



**Kenya: Repression and Resistance from Colony to Neo-Colony
1948-1990**

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Introduction: The Dialectics of Repression and Resistance

Who is the enemy?

*The enemy is imperialism, which uses its weapons
Colonialism and neo-colonialism - Nkrumah (1963)*

The above quote from Kwame Nkrumah sums up the struggle in Kenya and Africa - historical as well as current. It also provides the context and the scope of this article. Repression by imperialism and people's resistance it gives rise to, cannot be seen in isolation from each other. These opposites -- repression and resistance -- are in a cause-and-effect relationship with each other, with the process having been started by colonial repression in 1884. The struggle continued in the 1960 as African countries achieved political independence: now it was neo-colonialism that people's forces had to fight. Neo-colonialism's grip over African countries is now as entrenched as was that of the colonial powers in the earlier period. The contradiction between imperialism and people was, and is, the main feature of life for working people in Kenya and Africa. The global "cold war" between capitalism and socialism was reflected in Kenya in the contradiction between the conservatives and the radicals in KANU in the independence period. Later this developed into contradiction between the comprador ruling class and resistance movement maintaining the line of Mau Mau and seeking socialist solutions.

This contradiction needs to be seen not only in its particular manifestation in Kenya, but also in its global, universal aspect as well. History is sometimes seen in mutually exclusive country-perspectives and thus the complete picture of global repression and resistance is missed. Imperialist repression, exploitation and oppression in Kenya can only be fully understood in the context of similar repression in India or Malaysia, for example. Similarly, the resistance of the peoples of Kenya and India, among others, have much in common. Only such an overarching approach can help to understand not only the geographical aspects of repression and resistance in different countries, on the one hand, but also the historical links between events at different historical periods in any one country, on the other.

At the same time, it is necessary to understand the reasons that imperialist repression started. It was not as some imperialist's apologists have claimed to 'civilize natives' but was to acquire for free the wealth, land, resources and products of labour from the colonised and imperialist-dominated world. While military was the primary weapon against people, other, subtler, methods were also used. These included ideological, economic, cultural and social attacks that reinforced the military aspect. The key tool in imperialist arsenal was the introduction of capitalist relations in which capital was controlled by the colonial power and the losers were workers and peasants. In this way, capitalism also created class differences, class consciousness and class struggle which became an important anti-imperialist tool. It was the working class, in alliance with peasants, that formed the backbone of the Mau Mau resistance movement and also of the post-independence struggle. This resistance was thus not aimed merely at opposing capitalism and imperialism in the abstract: it was a pro-active movement to create a socialist society which would safeguard the interest of the working class and its class allies.

That is the context of repression and resistance in Kenya.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD: 1948-1963

Repression

The scope of this article is limited to the period 1948-1990. This does not imply that there was no repression or resistance before and after this period. Indeed, British colonialism had to use severe repressive measures to suppress people's resistance in Kenya. The Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya (2013) records the methods used by the invaders to suppress resistance:

The conquest of state and territory for British settlement and exploitation in Kenya was achieved through colonial violence. To force Africans into submission, the colonial administration in Kenya conducted 'punitive expeditions' in the 1890s against what they called 'recalcitrant tribes'. There were military expeditions against the Nandi in 1901, 1905, and 1906, against the Embu in 1905, against the Abagusii in 1904, 1908, and 1914, against the Kipsigis in 1905 and against the Abagishu and Kabras in 1907 ... Practically everywhere in Kenya, as was the case in the rest of Africa, the imposition of colonial rule was resisted. Such resistance inevitably provoked military retaliation from the colonial powers. Better armed and employing crack shot mercenaries, colonial powers imposed their rule by violence and/or military expeditions. This was particularly the case between 1895 and 1914; a phase of pacification of 'recalcitrant tribes' fighting for the preservation of their political, cultural and economic independence. The period was thus characterized by an unimaginable degree of human rights abuses against defenceless Africans. The military expeditions were accompanied by crimes such as theft, rape, death and destruction of property by the colonial soldiers or their associates. Such actions defy the view that the British colonialist used humane and gentle methods to impose their rule in Kenya.

This is the background to the period covered in this article. There were clear economic reasons that drove colonialism and imperialism to invade large parts of the world. Woddis (1960:1) sums up:

The history of Africa's relations with the West has been a history of robbery - robbery of African manpower, its mineral and agricultural resources, and its land. Even though direct slavery no longer exists, labour, resources and land remain the three dynamic issues over which the struggle for the future of Africa is being fought out. The form of this struggle, it is true, is a political fight for national independence; but the abolition of foreign control of labour, resources and land is the substance for which this independence is being sought.

Thus labour, resources and land were the central aspects of the contradiction between Britain and Kenyans. These formed the reason for colonial exploitation and repression, which in turn led people to resist. The demands of the people was for Land and Freedom.

The strategic importance of Kenya for Britain after World War II is summed up by Sik (1974, 21):

After World War II the importance of Kenya for the British imperialists was increasing. Having lost a whole series of strategic bases in the Near and Middle East (India, Egypt, Palestine), they found Kenya most fitted to be developed into a strategic base. To attain this aim they had to build roads and airfields, to develop agriculture and industry, and these projects needed – in addition to capital – the assistance of the settlers who aspired to independence and the more intense utilization of the cheap (and in part free) labour of African millions. ... Accordingly the post-war policy of Britain was directed towards increased economic development of the colonies, by breaking the resistance of Africans and silencing their demands, by forcing them to serve meekly the united interests of monopoly capitalists and settlers.

The control over land, labour and natural resources fueled industrial revolution in Europe at the expense of Africa. The contradiction between colonialism and the people of Kenya is well summarised by Lasky (1954: 7):

The climate of much of the territory [Kenya] is excellent for agriculture, and it is free from tropical diseases. These conditions, however, have encouraged the settlement of Europeans who have invaded the healthy areas and alienated the land formally owned and tilled by Africans. The African population must now either perish or work for starvation wages on the farms they and their parents owned for countless generations. In addition they are compelled to pay a Poll Tax to sustain the Administration which has deprived them of their land.

Thus the so-called land question was linked to other issues as well: issues around land ownership, particularly of the most productive land, the enforced movement of peasants from their land to work as cheap labour in colonial plantations and industries, as well as to government policies on taxation. The reality of land grabbing by the colonial authorities in Kenya is examined by Woddis (1960:2-3):

In Kenya, some 4,000 white farmers have been given the monopoly of 16,500 square miles of the White Highlands, which are estimated to contain no less than thirty per cent of all the good land in Kenya.

