA, CDK, ODK, KAUKENYA and PAKE decided to dissolve themselves and to form a single democratic organisation of all patriotic, democratic and progressive organisations operating outside Kenya — UMOJA: UMOJA WA KUPIGANIA DEMOKRASIA KENYA (UNITED MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY IN KENYA) with a central secretariat and branches in various parts of the world.

these documents:

Learning From Ourselves Documents

UMOJA which now brings together the resistance abroad under one umbrella is an anti-imperialist organisation wholly committed to the restoration of our national sovereignty and the building of a truly democratic Kenya and the restructuring of the economy for the social progress of the Kenyan people. UMOJA is not a new party but a support movement for the struggle at home. Towards this end UMOJA is pledged to the unwavering support of the democratic and social struggle in Kenya.

The Conference produced a structure of UMOJA, its Secretariat and branches which became operational as from the end of the Conference. A notable part of the Conference was a series of Background papers under two headings: Learning from our Past and Learning from Ourselves. The former had 5 papers on the history of Kenya written by delegates from different participating organisations. These were:

Background Papers

1. Resistance in Central and Rift Valley ¹⁶
2. Resistance in the Coast and the North ¹⁷
3. Women in Kenyan People's resistance to Imperialism¹⁸
4. Kenyan Asians in resistance to imperialism ¹⁹
5. Resistance in Nyanza and Western Kenya ²⁰

Taken as a whole they provide an overall history of resistance in Kenya. It is due to liberalism in UMOJA that these papers were never published as two of the Branches tasked with editing and publishing them failed to do so. Only one of the papers, *Kenyan Asians in Resistance to Imperialism* is available in the public domain after a revised edition was published in 2017.²¹ All the papers are, however, available at Ukombozi Library in Nairobi. The section Learning from Our Past had two other documents, the MWAKENYA newspaper, Pambana Nos. 1 (may 1982) and No. 2 (June 1983).

The Section Learning From Ourselves consisted of

16 UMOJA. Background Papers. Learning From Our Past. 1987/UC/BP/II.1.

17 UMOJA. Background Papers. Learning From Our Past. 1987/UC/BP/II.2.

18 UMOJA. Background Papers. Learning From Our Past. 1987/UC/BP/II.3.

19 UMOJA. Background Papers. Learning From Our Past. 1987/UC/BP/II.4.

20 UMOJA. Background Papers. Learning From Our Past. 1987/UC/BP/II.5.

21 See: Durrani, Naila (1987).

22 UMOJA. Background Papers. Learning From Our Past. 1987/UC/BP/III.1

23 It was later incorporated in Durrani, Shiraz (2018): *Kenya's War of Independence Mau Mau and its Legacy of Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism, 1948-1990*. Nairobi: Vita Books.

24 UMOJA. Background Papers. Learning From Our Past. 1987/UC/BP/III.3



1. *From Kimathi to Mwakenya: Resistance in Kenya Today*. Speech delivered by the Chairperson of UMOJA on Wednesday 18 February, 1987 at Friends House, London²²
2. *Pambana: Legacy of Resistance*. An unpublished paper by Shiraz Durrani written for the UMOJA Conference.²³
3. *MWAKENYA (1987): Kenya Register of Resistance, 1986*²⁴
4. *The ODK Declaration: We Oppose the Despotism Moi-KANU Regime (1986): Stockholm: The Organisation for Democracy in Kenya (Sweden).*

To be Continued in TKS No.7

Shiraz Durrani: Trade Unions as the Motive Force for Resistance in Kenya, 1900-1950¹

Introduction

The history of Kenya is not complete without the history of trade unions, which made it clear that Kenya was a class-divided country — a fact that colonialism and imperialism wanted to hide by creating an impression of a race-divided country. The trade union movement, led by Makhan Singh, Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai and others, showed the clear division between the interests of the working class and those of the foreign corporations and white settlers under capitalism. The trade union movement showed that the interests of workers and peasants could only be safeguarded by an active struggle in the political as well as in the economic front. Focusing on only one of these was not likely to succeed in national or class fields. Thus, the trade union movement carried on its political struggle into the Mau Mau movement as well as in other aspects of national struggles while retaining the industrial struggles as its main front.

The Early Years

Resistance by working people of Kenya to European colonialism and imperialism had been continuous from the earliest days of their invasion of Kenya, first from Portugal, later from Britain. After the Berlin Conference of 1886, British colonialism became the main agent of capitalism and imperialism in Kenya. In the early years, resistance was led by almost every nationality in every part of the country.

It was the construction of the railways that can be seen as the development of a working class and working class consciousness in Kenya. Singh (1969, 2) explains the start of the capitalist system:

With the advent of British imperialist colonial rule, both the slave-system of the coast and the voluntary labour system of the free African tribal territories were replaced by a system of forced wage-labour. Under this system the slaves of the slave-owner and the free tribesmen all became forced labourers. They were first deprived of land and then compelled to work under horrible conditions for a meagre wage for a settler or

another employer. Slave economy and free tribal subsistence-economy were both replaced by colonial capitalist economy.

The system of forced labour came into existence. It met with resistance right from the beginning.

Working class consciousness and class struggle against capitalism and imperialism came with the construction of the railways. Among the earliest strikes was the one in 1900 which started in Mombasa and then spread along the railway line. The strike was by European sub-ordinate staff, Asian and African workers. Among early strikes were the following:

- 1902: 50 African police constable on strike in Mombasa.
- 1908: strike by African workers at a government farm in Mazeras and by railway workers.
- 1912: Strike by African boat workers in Mombasa.
- 1914: Indian railway and public works department workers on strike against Poll Tax. The strike lasted a week and ended with assurance that their demands would be considered, but three workers' leaders were deported.

Early trade unions in 1914 included a number of Indian Trade Unions in Mombasa and Nairobi. Besides political organisations, there were some workers' associations as well. These included Indian Civil Servants Association (1917), Railway Indian Staff Association, the Kenya African Civil Servants Association, the Railway African Staff Association. 'Artisans and labourers were not allowed to join the staff or civil servants associations', says Makhan Singh (1969, 40) as he continues: 'It was thought that with their joining, the associations would become "trade unions", which in case of necessity could back their demands with strikes'. The colonialists understood class contradictions perfectly!