Then in July 1920, the British Government declared Kenya a “Colony”. Singh (1969, 9) explains the reasons for this:

This was aimed at ensuring that the British could deal with the land and labour of African people as they thought fit. It was to guarantee that the land taken away from the African people and given to settlers would remain settlers’ land and that the forced labour system prevailing in Kenya could be further tightened. Secondly a conspiracy began to be organised to make Kenya a “White Man’s Country” and to establish a white settlers’ government. Thus the African people were being turned from a “protected people” into a slave people.

The overall contradiction in the Kenyan society during the entire colonial period has been summed up by Singh (1969, xi-xii):

There was now a fierce struggle between two great forces. On the one hand were the British rulers, helped by settlers and other employers. They were determined to perpetuate for ever their complete domination over the African people and exploit the human and natural resources of Kenya for the benefit of imperialism and colonial interests. On the other hand were the African and other freedom-loving people. They were bent upon resisting, attacking and defeating the imperialist colonial rule and its consequences - land robbery, forced labour, low wages, long working hours, compulsory registration system, racial segregation, colour bar, oppressive laws and such other practices. The basic contradiction was the main driving force throughout the colonial period in Kenya and has influenced the historical development in Kenya.

The struggle over land had implications for the entire economic, political and social life of people. Koinange and Oneko (1952, 10-11) examine some of these related aspects of colonial policies:

‘Colonial development’ which seeks merely to produce more food and raw material for export, without reference to African needs, will fail. Cheap colonial food that relies on cheap colonial labour is not a contribution to development. Wages are already very low ... The lives and destinies of more than five million Africans are controlled arbitrarily by 29,000 Europeans in general, and 3,000 European Settlers in particular. This arbitrary rule by a small minority raises many questions ... Believing in full democracy, we aim at a common roll for all the peoples of Kenya, to eliminate racial, religious and colour discrimination

... With these discriminations, there are others: so that in education, health, and many other aspects of life, the Africans of Kenya are placed in a position of relentless inferiority. They, alone of the inhabitants of Kenya, have to carry passes which control and restrict their freedom of movement.

The scene was thus set for violent clashes between British colonialism and the people of Kenya.

Resistance

Resistance was led by peasants from different nationalities in the early period of colonial attacks. As these were defeated by colonial bullets and atrocities, there was a need for a qualitative leap in resistance to this superior firepower. This was provided by a combination of people power, trade unions and armed resistance, each working in unison with the other. Capitalism and colonialism had consolidated class structures and the working class now joined other forces to resist colonial repression. Maxon and Ofcansky (2000, 167) explain the class basis of Kenyan history:

On the whole, those who joined the armed struggle against colonialism and European supremacy were the poor and landless, while those who were wealthy, called loyalists, supported the colonial government.

Trade Union activities, such as strikes, were then added to peasant resistance to create a new level of resistance guided by a clear ideology and a stronger organisation. Thus, the strength of working class added the missing element to confront colonialism. The three aspects of this united front against colonialism were the peasants and people's militancy, the trade unions and the armed resistance by Mau Mau.

The first aspect of this new people power was the united action of millions of people. That was the advantage that people had over the occupying colonial forces. But it was not merely a matter of numbers. It was how this numerical advantage was used in combination with other advantages such as the radical trade union movement, the working-class ideologies that supported the liberation of people and the organisational structures developed by people over many decades, Singh (1969, 4) shows how it was people's resistance that led the anti-colonial movement in Kenya:

In order to struggle against foreign occupation of the country, against seizure of African lands and against forced labour, the African people, wherever possible, resorted to armed harassing of the British authorities, attacks upon labourers building the railway, and boycott of work for settlers and other employers. All this resistance was sporadic but secretly organised. At times it used the tribal organisation with the sanction or tacit consent of a patriotic chief. At other times it was organised by secret tribal groups in spite of opposition from stooge chiefs.

Trade Unions

The introduction of capitalism in Kenya consolidated and sharpened class relations, class divisions and class consciousness and struggles. The people who had cultivated land for generations were displaced from their land and became landless "squatters" or were forced into selling their labour on lands now "owned" by settler and plantations owned by multinationals. Other people were forced from the countryside into towns and cities where they found employment in industries, domestic service or government departments. At the same time, the construction of railways and roads strengthened class consciousness among workers as they organised and struggled for better working conditions. The formation of trade unions became the defining feature of this period. The development of working class was given a boost by people taking up employment

for substance and to pay taxes such as the Hut Tax and the Poll Tax. Indeed, the colonial tax system was designed to force people to take up employment in order to provide cheap labour to capitalist institutions.

The trade union movement provided other requirements for resisting capitalism, colonialism and imperialism: a committed leadership guided, not by personal greed, but a clear ideological vision in the interest of working class. Taken as a whole, the crucial factors of leadership, ideology and organisation made the trade union movement a formidable force to combat colonialism. The trade union movement understood that the economic interests of working class could only be safeguarded if they, at the same time, safeguarded their political interests. The radical trade union movement thus became active in politics and influenced the ideological direction of the progressive forces generally but in particular in Mau Mau. Gupta (1981, 50) provides a brief overview of the trade union movement:

Labour movement — organised effort on the part of wage earners to fight for their social and economic betterment — in Kenya had manifested itself in several directions. In a short span of 40-50 years of colonial conditions, it had acquired maturity and its own structure. It had grown as a response to growing capitalist exploitative institutions in Kenya. Kenyan trade unions have been bargaining with capitalism. In the context of Kenya the settlers represented the capitalist class. The Kenyan workers have fought to raise their standards of living, to organise a struggle for democratic rights and to end the domination of European settlers.

The struggle of working class in Kenya thus included the political struggle for independence. In this, the input from South Asian Kenyans in terms of links with working class struggles from India provided valuable lessons in class struggles. Gupta (1981, 56) traces some aspects of this history and the links with India:

Ever since its origin the trade-union movement in Kenya had a sharply pronounced anti-colonial character; it developed in the struggle for national independence, for political rights and freedom. During the absence of political parties, workers' organisations were the only mass organisations representing and defending the interest of the broad masses. Struggle for the rights of the workers tended to be the struggle against the foreign capitalists who controlled the means of production.

For many years it was difficult to separate the trade-union movement from political struggle against colonialism. During the post second world war period, particularly during emergency (1952-61) many trade-union functionaries developed into prominent political leaders and later became high ranking statesmen of Kenya.

The trade union movement in Kenya had a long history of struggles. It had used its main weapon - strikes - very effectively. Among the first strikes were as early as 1900, as documented by Singh (1969). That history points to yet other factors that Britain feared: the trade unions had no room for the divisive "tribal" or regional policies instigated by Britain. Workers were spread throughout the country and the railway system helped to unite and organise the working class country-wide. Plantation and other rural workers not only provided a strong link with peasants but also cemented the urban-rural split that colonialism sought to use as yet another divisive factor against the people. It was this unity that the British feared. It was a force that could not be isolated, divided and destroyed by colonialism.

A brief survey of earlier trade union activities from Durrani, S (2018a, 89-90) provides a background to the later advances made by the working class:

1921

The Kenyan workers demonstrated their strength in 1921 by forming the first politico trade-union organization, the East African Association (EAA) under the leadership of a telephone operator, Harry Thuku. EAA organised the resistance of plantation workers to fight against the employers' proposal to reduce wages.

1930s

In the 1930s, the trade-union movement amongst the African workers took a new turn. Under the leadership of Makhan Singh, a Marxist, an Asian worker union was set up in 1934 on East African level - the Labour Trade Union of East Africa (LTUEA). Ever since the inception of LTUEA, Makhan Singh attempted to unite African and Asian workers.

1937

Various strikes led by LTUEA took place, including one for 62 days in April. A settlement was reached with employers agreeing to a wage- increase of between 15-22%, an eight-hour week and reinstatement of all workers.

1939

Realising the importance of labour organisation, the KCA was cooperating with the Labour Trade Union of East Africa. African workers joined the Union in large numbers. In 1939 Makhan Singh celebrated May Day. This was the first time that a workers meeting was held on the workers day ... The most significant development in Kenya trade-union movement was the August 1939 Mombasa strike. The strike began with the municipality workers for higher wages, and quickly spread to electricity, docks, post and telegraph workers in the town. Nearly 6000 African and Asian workers stopped work. The strike was sponsored by the LTUEA (Labour Trade Union of East Africa) and supported by KCA (Kikuyu Central Association). The LTUEA and the KCA held a solidarity meeting of Asian and African workers in Nairobi. To break the strike the government used all the high-handed methods. One hundred and fifty workers were arrested. However, the strike was a success and ended in workers' favour.

A new situation developed after 1947 under increasing activities by the trade union movement. There was a general strike in Mombasa on January 13, 1947 when over 15,000 workers took part and led to the formation of the African Workers Union, later renamed the African Workers' Federation. Following the Mombasa strike, there were strikes in other towns. The colonial Government was fast losing its control over events and people. It reacted by arresting the trade union leaders. In 1951, the working class replied by staging a boycott of colonial buses and foreign beer in protest against colonial repression. The stage was set for the period of armed resistance.

Mau Mau armed resistance

The earlier anti-colonial struggles by peasants, the nationalities, the general people's resistance, the nationalist struggles and the trade union activism ultimately led to the armed resistance under Mau Mau. However, this transition did not happen overnight. These different strands of resistance fed the overall resistance and taught lessons that then became resistance strategy. Soon after the Second World War, the hopes of peaceful removal of colonialism from Kenya began to fade. The revolutionary line of armed, organised people's war began to emerge by around 1948. The lessons of the past struggles were clear to the politically aware workers: the contradiction with colonialism and imperialism could not be resolved without an organised, armed confrontation. This realisation began to be put into practice gradually as the subjective and objective conditions developed. It was becoming clear that in the meantime, intense working class struggles under Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai had developed ideas and experiences of working class struggles and organisations that added to the anti-capitalist arsenal at the disposal of working people. Soldiers returning after the Second World War, the resistance in India and other places as well the examples

of revolutions from USSR and China added to people's knowledge and understanding on the need and strategies for resistance.

It is important to see what the aims of Mau Mau were. Barnett (Barnett and Njama, 1966,199) sums these up:

The *secular* aspects of Mau Mau ideology was revealed most clearly in the oft-repeated demands of the Movement for higher wages, increased educational opportunities, removal of the colour-bar..., return of the alienated lands and independence under an all-African government.

These aims thus encompassed the demands for independence as well as the class demands of land for peasants and higher wages for working class.

At the same time, social and political activists had decided that the formation of a strong resistance organisation was necessary to meet new challenges of fighting colonialism. Thus was born Mau Mau. The name came later, but its organisation, its ideology, its vision, its strategies were all decided by the conditions of the time in the struggle against a foreign power that had captured people's land, labour and resources and, in the process, had created an unequal and unjust system under capitalism in order to maintain their power to exploit, to oppress and to govern without people's authority.

A study of the differing forms of organisation of Mau Mau at different times reveals that changing conditions at different stages of the struggle gave rise to corresponding changes in its organisation. The changes were also reflected in a refinement of strategies and tactics so as to better reflect changing conditions. Thus, the organisation of the revolutionary movement was different in its early years (i.e. before October, 1952) from that which evolved after 1952, which again was different from that which emerged by 1955 and again by 1960.

At a political level, new organisational structures began to emerge. After about eight months of armed warfare, during which valuable military and guerrilla warfare experience had been gained, it was decided to call a representative meeting of the various units. The meeting was held in August 1953 near the Mwathe River and came to be known as the Mwathe Conference. After an exchange of ideas and long discussions, it was decided to form the Kenya Defence Council as the highest military and political organ of the armed struggle. The Mwathe Conference then elected the leadership of the Kenya Defence Council and organised the fighting forces into eight armies. Kimathi was elected the President of the Kenya Defence Council, with Gen. Macharia Kimemia as vice-president, Gen. Kahi-Itina as the Treasurer and Brig. Gathitu as Secretary.

Changing needs at a later time led to the formation of the Kenya Parliament. A meeting of the Kenya Defence Council was held in February 1954. Eight hundred delegates attended the meeting and after intensive discussions, a decision was taken to replace the Kenya Defence Council by a new body - the Kenya Parliament. This was a change of fundamental importance. The Kenya Parliament was the first legitimate African Government of Kenya. Its aims were to separate political and military aspects of the struggle, making the former paramount, to emphasise the national character of the freedom movement, to ensure the representation of all Kenyan nationalities, and to assume authority over liberated and semi-liberated areas and people. Militarily, it established its authority over all fighting units and prepared a new military offensive. It also formulated a foreign policy and sent representatives to foreign governments. Twelve members were elected to the Kenya Parliament, and Kimathi was elected the first Prime Minister. Their first loyalty was to the Kenya Parliament and not to their former armies. Macharia Kimemia was elected as Field Marshal. Kimathi was now free to devote full attention to the political sphere and to the affairs of Kenya

Parliament. In addition, all the thirty-three districts of Kenya were represented in the Kenya Parliament, thus making it a national body.

In the early years, new cadres were recruited and given political education in preparation for a time when they would become fully active in resistance. Prospective members were placed under observation, then given the first oath, that of unity. They were then given specific tasks to test their commitment and provide opportunities for practice. At the same time, they were placed in an underground cell structure and assigned to work at a democratic level in legal organisations. Many of these became part of the Mau Mau intelligence-gathering network.