Workers' activities kept increasing over the years,

¹ A brief history compiled from Makhan Singh (1969) and other sources.

with a General Strike in 1922. The Government used the KAR (Kenya African Rifles) troops with armoured cars and machine guns in order to break the strike. The troops fired on the unarmed people at the demonstration for the release of Harry Thuku, leader of the East African Association, and 150 people were killed. Singh (1969, 16) sees the General Strike as an important milestone in the working class' history of Kenya:

Thus, on that historic day the tree of Uhuru was watered by the blood of our martyrs. They were martyrs of Kenya's national movement and trade union movement. The fight for Kenya's independence and for workers' rights began in great earnest with modern methods. And there took place the first General Strike of African workers in East African territories for political and economic demands.



Workers' demonstration at the Nairobi Police Lines on March 16, 1922 to demand the release of Harry Thuku.
Credit: EAPH, Makhan Singh, 1969, pp. 76-77.

A new chapter in the history of Kenya had begun.

During this period, African associations like East African Association — later changed to Kikuyu Central Association — and the Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association 'acted as general workers' unions in addition to acting as political and social organisations' (Singh, 1969, 40). These regional associations, rather than national ones, were formed as the Government refused to allow national bodies to exist.

1931 was an important year in the trade union history of Kenya. A mass meeting of about 1,000 artisans, masons, workmen and labourers was held in Mombasa in February in response to falling

wages, lengthening working hours and deteriorating conditions of employment' (Singh, 1969, 41). The meeting decided to form the Trade Union Committee of Mombasa. Among its demands was an eight-hour workday. However, the Committee functioned only for a few months. An interesting development was a successful strike by workers of the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours, organised without a trade union. The strikers 'had used canteens, clubs and occasions of ngomas (dances) for holding meetings in connection with the strike. This method of using social occasions for discussing workers' grievances and taking decisions was at the time prevalent throughout Kenya and other East African territories', says Makhan Singh (1969, 46).

Another attempt to form a trade union was made in Nairobi in the same year (1931) when the Workers' Protective Society of Kenya was formed. However, an important development was the decision by the newly formed Indian Trade Union that the union would be open to non-railway workers, creating the possibility of a broader organisation. The union was formed at a mass meeting of workers in December 1934 in Nairobi. The union changed its name later the same year to Kenya Indian Labour Trade Union. Singh (1969, 47) highlights one of the problems facing the trade union movement at that time, but it has relevance today as well:

The basic difficulty was the usual one. There was no team of workers who, after having been elected officials of the union, were prepared to devote their time regularly and fearlessly to making the union function in a spirit of co-operation, unity, sacrifice and service.

Singh explains some of the difficulties facing all the unions:

The reasons for the lack of such a team were not hard to find. The trade union functionaries from the very beginning had to face the general hostility of employers and the colonial rulers. The threat of victimisation by employers and/or deportation by the government was always there. Moreover, there was no trade union legislation. The nature of the existing labour legislation was such that there could only be discouragement for the formation of trade unions. The migratory character of workers made the continuity of a union nearly impossible. Industry was undeveloped: there was none worth

the name except the railway. This made the employment of a worker generally short-lived, so that he was compelled to go from job to job, workshop to workshop, town to town. All these factors equally affected the trade unionists. So, it was no wonder that the Kenya Indian Labour Trade Union was in the same quandary as some of its predecessors.

A strike by African fishermen at Kisumu took place in February 1935. 'The solidarity and the united struggle of the fishermen compelled the employers to increase their remunerations' (Singh, 1969, 47-48). Their achievement had lessons for the Kenya Indian Labour Trade Union, as Singh explains:

In view of the common interests of workers in Kenya, there was no solution to the difficulties of the Kenya Indian Labour Trade Union as long as the Indian and African workers pursued their aims separately. The solution lay in it becoming a non-racial trade union to harness and mobilise the energies and fighting spirit of the African, Indian and other workers of Kenya through a united trade union organisation. And adoption of this policy was soon to bring the incipient trade union movement out of its organisational and other difficulties.

So ends Phase One of the development of trade unions in Kenya.

Kenya Indian Labour TU becomes Labour Trade Union of Kenya (1935)

The change of name and the scope of the Kenya Indian Labour Trade Union helped to resolve some of the problems facing the union. However, an important hurdle remained, the one mentioned by Makhan Singh above — a 'lack of workers who were prepared to devote their time regularly and fearlessly to making the union function in a spirit of co-operation, unity, sacrifice and service'. The railway artisans then asked Makhan Singh to help the union. He accepted and worked without any remuneration. From that time, the union got new life under the leadership of Makhan Singh. In April 1935, the union was renamed Labour Trade Union of Kenya; its membership was now open to all workers, 'irrespective of race, race, religion, caste, creed, colour or tribe'. The union 'was the only body in East Africa that could struggle for the demands of workers', as stated by the union

communique. Union membership reached 480 by June 1935, half from railways. The first aim of the union was to 'organise the workers of Kenya on a class basis'. (Singh, 1969, 51).

While the union was a general workers' body, it also aimed to be a base of organising workers according to industries and uniting all the unions in a central organisation of trade unions. Among its early activities was the effort to address the problem of long working hours. It was decided at a mass meeting of workers in August 1935 to struggle for an eight-hour workday. In the meantime, the union helped the formation of the Print Workers Union with Makhan Singh as Secretary. The Second AGM of the LTUK fixed October 1, 1936 as the date for the implementation of the eight-hour workday. The principled stand of the union, together with the steadfast support of members, forced employers to accede to the demand. The success showed that trade unions could be a powerful tool for worker rights. Makhan Singh (1969, 54-55) reflects on the campaign:

...with the increasing tempo of the campaign and seeing the increasing unity and strength of the workers, who were ready to go on strike at the call of the union, all employers agreed to the demand ... The campaign was completely successful. This was the first time that African workers saw the union in action ... The effect of the success was felt all over Kenya, and in Uganda and Tanganyika, too. The membership of the union went up to more than 1,000.

The months that followed saw a number of strikes all over the country:

- October-November 1936: three strikes took place, two at the works of two building contractors: both were successful. The third one was in the Public Works Department, which was also successful.
- October 1936: Strike by 800 African workers employed in a sugar estate near Nairobi.
- December 1936: Another strike of the lake fishermen in Asembo Bay. Here also, the unity and solidarity of the fishermen were so strong that the employers had to agree to workers' demands.

Following the success of the campaign for an eight-hour workday, the union decided at a mass meeting

of workers on December 20, 1936 to demand wage increases of 25 per cent from April 1, 1937 from Indian employers. The demand became popular in Kenya as well as in Uganda and Tanganyika. The union decided to change its name to Labour Trade Union of East Africa, given the support it had in all three countries. A strike in support for the wage increase was called on April 1, 1937. Makhan Singh (1969,60) explains the campaign:

It was a complete strike. A strike committee was formed. Picketing was organised. A free kitchen was started, where strikers and unemployed could have their food.