The guerrilla forces established their own government in the areas they liberated from colonial forces. They controlled law and order, ran an effective administration with its own legal system and a policy for financial control with its own taxes to finance the war effort. It was this tax levied in liberated and semi-liberated areas in the enemy territory that bought guns, ammunition, food and other supplies for the guerrilla army. It established hospitals as well as factories for the manufacture of armaments and other necessities such as clothing. As the armed struggle advanced after 1952, so did increase the areas that were liberated by Mau Mau forces. They maintained a large administrative machinery, which had jurisdiction over vast areas with hundreds of thousands of people for whose economy, welfare, education, health and security they were responsible.

Achievements of Mau Mau

Mau Mau has been given a negative interpretation by imperialism. Its achievements are either ignored or misrepresented. The following section looks at some aspects of their work that marks it out as a pioneer in Africa as a strong anti-imperialist force.

Anti-Imperialist Ideology

Three strands of Mau Mau's ideological stand were anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and a proletarian world outlook in the struggle against capitalism. They thus represented the unity of workers and peasants and all those who were not allied to the colonialists. This stand was derived from peasants' anti-colonial struggles and from the trade union movement and working class struggles in the liberation struggle as well as from the nationalist forces resisting colonialism through political organisations over a long period.

Different aspects of the ideology became dominant at different times and freedom fighters responded differently at different times depending on the particular needs of each period. Just as at the political level different organisational structures were created in response to specific needs, so at the ideological level, different perspectives came to prominence in keeping with the specific contradictions and needs in the struggle at the specific times.

As time went on, there was a gradual shift in the struggle from an anti-colonial phase to an anti-neo-colonial one. This change in ideology reflected a change in the material condition at the time. In the period leading to independence and the period after independence, imperialism, the main force that Mau Mau fought, changed from colonialism to neo-colonialism. In keeping with this change, Mau Mau also changed its political and military priorities.

The class stand of Mau Mau was clear right from the beginning. The enemy was not seen in terms of the colour of their skin, as the colonialist propaganda had insisted, and in effect encouraged. Indeed, black Homeguard collaborators were prime target of revolutionary wrath. Kimathi explained in a letter he wrote

from his headquarters in Nyandarwa in 1953, “the poor are the Mau Mau.” Poverty can be stopped, he explained, “but not by bombs and weapons from the imperialists. Only the revolutionary justice of the struggles of the poor could end poverty for Kenyans” as Kimathi stated in his letter to the Nairobi newspaper, *Habari za Dunia*. (Odinga, 1968). Thus the movement was not against European people or Black people, but against colonialism and capitalism. It is also clear that Kimathi and the movement were taking a definite class stand.

Organisation

No struggle as large and facing a vastly superior military power as did Mau Mau could have existed without a strong organisation. The organisational strength of the movement needs to be recognised. Edgerton (1990) provides a succulent summary of Mau Mau’s organisational structure:

The Mau Mau movement was directed by what they usually called “Muhimu,” or the Central Committee. The Central Committee consisted of 12 men, including Kubai and Kaggia, with Eliud Mutonyi as its chairman. When the police began to make arrests at oath-taking ceremonies, the Central Committee created another group, known as the “30 Committee,” to direct oath-taking and to shield the true directorate from government detection. Under the direction of Fred Kubai, the 30 men on this committee were responsible for coordinating the activities of local leaders in the tribal reserves and townships. In addition, the leaders of Mau Mau were advised by what they called the KAU Study Circle, a kind of brain trust composed of four or five KAU members and an equal number of outsiders who were sympathetic to KAU’s stated goals. These men prepared background research on policy matters that the Central Committee might need to address in Kenya, as well as international concerns, especially ways of attracting foreign support.

The formation of the Kenya Defence Council and of the Kenya Parliament indicates the importance that Mau Mau gave to organisations at national level. Its organisational structures at other levels have also been well documented, for example by Barnett and Njama (1966) and Mathu (1974). Further evidence of Mau Mau’s strong organizational structure is provided by Edgerton (1990):

No rebels fought from forest camps. The rebellion also depended on the support of sympathizers in the reserves, and in Nairobi and other towns. Until mid-1954, the Central Committee and its War Council still purchased weapons, organized food supplies, and recruited new fighters for the forest armies. These new recruits were issued special identification cards in order to prevent infiltration by government informers. Meanwhile, men and women in the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru reserves continued to supply money, information, food, and weapons. Many risked their lives as often as those who fought in the forest. In fact, much of the actual fighting was done by men and women who lived in the reserves, and in Nairobi or smaller towns. Units from the forests often entered the reserves at night, and spent the day sleeping in the houses of sympathizers or hiding in a secluded area, before carrying out their raids and returning to camp. But others who had never entered the forests were sometimes called into action by a local leader, usually with the approval of higher Mau Mau authority. Sometimes they were ordered to kill a Kikuyu traitor, at other times to raid a Homeguard or police post for weapons.

Strategy

The strategy that Mau Mau used against a militarily stronger enemy was crucial in its struggle. Mau Mau saw Kenyan peoples’ contradiction with imperialism as an antagonistic one, which could not be resolved peacefully. It thus used the method of armed struggle, guerrilla warfare and people’s struggle against

imperialism. But it made a distinction between the three aspects of the enemy. Against the colonial military forces, it used the method of guerrilla warfare and military battles (both offensive and defensive), which included attacks on military targets, on prisons to free captured guerrilla fighters, and on arsenals to procure arms.

The other 'face' of the enemy was white Settlers, many of whom benefited from free or cheap land and who had taken up arms against the people of Kenya. The Mau Mau movement used another method to deal with this threat. The Settlers' main concern was to protect 'their' property on which their wealth depended. Indeed, their main aim in settling in Kenya was to appropriate, or acquire very cheaply, peasant land and labour and use it to produce wealth for themselves. The freedom fighters attacked them where it hurt most: the property itself. This served not only to threaten the very economic base of the Settlers; it also helped the guerrillas to procure food and rations they needed to continue their armed struggle, thus providing the material base for the armed Revolution.

Mau Mau used yet another method against the third face of the enemy, the African Homeguards. Considering that many had been forced either by economic reasons or through force or ignorance to become collaborators, many of those considered capable of reforming were given advance warnings to stop betraying the cause of national liberation. Only when these were ignored was action taken against them, depending on the seriousness of their collaboration, but sanctioned by Mau Mau courts. In this way many who had initially sided with the enemy were won over to the nationalist side and some of them then made important contribution to the anti-imperialist struggle. Many whose economic base was tied too strongly to imperialism refused to reform and had to be dealt with more severely in order that they did not pose a threat to the armed resistance forces.