By April 11, all employers accepted the union's demands. It next turned its attention to European builders. After the longest strike in Kenya's history lasting 62 days, the European employers agreed to wage increases of between 15 and 22 per cent, an eight-hour workday and reinstatement of all strikers.

Facing increasing militancy from workers, the Government introduced the Trade Unions Ordinance in 1937 which provided 'legal protection for registered unions and for peaceful picketing during strikes'. It was also meant to control militancy in unions. The Labour Trade Union of East Africa (LTUEA) was registered under the new legislation in September 1937. 'Trade Unionism in Kenya had come to stay', says Makhan Singh (1969, 65).

An indication of the future direction of trade unionism in linking economic with political demands is given by the resolution of the third annual conference of LTUEA in July 1939. The conference was attended by 'thousands of African and Asian workers' (Singh, 1969, 80) indicating the growing strength of the trade union movement among African and Asian workers. The Conference received messages of greetings from the British Trade Union Congress, the Colonial Information Bulletin, London and the Chemical Workers Union in Johannesburg. These international links were most likely established by Makhan Singh. The Conference passed the following resolution (Singh, 1969, 82) indicating the unionists' awareness and interest in international working class and political struggles:

The conference expressed "its deepest sympathy and heartiest solidarity with the people of India, China, Palestine and Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in their

struggle for freedom and human rights, and also with the workers of West Indies and West Africa in their struggle for better conditions."

The Conference then set out its demands for the working class in East Africa:

- (a) Freedom of speech;
- (b) Freedom of meeting and procession;
- (c) Freedom of press;
- (d) Freedom of movement;
- (e) Freedom of organisation.

Singh (1969, 62) sets out the importance of the decisions of the LTUEA Conference:

The real significance (of the decisions and resolutions) lay in the fact that they had resulted from the joint deliberations of African and Asian workers for the first time in East Africa. The workers' unity demonstrated at the conference had an immediate effect upon the African workers' struggle, especially in the railways and amongst other workers in Mombasa. There the chain of struggles started by the African railway apprentices' strike was continuing and was soon to develop into the Mombasa African Workers' General Strike of 1939 ... Trade unionism in Kenya was forging ahead.

These experiences of strikes and worker struggles influenced events over many years.

Mombasa General Strike, 1939

Workers in Mombasa got more militant and started organising strikes in a number of industries. 'In July and August 1939, there was a series of African workers' strikes in Mombasa, popularly known as the Mombasa African Workers' Strike of 1939', says Singh (1969, 83). The strike led to the grievances of workers being openly aired with some progress achieved in addressing them, for example, housing and housing allowance began to be paid, some wage increases were achieved and the need for 'organisation of trade unions began to be felt ... the trade union movement in Kenya was now moving forward at great speed (Singh, 1969,94).

The General Strike of 1950

Union militancy continued until May 1950 when Fred Kubai and Makhan Singh were arrested on a charge

² All the page references in the following section are from Singh (1969).

of being officials of ‘an unregistered trade union’, the EATUC’. The records of the Union were removed by the CID and their offices were closed (pp. 268-9). Members of the Central Council of EATUC discussed the arrests and concluded that the Government’s action in arresting EATUC leaders was ‘a serious attack on Kenya’s trade union movement and that it must be resisted’ (p.270). The meeting decided to call a general strike starting on May 16,1950 for the following economic and political demands:

1. Release of Makhan Singh, Fred Kubai and Chege Kibachia.
2. A minimum wage of Sh100/-.
3. Abolition of the municipal by-laws regarding taxi drivers.
4. We do not want workers arrested at night in their houses.
5. We want freedom for all workers and freedom of East African territories.

Frightened by the planned strikes, the Government rushed through new legislation making strikes in essential services illegal, hoping to control the strike. In addition, it arrested Chege Kiburu, the Acting President of EATUC and issued a warrant of arrest for Mwangi Macharia, the acting General Secretary of the union. These actions had no effect on the union and workers. By the following morning, ‘the general strike was in full force in Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa and some other parts of Kenya’ (p. 272). The strike demonstrated the solidarity with workers from peasants and other working people, as Singh (1969, p. 272) shows:

The sympathy and solidarity of the people was so great that food (maize, potatoes, sweet potatoes and sugar cane) began to be donated in the areas adjoining Nairobi and other towns for the strikers and their families. The donations continued on a very large scale throughout the strike.

It was this solidarity that was the strength of workers, which enabled them to take strike action. The workers also created symbols of the strike to strengthen their resolve to continue the strike. Again, Singh, (1969, 272) explains:

The same day (17 May, 1950) a bonfire was lit on the left bank of Nairobi River in the valley of Pumwani and Shauri Moyo, Nairobi. The fire was fed by trunks and branches of trees in the area as well as from nearby areas. The fire expressed the fighting spirit of the strikers as well as of the

people of Kenya for freedom and independence. “MOTO MOTO” became the slogan everywhere. The fire was also the sign of the continuation of the strike. Whether the services were "essential" or "non-essential" the attitude of the strikers was of defiance of the colonial authority.

The significance of the fire (‘Moto-Moto’) was that ‘the fire should be kept burning as long as the strike continued’ (quoting Assistant Superintendent Henderson, E.A. Standard, 23-05,1950, as quoted in Singh (1969, 276).



Credit: ILRIG (1989)

The strikes continued nationwide. By May 18, 1950 there were general strikes in Kisumu, Kakamega, Kisii, Mombasa, Thika, Nyeri and Nanyuki, among other places. The strikes spread further over the following few days: 750 African railway employees in the central workshops, 1,000 workers, including from Bata Shoe Factory, 60 African employees at Eastleigh airport, and workers at ‘various war department establishments’. These strikes were in addition to those taking place through the country

in which ‘thousands were participating since the beginning of the general strike’ (p.275). The authorities could do nothing to stop the strikes and so began intimidating workers with armed forces and arresting workers. But this did not stop the strikes.



The picture shows armoured cars parading the streets of Nairobi during the general strike of 1950, when the Kenya Government used tear gas, baton charges, Auster “spotter” aircraft, R.A.F. planes, Bren-gun carriers, armoured cars and police in order to break the strike and destroy the East African Trade Union Congress.

Picture and caption from WFTU (1952).