Another tactic used against the collaborators involved information warfare aimed at demoralising them. An example of this was spreading favourable news about guerrilla successes in enemy held territory. Pinning large notices on trees and walls near schools, police stations and social halls was one such way. It was not only the message of these posters that put fear in the enemy but the very fact that such notices could be placed in areas under colonial control. Despite the fact that strict security measures were taken by the colonial armed forces, the Mau Mau activists managed to reach areas in the very heart of the city to pin these posters thus showing their strength and demoralising enemy soldiers and civilians. It would be incorrect to deny that there were contradictions among the ranks of Mau Mau fighters and among the people. These became sharper under enemy attack. But these were not antagonistic ones, at least at the beginning, and were resolved by the use of non-violent means. In the main, democratic methods were used to resolve these contradictions. One of the aims of Mau Mau was to form a democratic society where everyone would have equal rights and duties and an equal access to the wealth produced by their joint labour. They put their ideas into practice in the liberated areas even as they engaged the enemy in a fierce battle.

The democratic method involved the use of meetings, conferences, and congresses where free discussions could be held, and ideas could be expressed without fear of persecution. After long discussions, decisions would be taken on basis of majority vote. Questions of leadership were settled through secret ballots and elections were held at every level in so far as war conditions allowed.

Mau Mau's military strategy ensured that the military might of the greatest military power at the time was kept at bay for over four years.

Infrastructure

There is no doubt that Mau Mau was well organised as a military and as a political organisation. The colonialists were aware of their abilities, as they had discovered many examples of infrastructure in towns and forests even as the War of Independence was going on. They deliberately chose to hide these facts and

set out to destroy such evidence so as to continue their myth that Mau Mau was a primitive group of people who had nothing to do with the War of Liberation. Such structures included hospitals, libraries, social halls as well as rules and regulations and records of civil and legal practice that guided the movement.

Politics of Information

Mau Mau's information and communication strategy reflects different aspects of its overall work. Each of the elements of governance such as ideology, organisation and strategy, required effective flow of information between different units and parts of the resistance movement. This flow was the lifeblood of the organisation. This is essential in peacetime in any organisation but was of particular significance in an underground movement facing a war situation against a heavily armed enemy. Survival depended on this life-giving process of flow of information and communication. And yet this was difficult to achieve in the war situation created by the imposition of the State of Emergency by British colonialism which relied not only on its military and political might but also on its experience of oppression in its other colonies, particularly India and Malaysia. The difficulties for Mau Mau were compounded by the absence of global networks such as the Internet and information embargoes by colonialism - experiences from the resistance forces in India and other countries were not easily available to the resistance organisation. It was to prevent the availability of such information that the Kenya colonial government banned various progressive publications, including many from USSR, Peoples Republic of China and India. That Mau Mau managed to develop sophisticated information policies and practices is a reflection of its strength as an advanced 20th Century resistance movement.

Leadership

All the aspects of governance, the actual conduct of warfare, the political aspects of Kenya Parliament and other Mau Mau actions were not spontaneous acts happening in a political, social and military vacuum. There was a guiding force behind them all. And that force was Mau Mau leadership, which is often ignored or minimised by historical studies. Mau Mau leadership needs to be seen in a dynamic level in all its aspects. It is not possible to see Mau Mau leadership in the sense that one sees the leader of a Western country personalised in the person of a president or a prime minister. True, Kimathi and other leaders did stand out. But the reality of fighting against the superpower of the day with limited resources dictated that a different model of leadership had to be found if the movement was to succeed. At the same time, the war of independence in Kenya was not directed by an organised political party as happened in Mozambique under FRELIMO or in Namibia under SWAPO. Such forces in Kenya were coming together to form a political-military organisation before British colonial government pre-empted the development with its excessive use of force under the guise of an emergency. Of necessity, Kenya's war of independence was led and organised in a way that suited local conditions.

INDEPENDENCE AND NEO-COLONIALISM: 1963-1990

By about 1956-57, it became clear that colonialism was no longer sustainable in Kenya. The departure of British colonialism was a matter of time. In just a few years of warfare, Mau Mau had changed the balance of power. Kenya became independent on December 12, 1963. Now an African Prime Minister and an African government ruled the country. The old order had given way to the new. And that achievement was due entirely to Mau Mau.

And yet it was not the independence that those who participated in the War of Independence had fought for. The changes were soon seen for what they were: the replacement of colonialism by neo-colonialism, the replacement of European Settlers by African “owners” of land. European Settlers remained, as did multinational corporations as the rulers behind the scene. Government policies were handed down by financial forces in London and New York. Policy “guidance” came from IMF and the World Bank. The only aspect that did not change was the condition of working class and the situation of those who fought in the war of independence deteriorated. It was, in effect, independence for the ruling classes (black and white this time) to rule, kill, massacre, suppress and loot as they pleased. And suppress, kill and massacre they needed in do in order to remain in power as the people who had sacrificed all were not yet ready to hand over control to new masters with the same agenda. But the new masters were fully backed by the same imperialist powers which had engineered their coming to power.

Repression by “independent” government

The British colonial government’s legacy of impunity as it massacred, murdered and tortured people at will was then bequeathed to the governments it set up after independence. The lesson that colonialism passed on to the comprador regime was that it was acceptable to eliminate and destroy people who oppose their policies. The TJRC (2013, Vo.IIA, 72) records the events of the time:

Kenyatta, having realized that he would not be able to meet the needs and expectations of all Kenyans, engaged in measures that would ensure political survival and self sustenance of his government. This led to a strengthening of the role of the security agencies similar to the role they played during the colonial period, and particularly aimed at controlling, and suppressing dissent and organized political opposition. In brief, in the words of Charles Hornsby, ‘the Independent State soon echoed its colonial parents repressive attitudes to dissent’.

It was not only the Kenyatta government that used force to remain in power. The Moi-KANU government that followed his did the same, as TJRC Report (2013) says:

Political assassinations have occurred under each of the three successive governments since independence. The motives associated with these assassinations have varied, from getting rid of political competition, weeding out ambitious politicians, and removing perceived “dissidents” of the government or those who posed as “threats” to power. Evidence of state involvement and subsequent cover-ups is evident in the majority of political murders. Propaganda and commissions of inquiry are often used as smokescreens to get to “the bottom of the matter,” and often have the effect of masking the motives and faces behind the assassinations. Prominent figures in government are said to be implicated. Key witnesses into the assassinations disappear or die mysteriously. No real perpetrators have ever been prosecuted, much less effectively investigated.

Under the KANU governments of Kenyatta and Moi, issues relating to the return of people’s land were not resolved. Instead, the local and settler elites and transnational corporations consolidated their grip on this

basic national resource. They were, in fact, further aggravated. Landlessness, the single most significant issue in Kenya before and after independence, continued to increase. Umoja (1989) provides a good record of torture, killings, executions and massacres under the rule of President Moi.

The three pillars of resistance – Mau Mau, trade union organisations and people's forces - were responsible for the achievement of independence in 1963. But imperialism saw the danger that this combined force posed to its continued exploitation after independence. The comprador regime systematically attacked all the three. Mau Mau fighters in the forests were killed in large numbers by colonial military forces and those who continued the struggle were hunted down and killed; others who came out in good faith at independence were ruthlessly murdered by armed forces. The radical wing of KANU which represented the demands of Mau Mau was systematically attacked and rendered ineffective. The trade union movement was weakened by attacks on militant trade union movement and the marginalisation or detention of its militant leaders. Thus, all the avenues of militant political action were banned. All public resistance activities were suppressed either "legally" or by the use of force.

The murder in 1965 of Pio Gama Pinto, an socialist who was active in Mau Mau, signalled a new period of repression in Kenya. The banning of opposition political parties followed. In 1969, the Kenya People's Union was banned, its leadership arrested and detained. Thus ended the one chance of open radical politics in Kenya. All political activities now went underground as did the expression of any independent ideas and opinions.

Resistance

Throughout the 1970s, underground groups flourished and articulated their vision of a Kenya free from capitalism and imperialism, issuing various underground pamphlets. Some of these are recorded in Durrani (1997). These included *Mwanguzi* and *Kenya Twendapi* which questioned the direction Kenya was taking after independence under the new elite. Many former Mau Mau combatants began to recount their experiences and stated that they had not suffered during the anti-colonial struggles merely to see a minority elite getting all the benefits of independence. Many such views could not be published within Kenya and were published overseas. The murder in 1975 of the popular politician, J. M. Kariuki, brought out a national unanimity in anti-government feelings. It also saw the publication and distribution of a large number of underground leaflets in support of basic human and democratic rights. The key feature of this period was the continued resistance by workers, peasants and progressive people's movement.

An important feature of resistance after independence was the lack of the strong united force such as the one that opposed colonialism in the earlier period. The strict censorship by the independent governments ensured that no strong, radical, organised working class and trade union movement survived, nor did it tolerate any form of people's resistance. Political parties that supported Mau Mau's vision were also not allowed. Such suppression of resistance was the legacy that colonialism left in Kenya and it curtailed, initially at least, the resistance of people. Nevertheless, resistance was not suppressed totally as the following section shows.

People's Resistance

Worker Resistance

Worker resistance throughout the country was in the forefront of direct action through strikes and related actions, reminiscent of the practice during the colonial period. Seen as an overall systematic resistance, these strikes and other struggles helped to build a movement against the government which has come down heavily against trade unions. It banned strikes and imprisoned trade union leaders. And, in the end, the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) was affiliated into the ruling party, KANU, thus ending its role as a workers' organisation to fight for economic and political rights of working people. But this did not suppress working class militancy as activists and shop stewards continued resistance, isolating the official, conservative leadership. Year after year, thousands of workers broke KANU laws and went on strikes for their rights.

The militant activities of the earlier radical organised trade union movement were absent in this period. But it was the daily struggles of the workers that gave true significance to the growing worker movement. Not willing to accept the situation, which meant daily erosion of their already very low standard of living, the workers intensified their struggles for a decent living wage and their economic, social and political rights. Mwakenya (1987b, 4) breaks down the workers' demands into three categories:

- Economic Demands: for higher wages, land and employment.
- Social Demands: safety at places of work, improved working conditions, adequate health facilities, adequate and relevant education.
- Political Demands: right to organise, right to assembly, union rights, support other workers, liberation from the entire oppressive system.

It is significant that Kenyan workers saw workers' rights in the same way as Mau Mau did: that workers' rights should include social and political as well as economic rights as legitimate demands of the trade union movement. This was the main plank of the trade union movement set up by Makhan Singh, Fred Kubai, Bildad Kaggia and others during the colonial period under the East African Trade Union Congress. The colonial administration, as well as the independent Kenyan government, legislated to remove workers' political rights from trade union remit - an aspect that has gravely weakened the trade union movement in Kenya. Workers' resistance in this period took various forms: strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, work-to-rule, refusal to accept unfair practices.

Peasant Resistance

Landlessness remained a key factor in resistance after independence. Peasants and pastoralists reverted to their colonial practices of resistance. No week passed without reports of peasant resistance to the Moi government's policies and attacks on government officials. They used varying methods of demanding their rights and often used violence against corrupt government officials and armed police supporting new landlords. At the same time, because of the shortage of land which resulted in high cost, it often became necessary for a large number of peasants to pull their resources to purchase one farm. This came in useful when they faced common problems: thousands of small land owners found strength in defying government directives, whereas individual plot owners may fear taking direct action. Peasants as a class joined hands with workers in resisting the policies of the government. Conditions were ripening in the countryside for a

more systematic and organised resistance by peasants. Underground resistance movements got much support from the peasants. Indeed, the government's use of force against peasants showed its fear of this resistance building up into a formidable force.

Student Resistance

Students throughout the country joined workers and peasants in opposing Government policies. In representing their own interests as students, they also articulated the aspirations of the working people. The youth derived their political consciousness from the material conditions of their own lives as well as from the experiences of their parents who in the main were workers and peasants. The government attempted to turn students into docile acceptors of its policies, including those in the education field such as the curricula. School, college and university syllabi were controlled to remove any progressive ideas, similarly removing the militant ideology and aims of Mau Mau and the War of Independence. Their cultural and social activities were vetted to ensure that there were no mentions of facts and events which could inspire independent thought. In short, the whole educational process was geared to produce supporters of capitalism and comprador rule.

But students never accepted this. They consistently resisted not only the colonial and imperialist-orientated elements of the education system itself, but also the socio-economic system that blindly followed Western capitalist ideas and encouraged corruption. They instead sought a united student national movement which would ensure free circulation of ideas and links with fellow students from Africa and other progressive students from around the world. The strength of student resistance was indicated in 1988 when thousands of students throughout the country went on strike.

Students were also in the forefront of writing and distributing underground pamphlets setting out their demands. This was especially the case at universities. Students at the University of Nairobi, for example, produced a vast amount of such literature, reflecting the militancy of the students there. Indeed, a tradition of at least one enforced closure per year was the norm as the government dealt with student protests by sending in the dreaded para-military General Service Unit (GSU) and closing the institution. New repressive regulations were introduced after every closure, but this did not stop student militancy. Most Student Union leaders ended up being thrown out of the University and jailed, detained or murdered. The student newspaper produced at the School of Journalism reflected socialist tendency among students. Mwakenya (1987a,12) summarises student resistance:

After the banning of K.P.U. , democratic opposition was led by University and Secondary school students. Nairobi and Kenyatta University students unions played a major role in fighting for democracy and human rights, and opposing neo-colonialism and foreign military bases in Kenya. They demonstrated in the streets, wrote leaflets, spoke in public and student gatherings, and in so many ways helped expose the reactionary character of the KANU regime.

The significance of these student activities was that they represented a new generation which refused to accept a corrupt, man-eat-man society. The future of Kenya in reality lay in their hands. And they indicated their rejection of the regime's policies which was to accommodate capitalism and imperialism in Kenya.