Within 9 days, by May 24, more than a 100,000 workers had taken strike action all over the country. The union decided to end the strike on May 25 as ‘sufficient protest and demonstration had taken place’ but decided to carry on the struggle by all possible means. It was ‘a great general strike in the history of the Kenya trade union movement as well as the national movement’, says Singh (p. 277). However, not all the strikes ended. The one by the Typographical Union of Kenya went on for 28 days and ended on June 12, 1950 with an agreement which gave the workers a 10 per cent increase in salaries, regular annual increments, 14-day annual leave and the same amount of sick leave, termination notice of one month, equal pay for equal work, among other improvements in working conditions. Similarly, the workers of the Tailors and Garments Workers Union saw increased wages as a result of their strikes.

As for the general strike, it led to an increase in the minimum wage in all main towns from August 1, 1950. Singh (287) sums up the achievement of the workers in strikes and other actions:

The two agreements and the increased minimum wages were a great victory for the trade union movement. They reflected the tremendous unity, awakening and upsurge of workers and other peoples of Kenya, generated by the trade unions and the East African Trade Unions Congress and by the general strike, which had also greatly advanced the freedom struggle in Kenya and other East African territories.

The key point to note is that the struggle for workers and their trade unions were not only for increased wages and better working conditions. They realised that their economic interests could be safeguarded and advanced only if the struggle against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism were waged simultaneously. It is this linkage that was to play a crucial part in Kenya’s war of independence and in Mau Mau.

Mau Mau and Trade Unions

An important aspect of people’s resistance that imperialism seeks to hide is the role of trade unions in the fight for the liberation of workers from capitalist exploitation. What is often ignored or forgotten is the key role that the trade unions played in the war of independence. Working class activism helped build anti-imperialist solidarity and gave an ideological framework that eventually became the economic and political demands of independence. The working class came from all parts of the country and from all nationalities, from all genders and their participation in the struggles made this a national struggle. It suited colonialism and imperialism, as part of the divide and rule policy, to ignore that the working class had anything to do with the war of independence. And it is no surprise that Kenyan comprador governments after independence, reflecting imperialist interests, have similarly ignored the role of trade unions. Trade unions were early targets of the Kenyatta government. Indeed, the concept of class is all but absent from imperialist interpretation of colonial history. This then leads to a misrepresentation of the aims and methods used by the liberation forces.

The trade union involvement in the struggle for independence and in Mau Mau has been covered by a number of titles listed in the References & Bibliography section.

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Remembering Pio Gama Pinto

Zahid Rajan & Zarina Patel: Celebrating the Life and Work of Pio Gama Pinto

An Exhibition at the Nairobi National Gallery, March-June 2023



In 2005, AwaaZ Magazine featured Pio Gama Pinto as its cover story titled 'Independent Kenya's First Martyr'. The democratic space which evolved after the 2002 non-violent overthrow of the Moi dictatorship made it possible for the first time since Pinto's assassination in 1965 to publish writings on Pinto without them being considered 'seditious'. The issue was received with great enthusiasm and inspired other historians and academicians to start researching and writing about this remarkable patriot who paid the ultimate price for his belief and activism around social justice, political pluralism and democracy for the majority. Other writings since then have been:

- Pio Gama Pinto -- Patriot for Social Justice by Pheroze Nowrojee published by Sasa Sema Publications in 2007.
- Pio Gama Pinto -- An Unsung Hero, anthology edited by Shiraz Durrani, published by Vita Books in 2018.
- 'Kenyan Organic Intellectuals Reflect on the Legacy of Pio Gama Pinto', published by Daraja Press in 2022.
- A 7-part YouTube podcast in Sheng titled 'Until Everyone is Free' in 2022.
-

Since 2002, there have been annual graveside commemorations of Pinto's death by social justice groups and individuals who have sought to reclaim our Kenyan patriots who have been ignored and

sidelined by post-colonial governments in Kenya. In 2015, on the fiftieth anniversary of Pinto's death, a commemoration was hosted by the Kenyan Asian Forum (KAF) at the Mazingira Institute supported by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC).

A few years ago the Asian African Heritage Trust, in partnership with the Nairobi County government, memorialised Pinto by naming a road after him. It adjoins the present day Sarit Centre – a corner of this plot is the site of the house Pinto and his family lived in on the day of his assassination in February 1965. There have also been initiatives to rehabilitate Pinto's grave at City Park where he is buried next to his father. The Murumbi Peace Museum is on its outskirts, honouring Murumbi's wish to be buried close to his friend, Pinto; but the security situation in the area has been a challenge. The aim is to rehabilitate the space so that it would become a site to commemorate two of Kenya's most revered heroes. At the launch of the Pinto Exhibition, the AwaaZ editors appealed to the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) for assistance in securing the space and the request was well received.

In 2022, The SAMOSA Festival, the cultural arm of AwaaZ Magazine, engaged NMK and started a conversation with Betty Karanja, Senior Curator at the NMK Nairobi Gallery, about the possibility of hosting a Pio Gama Pinto Exhibition. By late November/early December 2022, an agreement was reached to mount the exhibition from March to May 2023. It was of

1 Durrani, Shiraz (Forthcoming): Guerrilla Incursions into the Capitalist Mindset: Essays with Focus on Kenya, 1979-2023. This is the third of a series of articles on the underground movements for socialism in Kenya in the period 1970-1990s. The others are:

'Lessons from the Underground: Kenya's December Twelve Movement linked theory with practice in the 1970s'. Communist Review. 105. Autumn 2022, pp. 2-11.

'MWAKENYA Questions from the Sunday Nation'. Included in Guerrilla Incursions into the Capitalist Mindset: Essays with Focus on Kenya, 1979-2023.

particular interest to the Gallery because of the close relationship between Pio Gama Pinto and Joseph Murumbi whose renowned Collection of African Art is held and exhibited at the Gallery.

Suddenly, the pressure was on. With less than three months to go, organisers at the SAMOSA Festival were faced with a herculean task. We spent the three months fundraising, researching and reading all the available material, collecting photographs, designing the panels, contacting the family members and other relevant sources, organising publicity, etc.

The exhibition was launched on March 5, 2023. It was attended by about 200 people and was graced by the NMK Director for Monuments and Antiquities, Dr Manthi Manthi, Shujaa Gitu wa Kahengeri of the Mau Mau War Veterans Association, and Mzalendo Wanjira Wanjiru of the Mathare Social Justice Centre who performed the opening ceremony. The exhibition marks the first time a public conversation is being held by Kenyans on the assassination of this much-revered son of the country. This was 58 years after that sad event. We hope it will go some way

in healing the trauma the family and compatriots of Pio Gama Pinto have endured since 1965 and open an avenue for the resolution of independent Kenya's saga of political assassinations.