Release Political Prisoners Group and the Assassination of Karimi Nduthu

National and overseas campaigns forced the government to make constitutional changes. It repealed section 2A of the Constitution and thus ushering multi-party system. This however did not bring changes as many of the people who had been jailed for fighting social justice remained in prison. In this situation, the Release Political Prisoners Pressure Group (RPP) was formed to put more pressure on the government. The group mobilized some mothers of political prisoners and they demonstrated at Uhuru Park (Freedom Corner) where they staged a hunger strike demanding that their sons be released from prison. Their demands were however not taken lightly as the government used its police to beat and disperse them. The government later put them in vehicles and took them to their respective homes. The Government action did not dampen their resolve of seeing their children free. The following day they came back to Nairobi and continued with their hunger strike. They were hosted by the Reverend John Njenga of All Saint Cathedral. The government continued to harass them by sending police at the church and arresting members of Release Political Prisoners. The campaign ultimately bore fruits as by late 1992 all political prisoners save for Odhiambo Apiny had been released from prison. RPP believed political prisoners were not only those confined and serving a jail term, but anyone whose freedom, livelihood, conscience, ethics, values and principles were compromised by state powers. It on this principle that RPP consistently and tirelessly worked with people at the community in trying to solve problems and challenges they faced. The group was on the forefront of fighting for reforms and challenging unjust laws. RPP also partnered with the underground Mwakenya and this sharpened its members ideologically. The national coordinator of Mwakenya, Karimi Nduthu was also the Secretary General of Release Political Prisoners. Due to Nduthu's unwavering commitment to social justice, the enemy of the working people sent their agents to his residence in Riruta Satellite, a suburb of Nairobi, where they brutally murdered him on 24 March 1996. The assassination of Nduthu did not kill the spirit of RPP members as they continued with the struggle by raising awareness among the masses at the grassroots and also organizing demonstrations against injustices by the state. The government kept arresting its members and charging them with illegal assembly. The sacrifice of Karimi Nduthu and the commitment of RPP members together with other social movements was not in vain as this, together with other developments, forced the regime to agree to the drafting of the new constitution.

Organised Resistance

It was comparatively easy for the government to control people's resistance as it lacked a central ideology, leadership and organisation. It was often focused on local issues of relevance to a comparative small number of people. What was lacking was the nationwide perspective that the radical trade union movement and Mau Mau provided in the anti-colonial stage. This was rectified by the organised underground movements, the chief one being the December Twelve Movement that provided ideological direction, an analysis of history and proposals for future action. In this they provided the overall strategy for socialism that opposed the capitalist direction of the ruling party and class.

December Twelve Movement

Earlier attempts by radical groups to continue the vision of Mau Mau within KANU had failed, reflecting the total surrender of the comprador class to imperialist interests. It became the historical role of underground resistance movements to articulate the new phase in Kenyan politics where open opposition to the government was not possible. The tradition of organised underground resistance in Kenya goes back to the beginning of the 20th Century and continued throughout the colonial period. But it did not end with the

achievement of independence and continued throughout the period of Kenyatta's regime and intensified under Moi, as the US-backed regime consolidated its neo-colonial grip over the country. Among the key underground movement was the December Twelve Movement (DTM) which later emerged as Mwakenya.

DTM's activities represented continuation of resistance from pre-independence ones. DTM opposed the capitalist outlook of the ruling class and their party. It was active in articulating its ideological position, policies and outlook, not only among its active members grouped in secret cells, but also in disseminating these to its actual and potential supporters among the masses. It was not a mass movement and recruited into membership only those who showed clear grasp of its ideological stand and were willing to put into practice their commitments. The emergence of the December Twelve Movement marked the end of the attempts by democratic forces to form legal opposition parties. DTM's activities and ideological stand are best seen in its publications.

One of the most important underground publications of DTM was *InDependent Kenya*, (Cheche Kenya, 1981) published by the group Cheche Kenya, an earlier name of the DTM. *InDependent Kenya* documented, from the perspective of the Kenyan working people, the history of Kenyans' struggle for independence, the struggle of militants and conservatives within the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the corruption that became a way of life within the regime, and the cultural dependency on imperialism. *InDependent Kenya* was cyclostyled and widely distributed through underground channels in Kenya. It was published in a book form in London by Zed Press in 1982, sponsored by the Journal of African Marxists "in solidarity with the authors".

It was DTM's newspaper *Pambana, the Organ of the December Twelve Movement*, however, which had the widest circulation and the greatest impact in post-independence Kenya. The first issue was published in May 1982. DTM's programme became, in effect, an alternative to that of KANU's essentially capitalist one. DTM stood for a national democratic revolution which could unite all national forces opposed to imperialism and the neo-colonial comprador regime. As *Pambana* made clear, the December Twelve Movement supported all genuine Kenyan organisations and individuals, "fighting any aspect of local or imperialist reaction". It set out the tactics of achieving a broad unity of all democratic forces and, in the process, it clearly isolated the comprador class.

The short-lived coup of August 1982 was, at one level, a reflection of the developing democratic forces. The coup's message (Kenya Coup, 1982, Broadcast) reflected the desire of millions for an alternative political system from the one KANU offered. It was clearly a vindication of DTM's programme, which appears to have influenced the coup leaders.

The aftermath of the coup altered the political scene in Kenya. Realising how little public support it had, the KANU Government increased repression to new heights and relied even more on the military. Many people active before the coup were brutally murdered or illegally detained. All pretences to democracy disappeared. Economically, the Moi regime aligned itself even more firmly to US imperialism, which now acquired military facilities in the country in return for supporting the unpopular regime. At the same time, the coup ended prematurely the developing revolutionary forces from gathering more support and setting up an appropriate organisational and ideological framework to challenge the government on a stronger basis. As it is, the coup gave the Moi government an excuse to undermine every strand of resistance to its rule and arrest, detain and "disappear" those it saw as opposing its rule. This included the growing trade union and student movements and also DTM. With strong support from Britain and USA, it re-established its rule, but with an even more oppressive rule. It is difficult to speculate how the forces of resistance would have developed had Moi not used it to silence all opposition. It is fair to say, however, the resistance movement suffered a setback with Moi's reign of terror unleashed in the wake of the coup.

The December Twelve Movement (DTM) just about survived Moi's attacks on all forces opposed to him but as a much-weakened force following the brutal actions to jail, detain or eliminate its members and leaders. It continued the production of *Pambana* and the second issue came out in July 1983. It summed up the experiences following the coup and exposed the attempts of "the ruling clique and their army to instil fear amongst the people." It identified the root causes of the problems facing people and resolutely called for unity to defeat "the enemy". *Pambana* drew strength from the revolutionary traditions of the Mau Mau's use of struggle songs to mobilise people.