A special mention must be made of the Kenya Human Rights Commission, which supported the exhibition as part of a memorialization project in its 25th Anniversary celebrations. A website on Pio Gama Pinto will be launched in the near future.

There has been a great interest in the exhibition, which to date has been visited by at least 600 people from a cross-section of the society. One most heartening visitor was a young boy, David Mwangi, from Kibera, who spent three hours viewing the Pinto Exhibition. Plans are under way to take the exhibition to Kisumu, Migori, Bondo, Siaya and Mombasa. Some other organisations within Nairobi are also interested in hosting the exhibition.

Zahid Rajan and Zarina Patel
info@samosafestival.com

Photos from the Pio Gama Pinto Exhibition

Children's Session at the Pio Gama Pinto Exhibition





PIO GAMA PINTO

1927 - 1965

THE FUNERAL

- SHOCK, UTTER DISBELIEF AND ANGER GRIPPED THE COUNTRY.
• 'WHAT HAVE YOU PEOPLE DONE TO PINTO?' LEGISLATOR ODUYA OPRONG CONFRONTED TOM MBOYA.
• 'NO, NO, NO! KENYATTA MUST EXPLAIN! HE MUST EXPLAIN!' SHOUTED ACHIENG ONEKO.
• 'HOW COULD SUCH A THING EVER HAPPEN IN OUR COUNTRY?' PLEADED MINISTER GIKONYO KIANO
• JOSEPH MURUMBI, KENYA'S FOREIGN MINISTER, JUST SOBBED AND SOBBED.

OGINGA ODINGA, THE VICE-PRESIDENT, MOVED PARLIAMENT TO TEARS AS HE PROPOSED A ONE-WEEK ADJOURNMENT.

27 FEBRUARY 1965: PINTO WAS LAID TO REST BESIDE HIS FATHER IN THE CITY PARK CEMETERY. A HUGE NUMBER OF MOURNERS FROM KENYA (VICE-PRESIDENT ODINGA), TANZANIA (FOREIGN MINISTER OSCAR KAMBONA), UGANDA, ZAMBIA (FOREIGN MINISTER SIMON KAPWPWE), MOZAMBIQUE (DR EDUARDO MONDLANE) AND INDIA ATTENDED. AS DID MAKHAN SINGH, FOUNDER OF KENYA'S TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.



PHOTO: B. LINDA/MAGAZINE



PHOTO: M. K. SHARMA/REUTERS



PHOTO: J. SHARMA/REUTERS



PHOTO: J. SHARMA/REUTERS

In Ever Loving Memory Of



PIO GAMA PINTO

Born: 22.02.1927

Age: 38 years

PRAYER: Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, And let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace - Amen.

The funeral continued.

PIO GAMA PINTO

1927 - 1965

THE FAMILY SPEAKS

Specialist Report /

Pinto's wife speaks out 40 years on widow of celebrated freedom fighter asks why he was killed

By HILDEBRAND GESA

'I can't tell you the full story of his death... I was just told to keep it quiet...'

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Pio Gama Pinto's widow...

PHOTO: J. SHARMA/REUTERS

UNRAVIL STRUGGLE

Nationalist who inspired others even in detention camps

Pio Gama Pinto was a nationalist... He inspired others even in detention camps...

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Pio Gama Pinto was a nationalist... He inspired others even in detention camps...

Pio Gama Pinto was a nationalist... He inspired others even in detention camps...



PIO GAMA PINTO

1927 - 1965

REFLECTIONS OF KENYA'S ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS

ESTHER WAIGUMO NJOKI:

THEY LIVED FOR OTHERS AND GENERATIONS TO COME AND THE BALL IS IN OUR COURT TO ENSURE THAT WE CARRY THIS SAME SPIRIT UNTIL THE END. LONG LIVE THE UNDYING SPIRIT OF PIO GAMA PINTO!

LENA ANYUOLO:

BECAUSE NOTHING HAS CHANGED FIFTY-EIGHT YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE, IT IS STILL UPON US TO AGITATE FOR BETTER TREATMENT OF PRISONERS, MOST OF WHOM ARE REMAND DETAINEES. WE NEED TO AGITATE FOR FASTER HEARING AND SENTENCING, ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF JUSTICE THAT ARE NOT PUNITIVE, AND EVENTUALLY, AS WE SET UP SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST SOCIETIES - ABOLITION OF PRISONS.

GACHEKE GACHIHI:

THE SPARK THAT PIO GAMA PINTO BORE TODAY INSPIRES A NEW GENERATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISTS SUCH AS MATHARE SOCIAL JUSTICE CENTRE, WHICH CONTINUES WITH THE STRUGGLE OF MAU MAU AND OF THE AMBITIONS OF PIO GAMA PINTO.

KINUTHIA NDUNG'U:

THE WORKERS AND YOUTHS OF TODAY MUST QUESTION THE DIRECTION THE COUNTRY HAS TAKEN SINCE INDEPENDENCE AND USE THE GREAT HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES TO ADVANCE THE WORKING PEOPLE'S VISION OF SOCIALISM.

MINOO KYAA:

WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT UHURU MUST TRULY MEAN FREEDOM FOR THE PEOPLE TO BE FREE OF EXPLOITATION AND POVERTY. UHURU MUST BE UHURU FOR THE MASSES.

GATHANGA NDUNG'U:

THE QUALITY OF LIFE IS NOT MEASURED BY THE NUMBER OF YEARS ONE LIVES BUT THE IMPACT ONE MAKES. HIS POLITICAL LIFE WAS SHORT SPANNING ABOUT 17 YEARS YET WAS VERY IMPACTFUL; AND WE CONTINUE TO ENJOY SOME OF HIS FRUITS TILL THIS DAY.

EZRA OTIENA:

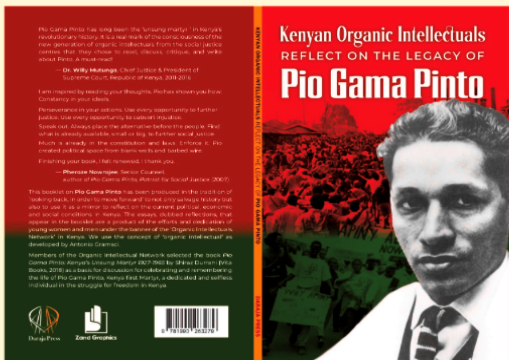
HIS DEEP CONCERN ABOUT ORDINARY PEOPLE MADE HIM ENVISION A SOCIETY WHERE A HUMAN BEING COULD NOT BE PENALIZED FOR BEING UNDERPRIVILEGED.