DTM also carried on its struggle overseas through Umoja in London, as recorded later in this article. In its short life, DTM left a legacy of progressive policies, vision and experiences reflected in its publications. These provided an alternative vision of a free, socialist Kenya.

Mwakenya



Mwakenya came into existence in the late 1980s and was composed largely of members of the December Twelve Movement (DTM) the revolutionary movement formed in mid-seventies. DTM members partnered with other progressive forces and formed Mwakenya. By 1980s, Moi regime had become increasingly repressive and did not tolerate any divergent view. Mwakenya as an underground movement played crucial role in exposing the ills that the regime was committing against the people. It summed up the democratic mood of the underground resistance under its slogan *Ni haki yetu kupingania haki* (It is our right to struggle for our rights). One of rights denied to Kenya was the right to organise and it was on this that Mwakenya concentrated in organising people and distributing its literature throughout the country in secret. Mwakenya was guided by seven fundamental goals or objectives, which were

1. The recovery of national sovereignty and integrity
2. The building of an independent and integrated national economy
3. The establishment of genuine democracy
4. The establishment of social justice for all classes and nationalities
5. The promotion of a patriotic and democratic national culture
6. The building of a strong people's defence force
7. The pursuit of an independent foreign policy

Events were to prove that many practices of DTM which had given it strength were not carried on into Mwakenya and that this perhaps led to its decline in the long term. Among these was a relaxation of the strict recruitment policy of DTM and an attempt to become a mass party opening up membership to all,

irrespective of ideological commitment, clarity and experience in the struggle. The earlier requirements of study and practice were also dispensed with.

And yet there were important achievements made by Mwakenya. Its achievement was strongest in setting out a clear political and ideological framework in opposition to the KANU government's pro-Western, pro-capitalist programme. It did so with an evidence-based analysis of the conditions of the time and the state of contradictions in the society. Based on such analysis, it produced two important documents setting out its vision.

The first document was Mwakenya's *Draft Minimum Programme* which set out the history of neo-colonialism in Kenya and also traced the history of resistance in Kenya. It also gave the background to the formation of Mwakenya itself and recorded its publications and Congresses. The most significant part was "the Fundamental Goals and Objectives of Mwakenya". The publication, *Draft Minimum Programme*, marked a new stage in the anti-imperialist struggle in Kenya. Once again, an underground opposition Party challenged the monopoly of KANU as the true spokesperson for the masses of Kenyans. No longer could KANU claim its exclusive right to speak for all the classes in Kenya. It now became obvious that KANU spoke for the comprador class in Kenya while Mwakenya and allied progressive movements represented the interests of the rest of the people. The challenge to KANU was on ideological and organisational fronts as well, as Mwakenya set out the demands of the "oppressed and exploited classes of Kenyan people" and called upon the people "to overthrow the entire neo-colonial system, seize political power and establish a peaceful state of democracy and social progress." The silent class struggle since independence was formally brought into broad daylight. Under its slogan "In struggle lies the Way Ahead", Mwakenya proclaims its stand, *Ni haki yetu kupigania haki zetu* (It is Our right to fight for our rights).

The other publications by Mwakenya were *Mzalendo Mwakenya* and *The Register of Resistance*. The publications exposed the deceptions of the Moi regime and attracting a wider readership from the people who were looking for ways of resolving the problems facing the country. The period saw a large number of strikes and demonstrations. According to the *Register of the Resistance* (1986), a total of 65 strikes involving over 42,000 workers in over 44 towns took place. Moi's regime unleashed its security agents (police, GSU) to quell the resistance but with little success.

History of Kenya shows that resistance builds on the achievements of the earlier period of struggle. The ideas of earlier anti-colonial struggles influenced Mau Mau, just as these ideas themselves then influenced DTM-Mwakenya.

Overseas Resistance

From Kenya Committee to Umoja

The suppression of people's rights led many of the vocal academicians as well as progressives to seek asylum abroad. The asylum seekers, upon landing to host countries, continued with the tasks that had put them in trouble with the regime. These included campaigning for the release of political prisoners and it was on this basis that the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya (CRPPK), was established in London on 2 July 1982. The committee acted as a solidarity organisation for those arrested, detained or harassed for their political activities in Kenya. The Committee's objectives which were:

- To campaign for the release of political prisoners in Kenya

- To express solidarity with the people of Kenya in their struggle for democratic rights (e.g. political, cultural and trade union freedom)
- To sensitise international public opinion on the repressive nature of the Kenyan regime
- To support Kenyan people in their opposition to U.S.A military bases and all foreign military presence in Kenya.

The Committee continued its campaign throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s publishing the influential *Kenya News* bulletin and coordinating with other Kenyan democratic and solidarity movements abroad. In October 1987 a number of resistance groups abroad came together and formed United Movement for Democracy in Kenya (Umoja). Umoja was committed to

- The restoration of national sovereignty
- The building of a truly democratic society
- The restructuring of the economy for the social progress of all Kenyans.

It had constituent branches and contacts in Britain (where the Secretariat was based), Norway, Denmark, Sweden, USA and also in some countries in Africa. Umoja also networked and worked with progressive groups in Kenya among them Mwakenya though on principled basis.

CONCLUSION – *Uhuru Bado*

The history of Kenya parallels trends in many other countries. The colonial government passes on power to a class it has created and nurtured and which ultimately rejects the interests of people who had borne the brunt of fighting colonialism. The people are then relegated to the margins of society by the new comprador class. A “show-democracy” creates a number of political parties and a Parliamentary system that represents the interest of the ruling class.

The crucial dividing line between the contending forces in Kenya is which class is in power and on whose behalf it rules. This class struggle is obscured by propaganda from the ruling classes. The contradiction between Homeguards and Mau Mau was that the former sought superficial political change while the latter demanded economic, political and social transformation in the interest of working class. That contradiction has not yet been resolved. If the workers’ forces are to continue the legacy of Mau Mau and fight for transformation today, they will need to free themselves from the ideological and historical blinkers that imperialism has created. Liberating their minds from colonial and imperialist thinking entails recognising class struggles as the key reality in Kenya, before and after independence.

Mutunga (2017) sums up the current situation in Kenya:

The Kenyan elite, like many in Africa, has not identified or supported our national interests. They do not represent us patriotically in national relations with either the West or the East, preferring to build their own personal power bases among foreign interests, national and international cartels ... The bottom line is - This status quo MUST GO!

There can be no better way to understand Kenya’s past than to study Pio Gama Pinto’s analysis (Pinto, 1963, Quoted in Durrani, Shiraz, Ed. 2018b,246) at the time of independence:

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 ... 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.

Events have shown, however, that the aims of the uhuru that Pinto and others died for have not been met even after 55 years of independence. The struggle that earlier generations, the radical trade union movement and Mau Mau waged, continues.

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