ANTONY ADOYO:

MY FIRST VISIT TO HIS GRAVE SITE WAS HEART BREAKING BECAUSE FOR A CADRE WHO PLAYED AN INSTRUMENTAL ROLE IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE HIS MEMORY AND GRAVE HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED.

MZALENDU WANJIRA:

OFTENTIMES I WONDER TO MYSELF, WHAT WOULD THE PRESENT KENYA LOOK LIKE HAD PINTO'S IDEAS AND DREAMS FOR KENYA MATERIALIZED? THAT IMAGE, OF A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, WITH EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, FUELS MY PATRIOTISM ALWAYS.



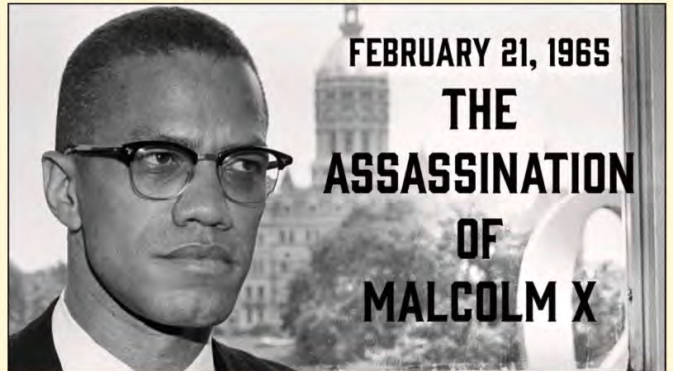
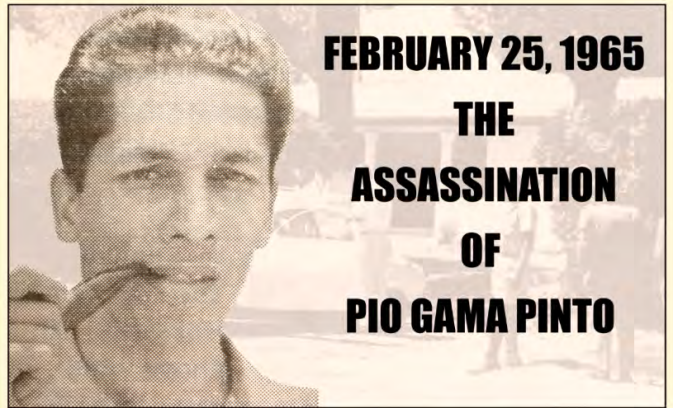
SOCIALIST AND FREEDOM FIGHTER

PIO GAMA PINTO

1927 - 1965



MALCOLM X AND PIO GAMA PINTO



TWO REVOLUTIONARIES: PIO GAMA PINTO AND MALCOLM X



SOCIALIST AND FREEDOM FIGHTER

Shiraz Durani: Pio Gama Pinto: Legacy of Resistance in Kenya (PowerPoint



Wanjiru Wanjira
Sunday at 17:07 · 🌐

Today was a great day for Mathare Social Justice Centre - MSJC kids book club. We learnt about Pinto last Saturday so Leo we went to pay him homage. We visited his grave and sang wimbo wa mapambano together. Long live the spirit of Pio Gama Pinto long live. 🇰🇪

(24)



- 31-03-1927: Born in Nairobi
- 1954-59: Imprisoned by Britain
- 24-02-1965: Assassinated



Credit: Gerard Motondi

Key Dates - pre independence

- Born in Nairobi on March 31 1927
- 1938: To India for education - active in Goa's liberation
- 1949: Returned to Kenya, active in trade unions
- 1952: Editor, Daily Chronicle
- 1954: Married Emma
- 1954-57: Arrest & imprisoned on Manda Island
- 1958-59: Restricted at Kabernet
- 1960: Started *Sauti ya Kanu*, *Sauti ya Mwafrica*, *Pan African & Nyanza Times* (Pan African Press)

Pinto targeted by imperialism because he was

- Freedom Fighter
- Anti-colonialist
- Socialist
- Champion of working class & peasants
- Internationalist
- Mau Mau
- Anti-imperialist
- Turned his ideas into action

Pinto was murdered because he stood in the way of neo-colonialism; he was undoubtedly removed by those who wish to go on exploiting, misusing and oppressing Africa and the Africans. Pinto fought and fell in battle (2)

What did he do? Pinto and Mau Mau

Pio's work under the Central Committee of Mau Mau was especially important during the Emergency. The Committee needed money, food and arms for the fighters. Most of the leaders were in prison, and under the watchful eye of the police. Despite these difficult conditions, money was collected from supporters who could only give ten cents or at most a fifty-cent coin. These were carefully collected in sacks and taken to certain trusted persons. Pio was one of these. He would then take the money to wherever he was directed by the Central Committee. (11)

Pinto and Mau Mau [3]

- Pinto had been at the forefront of the formation of Mau Mau Freedom movement. Secretly, he had acquired a cache of arms for 1,500 youth who had joined freedom fighters in Mount Kenya forests ⁽¹⁴⁾
- Pinto wrote: ‘constitutional, non-violent methods of fighting for one’s rights was absolutely futile in dealing with the Settler-Colonial administration. ORGANISED VIOLENCE WAS THE ONLY ANSWER TO SUCH A SITUATION’ ⁽¹⁵⁾

Pinto and Trade Unions

- Pinto played a very key role in the formation of the Trade Union movement at a time when the movement was still illegal and enjoyed no legal status. Together with Makhan Singh, Chege Kibachia, Fred Kubai and Aggrey Minya, Pinto can never be forgotten when the History of Trade Union movement is being discussed
- ‘Pinto was detained during the Emergency because of his nationalistic support for the masses and because of the role he played in the formation of the anti-imperialist East African Trade Union Congress, later banned’ -Denis Akumu ⁽¹⁶⁾

Pinto and the Land Issue [2]

- No assessment of Pinto would be complete without examining his role in the struggle for land
- He continued his activism on land even after independence and this was perhaps one reason for his assassination
- Peasants lost out under colonialism; they lost under the new African ruling classes. That went against everything Pinto stood for. He was not afraid to continue his campaigns on behalf of peasants and landless Kenyans into independence

When it was time

- To write political cases for people’s rights
- To form strong political parties
- To develop working class ideologies
- To face the enemy with guns
- To support victims of colonialism and imperialism
- To take political stand after independence
- To support people in other countries
- To make personal and family sacrifices
- To stand for principles and die for his country

Pinto was there



PIO GAMA PINTO

BORN 31-3-1927

ASSASSINATED 24-2-1965

SOCIALIST and FREEDOM FIGHTER

POLITICAL DETAINEE 1954-1959

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
1963 -1965**

*"If He Has Been Extinguished Yet There Arise A
Thousand Beacons From The Spark He Bore."*



3:46 pm



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Yours sincerely,
P. G. Pinto
(P.G. Pinto)



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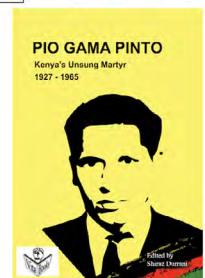
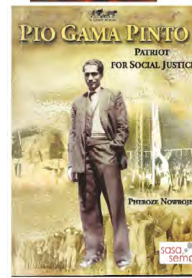
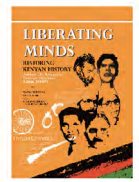
until every one is free

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Less than two years after gaining independence, Kenya began killing its own freedom fighters.

One of the first political assassinations in the history of independent Kenya was in 1965. They killed a man who knew too much.

More information on Pinto



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Remembering Pio Gama Pinto



“The sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of Kenya's freedom fighters must be honoured by the effective implementation of the policy - a democratic, African, socialist state in which the people have the right to be free from economic exploitation and the right to social equality. Kenya's uhuru must not be transformed into freedom to exploit, or freedom to be hungry and live in ignorance. Uhuru must be uhuru for the masses - uhuru from exploitation, from ignorance, disease and poverty.”

- Pinto (1963).

9

Pio Gama Pinto - Timeline of References

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- Until Everyone is Free* (2021) Podcast in Sheng in 7 parts. Available at: <https://untileverypod.com/>
- Mwangi, Nicholas and Lewis Maghanga Njuguna (2021?): *Kenya Organic Intellectuals Reflect on the Legacy of Pio Gama Pinto*. Cantley, Quebec: Daraja Press.
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Poems

Dorphan Mutuma

Fahamu

Matendo ya wengi yamefanya naning'inia kwa imani
Taarifa humu zaninyima hamu maishani
Ila ujasiri wako wanipa tabasamu
Jitihada zako za utu zanipa matumaini na binadamu

Fahamu
Udhabiti wako ndio nguzo ya msukumo wangu
Na uaminifu wako ni chanzo cha raha kwangu

FAHAMU!

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English translation (by the author)

RECOGNISE

Recognise
The acts of most have resulted in the waning of my faith
Daily news are a source of distress in my life
But your courage gives me cause to smile
Your efforts towards mankind reassure my hope for
humanity.

Recognise
Your resilience anchors my resolve
And your belief reawakens my joy.

RECOGNISE!

SUBVERSIVE DESIRES

Give me Muthoni Nyanjiru's heart
and Kimathi Waciuri's conviction
Bantu Steve Biko's clarity
and Thomas Sankara's righteousness
Mekatilili Wa Menza's resolve
and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's vision
Vuyisile Mini's songs
and Fela Anikulapo Kuti's beats
Give me Ken Saro-Wiwa's kind
and Wangari Maathai's mind
And I promise
liberation in Africa will not be so hard to find.

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The Killer Cops of Kenya

Here they come
The Killer Cops of Kenya

Here a bang
There a broken limb
Ever ready with the gun
The Killer Cops of Kenya

See them everywhere
Where young people are
But never in Muthaiga
The Clever Cops of Kenya

A quick trip to the mortuary
For the missing dead
They know how to hide their crime
The Clever Cops of Kenya

Nigeria up in arms
Mathere knows who maims
There is no way out
For the Killer Cops of Kenya

Not today, Not tomorrow
People's tsunami of anger
Will the day after drown
The Killer Cops of Kenya.

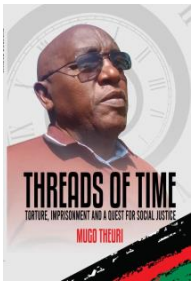
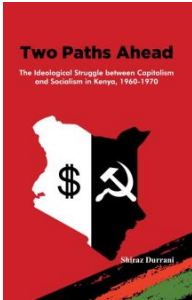
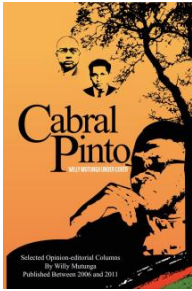
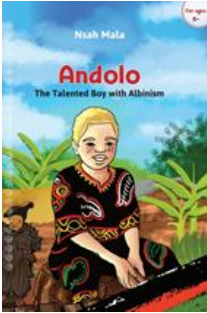
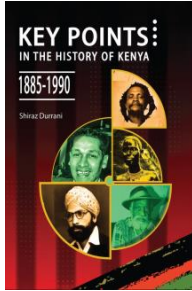
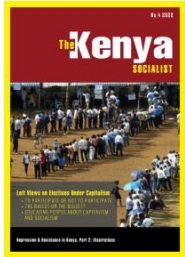
See the sign, read the wind
When we lose fear, they lose hope
What future then
For the Killer Cops of Kenya?

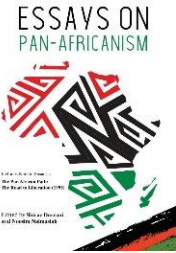
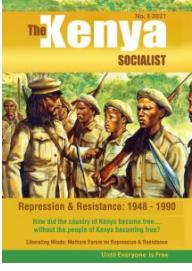
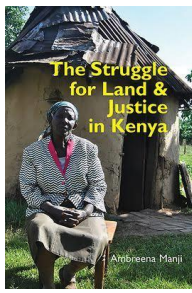
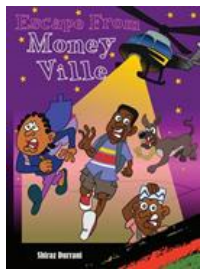
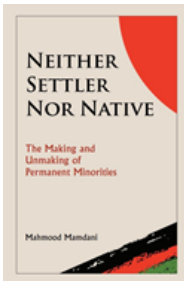
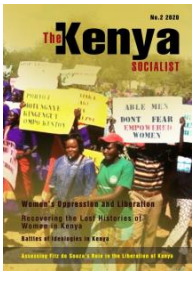
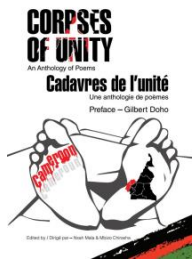
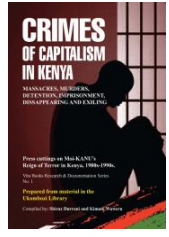
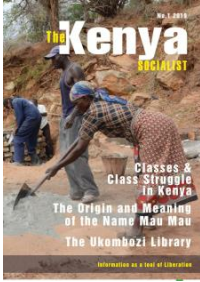
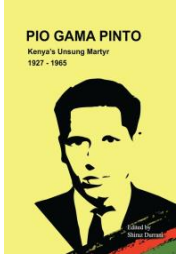
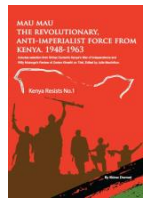
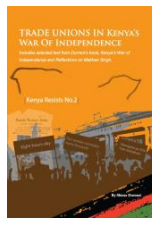
Shiraz Durrani
October 20, 2020

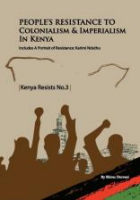
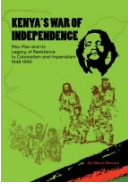

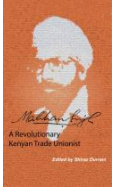
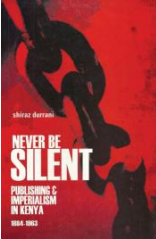
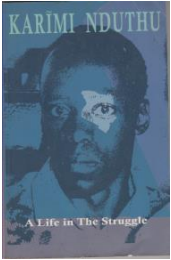
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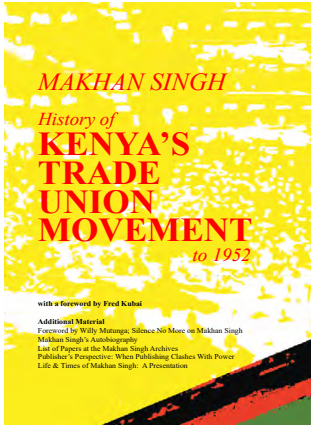
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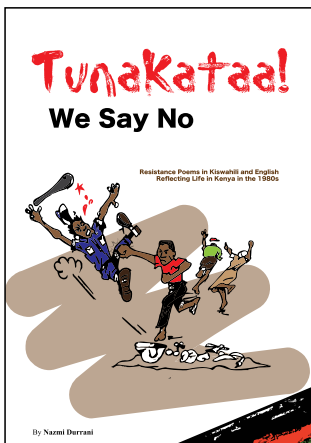
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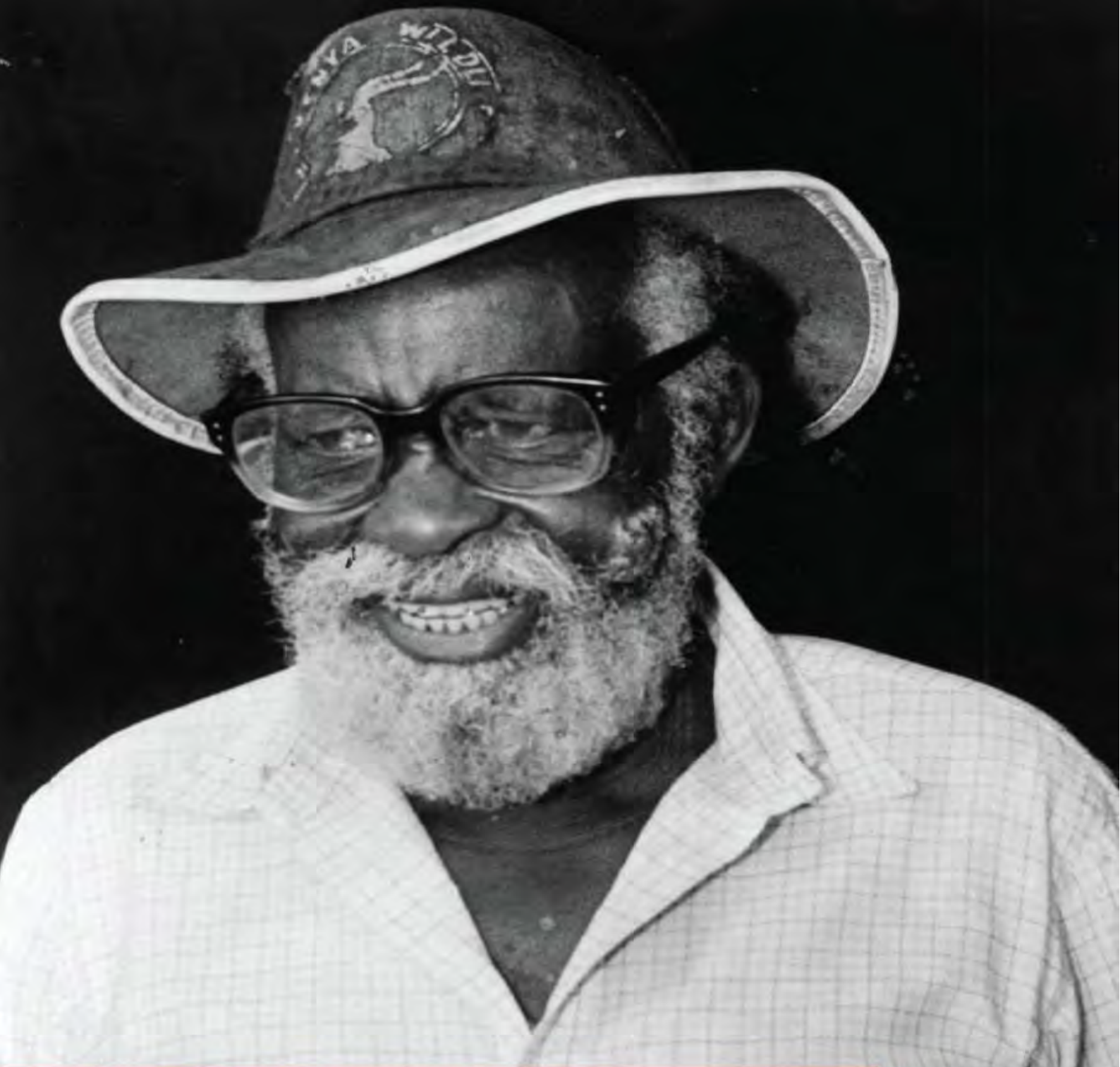
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“I hope that the new generations will draw inspiration from my story, carry on where I left off, and in the end, I hope they will succeed in areas I did not”
- Bildad Kaggia
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